

DARK HERESY™

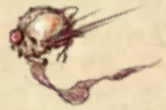
ROLEPLAYING GAME

WARHAMMER® 40,000 ROLEPLAY



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It is the 41st Millennium...

For more than a hundred centuries the Emperor has sat immobile on the Golden Throne of Earth. He is the master of Mankind by the will of the gods, and master of a million worlds by the might of his inexhaustible armies. He is a rotting carcass writhing invisibly with power from the Dark Age of Technology. He is the Carrion Lord of the Imperium for whom a thousand souls are sacrificed every day, so that he may never truly die.

Yet in his deathless state, the Emperor continues his eternal vigilance. Mighty battle fleets cross the Daemon-infested miasma of the Warp, the only route between distant stars, their way lit by the Astronomican, the shining psychic manifestation of the Emperor's will. Vast armies give battle in his name on uncounted worlds. Greatest amongst his soldiers are the Adeptus Astartes, the Space Marines, bioengineered super-warriors. Their comrades in arms are legion: the Imperial Guard, the ever-vigilant Inquisition, and the Tech-Priests of the Adeptus Mechanicus to name but a few. But for all their multitudes, they are barely enough to hold off the ever-present threat from aliens, heretics, mutants—and worse.

To be a man in such times is to be one amongst untold billions. It is to live in the cruellest and most bloody regime imaginable. Forget the power of technology and science, for so much has been forgotten, never to be re-learned. Forget the promise of progress and understanding, for in the grim darkness of the far future, there is only war. There is no peace amongst the stars, only an eternity of carnage and slaughter, and the laughter of the thirsting gods.

Prepare to enter the nightmare world of Dark Heresy.



Into the Dark...

by Dan Abnett

They had gone out into the Low Worlds, where death was expecting them. Indeed, of all the things out there in the dark hoping to make their acquaintance, death was probably the most hospitable.

The dropship shook like a seedcase in the wind.

"You see the whole world, yet you see nothing," remarked Zarn Vertigon. The savant was sitting quietly in an arrestor seat at the back of the dropship cabin. He had unscrewed the lens disks of his left-eye optic to clean them, but the jolt of atmospheric entry was too brutal, so he sat instead with the delicate components cupped patiently between his hands in a piece of cloth, waiting for a landing, or an abrupt high atmosphere death.

"What?" asked Alia Kanaed. She was up front, in one of the worn leather helm station seats, beside the hunched beetle shape of the pilot-servitor. She tapped one of its upper manipulator arms, and indicated the dark block of the dropzone that digital chevrons were chasing across a real-time hololith of the landscape far below, a landscape that yawed and turned as the servitor made its course adjustments.

The mesh grilles of the servitor's mouthparts emitted a series of clacks that indicated it had understood.

Kanaed turned again and looked back at the savant.

"I said what?" she said, "as in what the hell are you on about?" Irritation showed in the slight crease between her eyes. She had never been particularly tolerant of the savant. Then, as Hessk always pointed out, she had never been particularly tolerant of anything.

"You see the whole world, yet you see nothing," Vertigon repeated. "It is a quote. Attributed to Alexis Feroth, the Great Cartographer of the Surena Dynasty. I think it was intended as a commentary on the political naivety of the usurper Kalisto Surena."

"Really?"

"But I was applying it specifically to this situation," Vertigon replied evenly.

"Imagine my surprise," said Kanaed.

"Yes," said Vertigon, cupping the delicate optic rings.

"If you're going to say something, just say it," said Kanaed. "Don't dance." Her tone was mild, but it had been every bit as mild the day she uttered the words, "No more than you deserve," as she buried her void-dark sword through the heart and spine of the heretic Goran Drakos.

"Enough, children," said Callan Hessk.

He lowered his boots from the seat-back in front of him and turned sideways in his seat so he could glance up-cabin at Kanaed and down-cabin at Vertigon.

"Alia, don't look for fights. Zarn...what's the matter with you? This is a simple business."

"Is it?" asked Vertigon. "Is it really?"

Callan Hessk sighed.

"We are all sworn servants of Inquisitor Tortane, and answer to his authority willingly. Tortane has told us to come here, and do this thing. It is simple. It is a simple business."

Vertigon shrugged, still keeping the parts of his augmetic eye carefully nested between his hands.

"Yet...none of us have ever met Inquisitor Tortane. We serve at a distance. He sends us instructions that are simple, I agree. Go here. Do this. Except, when there is such distance involved, and such simplicity of instruction, it is clear that Inquisitor Tortane expects some nuance from us."

"Does it?" asked Hessk.

"Of course," said the savant. He began screwing the lens rings back into his augmetic socket, one by one. "To suggest otherwise would be to assume that the Inquisitor is stupid, and I think we can agree he is not. He expects us to act autonomously, to interpret his simple instruction and sophisticate our plans. He expects us to be his proxies here, to do in person, for him, what he is not here in person to do."

Hessk heard Kanaed groan. Without looking at her, he held up a warning finger.

"Vertigon," he said, "I have field command of this team. The Inquisitor's instructions were direct: seek passage to this world, examine the site for which he has given us coordinates, and report our findings back to him. What part of that requires sophistication?"

Vertigon had finished refitting his optics. He blink-whirred them once, and then released his harness and stood up. With a hand holding the ceiling rail, he edged down the aisle of the bumping dropship.

"Below us," he said, indicating both the hololithic display and the nightside shadow beyond the dropship's small, thick cockpit ports, "is Epsilon Angel KZ-8, outermost world of the prohibited Angel KZ-8 system. Nothing is known about it. Indeed, virtually nothing is known about the entire system."

"Except for the..." Kanaed paused.

"The artefact? The Sleeping Fortress?" Vertigon asked. "Yes, apart from that, and even that is an unsubstantiated myth. But he sends us here, to this remote world, far, far out from the zone where the mythical fortress is said to orbit. We know one mysterious thing about this empty system, and it is not the thing our master the Inquisitor sends us to look at."

Callan Hessk frowned. The savant was voicing uneasy thoughts that had been gnawing at Hessk's mind since they had left Juno.

Vertigon pointed directly at the jumping track of the glowing hololithic display.

"We have one set of coordinates. We do not even know if it is a viable landing zone."

"Terrain-reading auspex seems to think–" Kanaed began.

"Hmm. Use of the word 'seems' there, it bothers me," said Vertigon. He pointed at the screen again.

"You see the whole world, yet you see nothing," he repeated. "We have virtually no data. Thanks to atmospherics, we don't even have a reliable auspex return. Yet we treat this as the front door. Would Tortane expect us to be so literal, or would he expect us

to think clearly and intelligently and perform this undertaking the way he would if he was here personally?"

"He's right," said Dayglass. They all looked at her. The voidborn was hunched in one of the seats recessed beneath the port-side underwing. Her long legs were drawn up, knees to chin. "Annoying, but right."

There was a long pause, broken only by the rattle and bump of the long descent and the click of the pilot-servitor.

"Let's consider our options, then," said Callan Hessk.

"Vertigon was wrong about one thing," said Alia Kanaed. "I've met Tortane."

"Yes, but afterwards he mind-wiped you," said Hessk, "so you can't tell us a blessed thing about him."

"Whatever," Kanaed replied, savouring what she clearly felt was a tiny triumph. "I've still met him."

The landing was rough. Hessk decided to alter the drop route and set down on a headland three klicks from the coordinates, a headland that the auspex was able to resolve as clear and solid.

As if aggrieved by this wanton diversion, the atmosphere trembled and turned into a violent storm. Ribbons of lightning eight or nine kilometres long ripped through the thickening sky. Wind speeds topped nine hundred per hour. The clouds were like ink in water and the rain was like an iron wall.

A thirty minute descent turned into a ninety minute hell-ride. They lost through-put telemetry within fifteen minutes, and secondary power in twenty. A lightning strike sheared their hull armour and torched their number three engine.

Even Hessk thought they were dead at that point.

But they lived, though the ride that followed was brutal. It was like being shaken in a tin box. Strapped into their arrestor seats, they held on. Dayglass put her head between her hands and sobbed. She had never coped well with anything except the cold serenity of space. Vertigon, usually strong of constitution, vomited discreetly into a poly-bag. Even the vehement Kanaed looked green.

Callan Hessk, cold-hearted killer of monsters, buckled up tight and prepped his twin Tronsvasse autopistols.

The pilot-servitor brought them in. It was blind by the end. Telemetry lost, it had focused on an exact memory of the chosen landing site. The stress fried its primary and sub brains. It was dead by the time they breathed out and reached to unclasp their arrestor straps.

The dropship's systems sighed, fluttered, and went blank as the servitor's vital spark ebbed away.

Tpsilon had a life-sustaining atmosphere, or at least one that wouldn't kill them anytime soon. They stepped out of the smouldering dropship into a gigantic darkness.

They were on a high slope forested by tree-like fungal growths that were as black as the surrounding night. Below them, across the broad, rift valley, dark with swaying vegetation, the storm rolled and flashed. The thunder was like concussion in the air, and the rain rinsed their faces. The world smelled odd. It was wet, peaty, sappy. There was the scent of ozone.

There was something else, too.

Hessk pulled a hooded jacket around his shoulders. He had a handheld auspex and a hefty stablight.

"This way," he said, reading off the auspex display. The little screen underlit his face.

The four of them headed down the slope, moving through the rain-swept thickets of fungus trees as they came down the headland. The ground was wet mulch underfoot. Rain beat at them. Their four, jerking stablights were the only light sources apart from the phantom strobe of the lightning. Around them, the curious fungal trees creaked and groaned as they strained in the night wind.

The trees were huge. The darkness was infinite. The four of them, and their four small light beams, were tiny.

Callan Hessk led the way. Impressively tall in his boots, he was a stone cold killer with a mind like a high-grade cogitator. He wore a long leather coat under his hooded weather-jacket, and heavy deck boots. He had a face like a monolithic statue, and violet eyes. His grey hair had been crop cut with a buzzer. Inquisitor Tortane had recognised Hessk's talents as a leader and an unscrupulous killer years before, and saved him from a life in Juno's slum-habs, the short, infamous life of a desperado.

In return, he had served Tortane, and served him well, performing as his agent in the field. But they had never met. Tortane had never allowed that to be a possibility.

As a consequence, Callan thought it was possible he might not like Faros Tortane.

Behind Hessk came the savant, Zarn Vertigon. Vertigon was unusual for a savant. He was reasonably young and very robust. Ex-Guard, he knew how to fight, and knew how to handle the ancient long las he kept slung in its slipcase over his shoulder. Hessk had seen him fight. Zarn did it well.

A savant who wasn't an old fart and could handle himself in combat. Hessk counted that as a plus.

Zarn's story was odd, and only half-told. He'd been with a Havarth regimental unit on one of the interminable Askellian campaigns. The way Zarn told it, they'd been ordered to assault a hill, but the hill wasn't a hill, it was some kind of structure: A mechanism, an artefact, alien and as old as hell. Zarn's unit was slaughtered on the way up. Zarn was hit, blinded, half his face burned off.

When he woke up, in a medicae station eighteen kilometres from the frontline, he discovered that, in the depths of his pain and injury, the hill had given him something. It had imparted a little of its ancient sentience to him. He understood things, things he had never understood before. He knew things...a lot of things.

Zarn Vertigon had instincts that left most men blinking. The worst part was, his ability scared everyone, including Zarn himself.

Dayglass, the voidborn psyker, followed Zarn, her long dress bedraggled by the rain. Tall and painfully slender, she carried no weapons, and her exquisitely large black mirror-eyes reflected the storm. Her long black hair hung limp.

Alia Kanaed brought up the rear, cradling her hell-rifle. She was muscular, tall and full-figured, her form strapped into a red leather bodyglove. Her face was a sculpture of cheekbones and jawline, forming piercing, pale blue eyes. Her hair was short and white. The djin blade slung between her shoulder blades in a bound scabbard whispered to itself.

"This is going to end in tears," Alia muttered.

She didn't specify whose.

By the time they reached the floor of the rift valley, the rain had stopped. Night blackness continued to enfold them. Spent rain pattered out of the cupped leaves and fungal folds of the forest canopy far above them. Their lights bobbed.

The darkness had lengthened. There was a cold ozone smell, a sense of gloomy, damp space, a sense of the unseen.

Vertigon uncased his long las, loaded a cell, and moved ahead, the rifle braced over the crook of his left arm.

Dayglass's mirror eyes searched the surrounding blackness.

Alia ignored the irritated tingle of her sheathed sword.

"There's something here," Dayglass said eventually, her voice as small as a dust mote.

"Good, good," replied Hessk. "Not a wasted journey, then."

"Don't be flippant," Dayglass replied.

"He wasn't being flippant," said Vertigon. "Tortane sent us here. It's good that there's something here to warrant our coming."

"You don't understand," Dayglass sighed. The voidborn hesitated. "My mistake," she said. "I mis-spoke. I didn't give you context. There's something here. I can feel it. Read it. It's not something or someone we've been sent here to meet. It's...a state. It's the way of this place. The something that's been here, has been here for a very long time."

"How long?" asked Alia Kanaed.

"How long is forever?" replied Dayglass.

"Can you be more specific?" asked Vertigon.

"And less, you know, alarming?" added Hessk.

Loose raindrops fell from an invisible leaf cup high above and spattered the marsh soil nearby. Dayglass turned to face the darkness, and raised her arms from her sides as if invoking some kind of blessing.

"By the throne," she said, "it's old...so, so old. It comes from a time and place where good and evil weren't defined. It is...it just is what it is."

"And what exactly is it?" Hessk asked.

"Itself," she replied. "And it's all around us." She paused. "And it's watching us."

They paused to swig some fluids from their water-bottles and pick at dried rations. There was no sign of dawn, not even a promise of sunrise.

Callan Hessk moved away from the others, circling the clearing where they had stopped. He appreciated the voidborn's abilities, and a warning was always useful, but she could be so imprecise. She'd succeeded in putting a knot of worry in his head, making him suspicious of everything. He would be jumping at shadows from now on, and Epsilon certainly had more than its share of shadows.

Something moved in the trees to his left.

What? A flash of red. A glimpse.

He turned to follow it, but saw nothing. Looking back at the others, he saw that Dayglass was sitting up, alert, staring at the same spot.

Hessk drew one of his pistols and began to move forward, stablight raised in his other hand. The others got up as well and followed him.

No words were exchanged. The expressions and intent of Hessk and Dayglass told Kanaed and Vertigon all they needed to know for the time being.

Hessk pressed forward, moving between the tall, black trees, almost wading through wet undergrowth and foliage that came up to his waist. The unseen ground was a sucking marsh under his boots. The deep blackness between the grey-black boles of the trees seemed darker than the Great Void.

Movement.

He swung left, pistol and stablight aimed together.

Nothing. Or had there been the merest flash of something red in the dark?

Hessk realised he was breathing hard. He blundered on again.

Movement again, this time to his right. A definite flash of red. Something soft red had flickered between the trees not twenty metres from his position.

It had been the colour of good wine, or blood.

Hessk cut right, prowling sideways between the trees, gun aimed steadily, stablight beam sweeping. The light caught grey leaves and made bright white dots out of water droplets falling from the forest canopy.

He came around the base of a massive tree. Nothing. If something or someone had been there, it was gone. He played his light across the muddy ground to see if he could see tracks, but the mire gave nothing away.

He started to press forward again, but then felt something clutch at the hind-part of his brain. It was a gentle tug, but unpleasant, as though cold, slippery fingers had slipped inside his skull to paw at his brain matter.

He stopped and looked back. He hadn't realised how far he'd moved away from the others. Dayglass's gentle telekinetic pulse had been a wordless reminder not to stray far.

She could remind all she liked. They were moving too slowly, and he was on to something.

He began to move down a bank between the semi-exposed root balls of enormous trees. It stank of wet and mildew. A vapour-like steam had begun to rise from the undergrowth after the rain. It fumed like white dust in the darkness where his stablight beam caught it.

Cold slippery fingers yanked at his brain again. He grimaced.

"Get out of my skull," he whispered under his breath, "and catch the hell up."

He froze.

Something red shimmered in front of him for a moment. It was right in front of him, just half a dozen steps away, a slim figure in a long red robe. Its face was a mask. It had to be.

It hesitated for a second, less than a second, staring right at him, and then turned and vanished into the mist.

He started to run.

He heard Alia call his name from the forest behind. No pretence now. Something was here, and it knew they were here too.

Moving fast, he broke through more undergrowth and came out into another clearing. Immediately, he realised that the ground underfoot was different. It was no longer spongy and soft. It was hard, and flat.

He looked down. Stones. A stone platform made of perfectly cut slabs. The softening of the edges and the patches of lichen suggested great age.

Yes, great age indeed. He looked around. The platform he was standing on was just the apron of a ruined stone structure that stood between the trees. It was swathed in ferns, strings of creepers, and a profusion of climbing vines. In places, the huge trees had split through the stonework, or had been forced to grow in twisted, convulsing shapes to snake around the heavy lintels and uprights.

How long had this stood here?

"Pre-Imperial," said Vertigon. He stepped onto the platform beside Hessk, long las cradled, looking up at the crumbling architecture. He hadn't read Hessk's mind. He just knew what the first question was likely to be.

"Are you sure?"

"Yes, just from a rough estimation of average growth rate and erosion," the savant replied. Alia and Dayglass came out onto the platform behind him.

"Actually," Vertigon began, and then stopped. He walked forward and began to tear creepers and other tenacious succulents from the facing wall of the temple. Hessk realised that Vertigon was exposing some kind of figuring, carving...words.

"Pre-human," he said.

"Pre-human?" asked Alia.

"The symbols here, and the intercut construction, resemble structures and ruins found on six other worlds in the Askellon Sector, all of which pre-date human arrival by a considerable factor. This is by far the most complete and sizeable site ever found."

"What does it say?" Hessk asked.

"I don't know. The script has never been deciphered, though again there seems to be much more of it here than has been found at any other site. It runs all along the wall...thousands of characters and pictograms. I think there may be more under that great hedge of creepers there."

"There's more inside," Alia called, shining her stablight into one of the ruin's dark openings.

"With appreciably more material to work from, I might be able to start to establish a translation matrix," Vertigon said, "just from the size and variation of the sample."

"You have records of the designs found at other sites?" asked Hessk.

"No," said Vertigon, "but I remember them well enough."

"Of course you do."

"What will you use as a key?" asked Dayglass.

"Other, albeit dubious, sources have noted that some of the sigils resemble characters from early forms of the Eldar written alphabet. I'll work with that."

He leaned his rifle against the wall and, stablight raised beside his head, began to work.

"You ran off," Alia Kanaed said to Hessk.

"I saw something."

"This place?"

"Eventually. Before that, I saw a figure."

"There's someone else here?" asked Alia.

"Yes."

"What did he look like?" asked Dayglass.

"Can't you see?" Hessk asked her. She looked directly at him, and he felt her scan his surface memories. It felt like a shaft of warm sunlight had briefly crossed his face.

"Slender," said Dayglass. "A red robe. Why is the face a skull?"

"A skull?" asked Alia.

"It was a mask," replied Hessk.

"I don't think it was," said Dayglass.

"Reassuring," said Alia. She looked at Vertigon and the shadowy bulk of the ruin.

"Is this what Tortane sent us to find?" she asked. "Is this why we're here?"

Hessk checked his auspex. The displayed coordinates were a precise match.

"This is the place," he said.

"Look at this," said Vertigon from behind them. "This is quite interesting."

Hessk was about to ask what, but he never got the chance.

A cold, wet slap of psyche from Dayglass shivered his mind and sent him a last-second warning, just enough of a warning for him to back-step.

Something was leaping at him from the roof of the ruin, something humanoid that launched itself off the stone blocks in a shower of water droplets and strands of leaf. It was about twice his size, but it seemed even more gigantic as it dropped towards him, arms outstretched, legs crooked.

It was a half-naked thing, covered in tattered, rudimentary clothing and matted hair. Its belly was distended. Its limbs were muscular but emaciated. Its flesh was dark, as though it had been scorched with a blowtorch. Its fingers were capped with ragged, horny talons.

Its head was like a man's, heavy-browed and whiskered. Like a man's, except for the mouth and jaw. They were extended and huge, like those of a giant simian, lips stretched back to expose huge canines and incisors.

It howled. It screamed like the Warp.

Dayglass's warning had been sufficient to jerk Hessk back a pace or two, just enough for the pouncing creature to miss a full body-slam. It jarred against him, a passing blow, its talons ripping through his weather jacket, causing the down lining to puff into the air like a tiny blizzard. He felt something bite into the flesh of his hip and he exhaled in pain, staggering backwards from the impact.

The creature landed on the platform, and then rolled, still screaming. It was a scream that pierced the soul as much as the ears. It was the scream of the insane, of the inhuman.

Rising, in a manner that seemed terribly swift for a thing its size, it lunged at Hessk.

Alia Kanaed was in its way.

Grim-faced, she delivered a fluid spin-kick to its face that rocked its misshapen head backwards. As it reeled, she rotated and delivered another.

This one broke a tooth, a lower canine, and sent blood and spittle flying sideways in a long, viscous spurt from its mouth.

The creature howled and swung at her with a long, taloned arm to disembowel her.

There was a crack and a wet explosion. The creature's head detonated like a ripe fruit, and it fell back off the platform, dead. Las heat smoked the platform space. Vertigon lowered his long-rifle.

He began to smile.

+ More! +

Dayglass's mind-snap lanced into their brains.

There were more of the things, a whole lot more.



They came screaming out of the night, leaping off the ruin's roof, or clambering up along the edges of the platform, or dropping out of the vast trees.

Hessk opened fire. He put three rounds from his Tronsvasse through the chest of the nearest creature, and then two more through the skull of the next. There was so little light. Everything was directional. Their stablights were only illuminating jerking bars in the darkness, and the gunfire was briefly lighting up other splashes, like strobe lights.

It was hard to see, hard to pick a target.

Just eyes, eyes glinting in the blackness. Eyes and screams.

Dayglass had taken time to focus. Dark things rushed her. She reached out with her mind and squeezed, bursting a temporal lobe with a telekine vice.

"Show us! Dayglass, show us!" she heard Hessk yell.

Of course. Tactically it was much more useful.

Concentrating, oblivious to her own safety, she expanded the conscious cone of her mind. It was a risk. Any use of psychic abilities was a risk. Even if your mind was attuned to the Warp, it did not pay to go meddling there. Dayglass felt cramps in her abdomen. Frost settled on the ground around her. Things that were not her made whispers leak out of her mouth.

But she persisted. She focused. She expanded her perception. For her, and for her three comrades, the ruin and the platform were now lit up as if by night vision. Their immediate locale was washed in a pallid, luminous green glow. The screaming creatures were visible.

Hessk tossed his stablight aside. Though physically blind, he could see now. He pulled his other Tronsvasse pistol and, braced with both, began to pick off the creatures mobbing over the edge of the platform.

Dark, fanged things wailed as they fell back into the forest pit behind them. Blood sprayed, hot white in the mind-view.

Zarn Vertigon fired repeatedly, loosing las-rounds at distances far shorter than generally recommended for his sniper weapon.

The stopping power was considerable. In the green hue of Dayglass's mind-view, which to him was distorted slightly on one side by his augmetic optics, he shattered heads and throats, and carved entire torsos into stringy, wet tatters.

But they came as fast as he could reload, and his bag of munition cells was not limitless.

"Too many!" he shouted above the roar of his weapon. "Hessk, too many!"

Hessk didn't reply. He was busy firing and reloading his twin autopistols. The heavy, long-framed guns punched round after large-calibre round into the faces and chests of the feral attackers clambering onto the platform.

Dayglass's mind-view allowed him to sense and almost see things behind him. Alerted, he swung around, raising his aim, and killed several creatures in mid-leap as they came off the ruin's roof. Then he knocked down two more who were poised to leap. When one of his shots grazed the roofline and showered up grit and dirt rather than killing a target, he cursed aloud over wasted ammunition.

He heard Vertigon yelling. Yes, there were too many. They had ammo. Hessk prayed to the God-Emperor that they had enough. How many of these things could there be?

Maybe...

Maybe a planet full?

Dayglass concentrated. She knew that she could easily reach out and pinch off a spinal cord here, or shut a major blood vessel there, but she didn't dare waste her power. Her teammates needed the mind view so they could conquer Episilon's darkness and keep fighting. That was all that mattered. Sustaining the mind-view took all her concentration.

The creatures made another mass rush, but Alia Kanaed had drawn her djin blade. It was hungry. It moaned in her hands. Kanaed went into the thick of the charge and struck blows two-handed, right and left, hacking and slashing, sending hunks of meat and body parts flying.

Her blade sizzled as it sliced flesh.

She ducked a ripping blow, and severed the limb that had tried to deliver it from beneath. A creature reeled away, wailing, squirting blood from its stump. Another came at her. She sliced its face in two. Two more, from the left: a decapitation and an impalement. She had to heel-slam the latter to get it off her sword.

The blade sung to her. It liked the blood. It liked the air. It liked to be loosed and free. It sang its love song to her, the love song that had ruined her, the love song she tried so hard not to obey, the love song that only she could hear. To everyone else, it was a fine blade of xenos manufacture. To her, it was....it was something that had singled her out, singled her out from billions of other human souls. She wondered why. She wondered what made her so blessed, or cursed. The sword had almost entirely claimed her sanity. She tried to shut it out, but every time she was forced to use it, it stole a little more.

How much longer have I got left, she wondered. *How much longer before the sword is me and I am the sword?*

Deny the thought! Deny the fear! Alia Kanaed put her head down and struck on. She no longer knew where her fingers ended and the sword began.

But she was sure that however long it was going to take for the djin blade to claim her, the creatures she was facing had infinitely shorter lives.

Alia pivoted. She braced her feet and sliced the sword around, shearing the tops off two heads. She ducked a handful of claws, and then sidestepped a charging creature that she reverse-stabbed through the heart the moment it had gone past her.

She came up, ready, rotating the blade, letting blood-drops fly away from it.

Where? Where next?

"Alia?"

"Hessk?"

"It's all right. We're clear."

Alia blinked. There were no more creatures attacking them. The stone platform was littered with corpses and body parts. Blood pooled on the stones, and she could hear it streaming into the darkness below like a rainwater.

How many had she killed? How much of a frenzy had the sword put her into? Had Hessk seen?

God-Emperor no, please...

"We're clear," Hessk repeated. He picked up his fallen stablight and scanned her with it.

"You did well, Alia. Good kills."

"Thanks."

She sighed and sagged.

"Where have they gone?" asked Vertigon. "There were more of them...a lot more. They retreated."

"Why would they retreat?" asked Hessk.

"Because we slaughtered them?" Alia suggested. The air above the platform was wet with blood mist and stank of gunsmoke. The battle had been intense.

"No," said Dayglass. "Something else. Something called them off. It–"

She grunted, and then fell, full-length, to the ground. Vertigon rushed to her side.

"Dayglass? Dayglass?"

The voidborn murmured low and kicked spasmodically in his arms.

They looked up. The glow of the mind-view had vanished, but they still had the glow of the stablights.

A movement. A flash of red.

A figure in a long red robe stepped onto the platform before them. They raised their weapons.

It lowered its hood.

Its head was a skull, a brass-fitted, fully-functional human skull, beautifully machined...

"I thought you'd never get here," it said, voxing from an implant in its chest.

"Who are you?" asked Hessk.

"This is where you need to be," continued the metal skull. "Because of the sentient temple and the mutants, because of the agents of the Ruinous Powers even now closing in, and because of me."

"Who are you?" Hessk repeated.

"I'm the reason you're here," the skull said.

Alia Kanaed glanced at Hessk.

"I remember," she said.

"Remember what, Alia?"

"That. That's...Inquisitor Tortane."

Tortane turned his burnished death's head to look at Hessk with empty sockets.

"We meet at last, Callan," he said. "Now, shall we get on with it? I seldom enter the field in person. That's why I have Acolytes. My presence here should therefore assure you of the significance of this."

"And how significant might that be, exactly?" asked Hessk.

Tortane hesitated.

"The fate of the Imperium itself may be in our hands tonight," he said.



What is Dark Heresy Second Edition?

This new edition updates the original Dark Heresy roleplay game while retaining the core mechanics—such as skills, talents, weapons, and combat—familiar to veteran players. Revised from over six years of player feedback, it also includes new rules for investigation, social interaction, vehicle combat, and more including a new setting to offer an even better game experience. As it shares many of the rules from the previous edition, earlier supplements and adventures can be adapted for use with minor effort.

Innocence Proves Nothing

"In an hour of Darkness, a blind man is the best guide.
In an age of Insanity, look to the madman to show the way."

–Anon

In the nightmare future of *Warhammer 40,000*, horrific danger, deadly mystery, and brutal violence are Mankind's only truths. In this roleplaying game, players act as defenders of humanity and embark on hazardous adventures into the dark heart of the 41st Millennium. They each take on the role of an Acolyte in service to an Inquisitor, at the front line of a great and secret war to root out the foes that imperil all of humanity. Inquisitors—ruthless agents dedicated to preserving Mankind at any cost—are relentless in the pursuit of these threats, and answer to no one save the lord of the galaxy-spanning Imperium of Man, the Emperor Himself. Yet Inquisitors are but men, and though their purview is limitless, they are far from omnipotent. As such, they employ Acolytes to project their power throughout the Imperium. To be an Acolyte is to possess more power than most men can conceive of. This power must be wielded wisely, though, for misusing it can be as dangerous as not using it at all. Should they fail, entire worlds, systems, or even the Imperium itself may fall to endless night.

These desperate times call for desperate measures, and these are the darkest times that humanity has ever known. The Imperium is beset by enemies, both from within and without. It is the Acolytes' duty to shepherd Mankind from the manifold paths of damnation, with a smoking boltgun or world-burning virus bombs if necessary. Acolytes cannot shirk from their noble calling, harsh as it might be, for the only thing worse than their actions is what might occur if they fail to act.

Their investigations take them into deadly combat against twisted mutants, powerful psykers, and other abominations. Acolytes must face the horrors of Daemons and ancient aliens dedicated to the eradication of Mankind as a species, and battle for survival amidst webs of conspiracy and betrayal. Perhaps the greatest threat they face, however, is their fellow man, for the human soul is such fertile ground for corruption. Foul cults and insane heresies permeate all areas of the Imperium, and no one is beyond suspicion.

Through their actions, players and the Acolytes they bring to life create epic tales where it is always a minute from eternal midnight, and only their combined efforts can defeat their foes and stave off the end for one more day.

They can never rest, for the multitudes of terrors desiring humanity's extinction are ever-present. There are always heresies to be uncovered, aliens to be vanquished, and Daemons to be banished. To be an Acolyte is to know these terrors exist, and possess the strength and will to combat them, no matter the sacrifice. Take up bolter and chainsword, and enter the world of Dark Heresy.



Blessed is the Martyr.

What is a Roleplaying Game?

A roleplaying game is a storytelling experience in which the players build a narrative by taking on different roles in an ongoing adventure. Throughout the course of the game, the players embark on harrowing journeys, thrilling investigations, and intense battles. The roleplaying game presents a set of rules that helps guide this narrative as it unfolds. In addition to the rules, every roleplaying game has three key elements: a number of players (usually four to five players works best), a Game Master, and an adventure.

Player Characters

Each player in the game creates a character—one of the protagonists of the ongoing story. These characters are known as Player Characters (also referred to as PCs), and in Dark Heresy they take on the role of Acolytes who form a warband in service to an Inquisitor. During the game, each player chooses the intentions and actions of his character, making these decisions based on his character's personality and motivations. Then the Game Master, using the rules of the game, decides the outcome of the characters' actions, and narrates their effect on the story.

The Game Master

One person in the group does not create a Player Character and instead takes on the role of the Game Master (also referred to as the GM). The GM presents the story to the other players, adjudicating the rules of the game and unfolding the narrative created by the players' actions. He is in charge of creating adventures (or selecting pre-made adventures), narrating the story as the game is played, controlling all of the other characters and adversaries in the game (usually including the Inquisitor who guides the warband), and fairly applying the rules of the game to the players' actions.

Adventures

Adventures present the setting, story, and challenges that the players face as they participate in the game. In essence, an adventure is a series of locations, characters, and events that the Acolytes encounter as they make decisions and progress the story. The Game Master is in charge of not only presenting the adventure to the players in a fun and engaging way, but also making sure the adventure is prepared before the group sits down at the gaming table. There are three different ways GMs can prepare these adventures:

- **Pre-made Adventures:** This book includes the introductory adventure **Dark Pursuits**, and other professionally written Dark Heresy adventures can be purchased at any gaming store. There are also free adventures that can be downloaded at www.fantasyflightgames.com.
- **Adventure Seeds:** The Dark Heresy Core Rulebook and its supplements include settings, characters, and adversaries that can be the start of new adventure. Many of these also offer GM advice for building off them, creating surrounding narratives, or integrating them into existing campaigns.
- **Homemade:** Instead of using an established narrative, many GMs wish to tell their own stories, or let their players decide the game's course. Dark Heresy presents all of the elements required for a GM to create his own adventure from scratch.

What is Needed to Play?

The following things are needed to play Dark Heresy:

- This rulebook
- Three or more people (four to five works best)
- Three or four hours of gaming time
- Some ten-sided dice (two or more per player)
- Paper, pencils, and an eraser

Pre-made character sheets and other support items are not essential but can aid gameplay. These can be photocopied from the back of this book or downloaded from the Fantasy Flight Games website (www.fantasyflightgames.com).

Getting Started

Whether acting as a Player Character or Game Master in Dark Heresy, all players should begin their journey into the 41st Millennium with **Chapter I: Playing the Game**. Those acting as PCs should then read **Chapter II: Character Creation** to fashion their Acolytes for the game. The player who is serving as the GM should skip to **Chapter XI: The Game Master** for advice on running encounters, creating adventures, and other aspects of his position within the game.

What's in this Book

Dark Heresy is divided into thirteen chapters:

Chapter I: Playing the Game

This chapter provides the basic rules and core mechanics, the characteristics that define each character in the game, and how to perform game tests to determine character success or failure.

Chapter II: Character Creation

Here players learn how to form their characters, choosing home worlds, backgrounds, and roles to bring their Acolytes to life. It also offers Elite Advances for special character progressions.

Chapter III: Skills

Skills represent a character's ability to perform feats that require expertise and training. These may be present as part of character creation, or learned in later adventures.

Chapter IV: Talents and Traits

This chapter covers common talents available to characters. Talents are special proficiencies, many of which augment skills. Unlike skills, a talent is always active and does not require a test to use. The chapter also covers traits, representing special innate abilities found in many of the unusual denizens of Askellon or the Warp.

Chapter V: Armoury

An Acolyte would be lost without an arsenal of weapons, armour, vehicles, and other equipment to help smite his foes. This chapter includes rules for such items, as well as how to acquire them.

Chapter VI: Psychic Powers

Cursed or blessed, some beings can call on the Warp to blast their enemies with eldritch lightning or divine the future. This chapter includes rules and descriptions for the powers, as well as the hazards a psyker faces when using them.

Chapter VII: Combat

Conflict pervades life in the 41st Millennium, and this chapter covers the rules for fighting and vehicular combat in Dark Heresy, as well as the full rules for movement.

Chapter VIII: Narrative Tools

Acolytes do not spend all their time fighting, and much of an adventure is spent investigating heresies, travelling to new locales, exploring for clues, interrogating suspects, and performing other non-combat tasks. This chapter presents these topics along with rules for Fear, Insanity, and Corruption, plus guidance on using Fate points and Reinforcement Characters.

Chapter IX: The Imperium and the Inquisition

Here the players learn of the galaxy-spanning Imperium of Man, encompassing over a million worlds and countless billions of subjects. This chapter also covers the dreaded Inquisition that the Acolytes serve.

Chapter X: The Askellon Sector

Dark Heresy takes place in the Askellon Sector, an ancient but decaying region of space threatened with terrible Warp storms that many claim are a sign of the end times. The chapter details several of the worlds and settings players can find here.

Chapter XI: The Game Master

The Game Master guides the other players through adventures, pitting the Acolytes against fearsome foes and their diabolical plots. This chapter offers guidance on running encounters, overseeing combats, setting and adjusting subtlety, crafting campaigns, and operating as a Non-Player Character (NPC) Inquisitor. This chapter and the two that follow are for Game Master's eyes only, as they reveal many secrets the Acolytes are not aware of and can spoil adventures.

Chapter XII: NPCs and Adversaries

In this chapter, Game Masters can find a plethora of NPCs to use to aid or bedevil the Acolytes, from lowly hive scum to powerful Daemons and xenos creatures. The chapter also includes guidelines for crafting combat encounters and suitably matching them to the Player Characters to generate challenging and rewarding games.

Chapter XIII: Dark Pursuits

This book includes an introductory adventure, **Dark Pursuits**, wherein the Acolytes must track down illicit shipments of deadly relics before disaster falls upon Hive Desoleum. Like the previous two chapters, this section should be for Game Masters only.

The Age of the Imperium

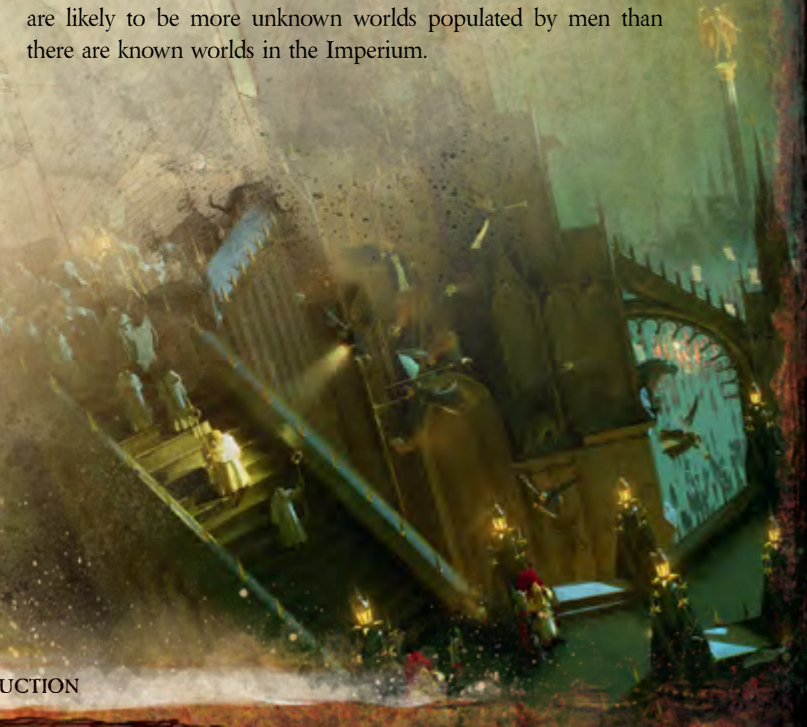
"The Imperium! How mighty its aspect! How far-reaching its boundaries! As one world dies, ten more are brought into the fold. Fear us, for we count the lives of planets, not men!"

–Cardinal Morius Blate, Ecclesiarch Primus

It is the 41st Millennium. The Imperium of Man is hailed as the greatest stellar empire humanity has ever raised up, its extent taking in the length and breadth of the entire galaxy. The worlds upon which Mankind resides vary from factory-hives populated by uncounted billions to feudal cultures ruled by savage, warlike kings. There are no limits to which man does not go to realise his manifest destiny to rule the stars, and he makes his home wherever he may, whether in the clouds, beneath the sea, or in the depths of space itself.

Though humanity long ago learned to travel between the stars, the technological marvels upon which its dominion of the galaxy is founded are long gone. Learning is a thing of the dim and distant past, cast down by generation after generation of war and calamity. No man now knows how many times humanity has soared to the lofty heights of achievement only to plummet once more to the depths of barbarity. The science that caused both advancement and debasement is now the subject of superstition and fear. Only fragments of it are remembered, and then only by rote, passed from one generation of Tech-Priest to the next, each iteration ever more distorted than the last. While most men know how to operate a weapon, they have no inkling of the processes that power it. Only through prayer are the machines Mankind relies upon maintained, and the machine spirits are easily displeased.

The Emperor, or rather the High Lords of Terra who rule in His name, claims the entirety of the galaxy as sovereign domain. The Imperium occupies millions of planets, but in reality Mankind is cast across the vast depths of space and is to be found on more worlds than can be imagined. What long-forgotten tides of war washed human colony vessels up on planets from one end of the galaxy to the other can scarcely be imagined, but some claim there are likely to be more unknown worlds populated by men than there are known worlds in the Imperium.

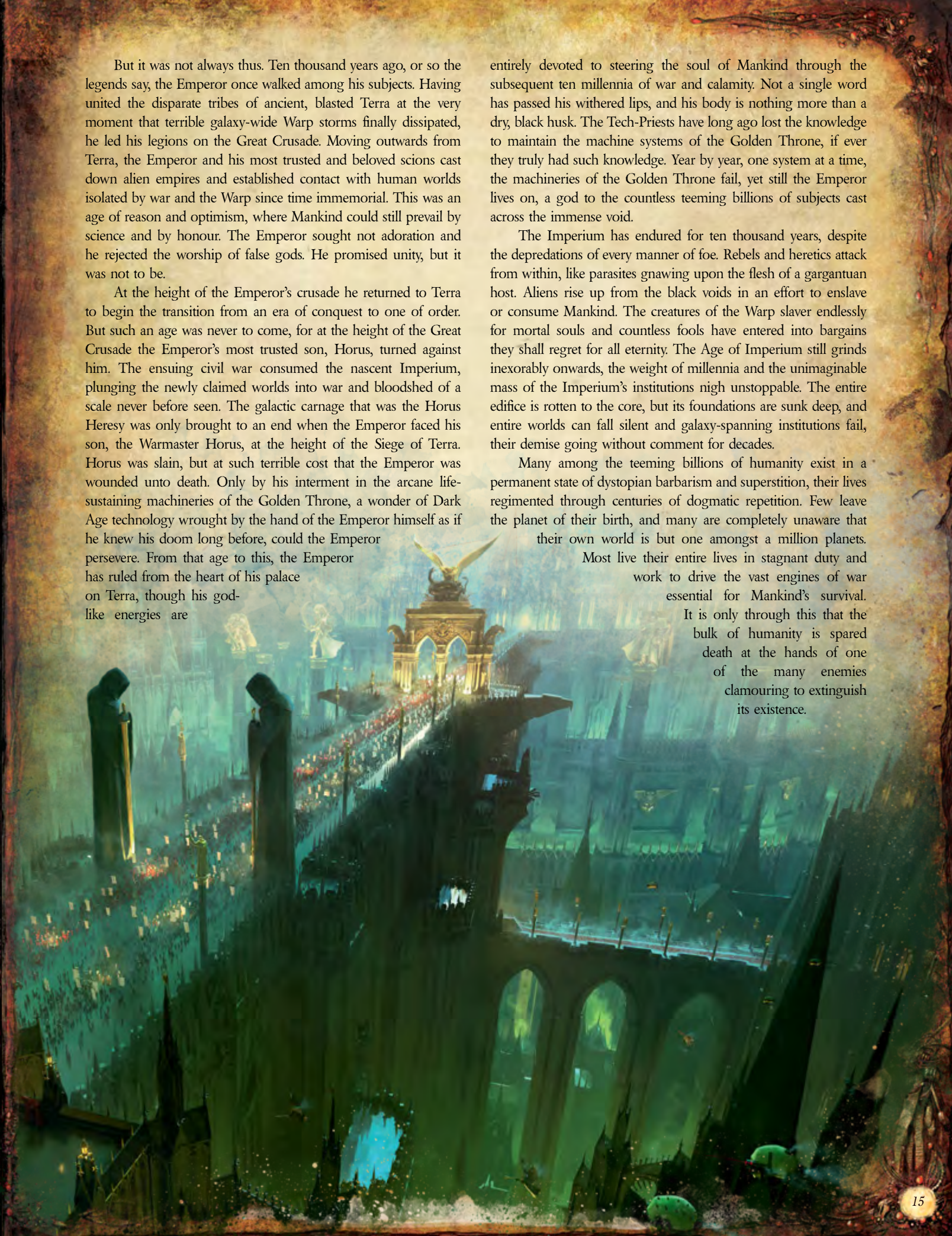


But it was not always thus. Ten thousand years ago, or so the legends say, the Emperor once walked among his subjects. Having united the disparate tribes of ancient, blasted Terra at the very moment that terrible galaxy-wide Warp storms finally dissipated, he led his legions on the Great Crusade. Moving outwards from Terra, the Emperor and his most trusted and beloved scions cast down alien empires and established contact with human worlds isolated by war and the Warp since time immemorial. This was an age of reason and optimism, where Mankind could still prevail by science and by honour. The Emperor sought not adoration and he rejected the worship of false gods. He promised unity, but it was not to be.

At the height of the Emperor's crusade he returned to Terra to begin the transition from an era of conquest to one of order. But such an age was never to come, for at the height of the Great Crusade the Emperor's most trusted son, Horus, turned against him. The ensuing civil war consumed the nascent Imperium, plunging the newly claimed worlds into war and bloodshed of a scale never before seen. The galactic carnage that was the Horus Heresy was only brought to an end when the Emperor faced his son, the Warmaster Horus, at the height of the Siege of Terra. Horus was slain, but at such terrible cost that the Emperor was wounded unto death. Only by his interment in the arcane life-sustaining machineries of the Golden Throne, a wonder of Dark Age technology wrought by the hand of the Emperor himself as if he knew his doom long before, could the Emperor persevere. From that age to this, the Emperor has ruled from the heart of his palace on Terra, though his god-like energies are entirely devoted to steering the soul of Mankind through the subsequent ten millennia of war and calamity. Not a single word has passed his withered lips, and his body is nothing more than a dry, black husk. The Tech-Priests have long ago lost the knowledge to maintain the machine systems of the Golden Throne, if ever they truly had such knowledge. Year by year, one system at a time, the machineries of the Golden Throne fail, yet still the Emperor lives on, a god to the countless teeming billions of subjects cast across the immense void.

The Imperium has endured for ten thousand years, despite the depredations of every manner of foe. Rebels and heretics attack from within, like parasites gnawing upon the flesh of a gargantuan host. Aliens rise up from the black voids in an effort to enslave or consume Mankind. The creatures of the Warp slaver endlessly for mortal souls and countless fools have entered into bargains they shall regret for all eternity. The Age of Imperium still grinds inexorably onwards, the weight of millennia and the unimaginable mass of the Imperium's institutions nigh unstoppable. The entire edifice is rotten to the core, but its foundations are sunk deep, and entire worlds can fall silent and galaxy-spanning institutions fail, their demise going without comment for decades.

Many among the teeming billions of humanity exist in a permanent state of dystopian barbarism and superstition, their lives regimented through centuries of dogmatic repetition. Few leave the planet of their birth, and many are completely unaware that their own world is but one amongst a million planets. Most live their entire lives in stagnant duty and work to drive the vast engines of war essential for Mankind's survival. It is only through this that the bulk of humanity is spared death at the hands of one of the many enemies clamouring to extinguish its existence.



The Myriad Foes of Mankind

"There can be no bystanders in the battle for survival. Anyone who will not fight by your side is an enemy you must crush."

–Lord Solar Macharius

The enemies of Mankind are countless in number and form, ranging from creatures that dwell in the depths of interstellar space and can swallow entire worlds, to legions of ravening killers intent upon desecrating humanity's every achievement. Some are environmental, such as death worlds where every life form in the entire biosphere is dedicated to slaying any intruder. Others come from within, such as when a trusted leader turns his back upon the Emperor and seeks to name himself master of his own domains. The vast majority of threats to the continued existence of Mankind can be assigned to one of three great enemies—the enemy within, the enemy without, and the enemy beyond.

The Enemy Within

The soul of Mankind is bound to the Emperor not by unconditional reverence, but by the rule of the Imperial Creed. Though it takes as many specific forms as there are planets or even cultures in the Imperium, the one, true faith unites every man, woman, and child, every scribe, worker, and soldier, every noble, planetary governor, and High Lord. Those who would deny their duty—to the Imperium, to the Emperor, or simply to the overseer of their workplace—are deemed "heretic," the enemy within, and cast out from the beneficence of the Emperor.

Heresy takes a myriad of forms, often varying drastically from one culture to another. Expressions of faith made on one world might be condemned as blasphemy on another, and while interplanetary travel is rare, when strangers from such divergent cultures do meet, conflict is not uncommon. When worlds are isolated for prolonged periods, the doctrines of faith are wont to diverge and mutate. Sects rise, and formerly proscribed cults step out from the shadows and preach openly to the masses. Such blasphemy against the Master of Mankind can lead ultimately only to the worship of other, darker entities: Chaos.

Those who turn to Chaos are forever damned, and in their damnation they endanger all of humanity. Some believe themselves to be sowing seeds of purity and truth as they denounce the hated corpse-god of Mankind. Others are warriors who find in the service of the Ruinous Powers the means to unleash undreamed-of destruction on their enemies. Most terrible of all those who fight for the glory of the Ruinous Powers are the Chaos Space Marines. Once ranked amongst the mightiest of the Emperor's champions, these traitors turned against their master and creator ten thousand years ago and continue their Long War even into the current days of the Time of Ending.

The more outwardly visible expression of the taint of heresy is that of mutation and deviation from the divine form of Man. While the Imperium tolerates certain genetic divergence—sub-species such as the brutish Ogryns or diminutive Ratlings, and mild mutations to be endured within the depths of a hive factory or on fringe worlds—these exceptions are rare. Most mutants are hideous creatures tainted in both body and soul, bearing distended limbs or oversized appendages, tentacles, claws, or countless other hideous signs of some unknown sin. Some worlds use the more easily controlled mutants as expendable slave labour, while others exterminate them wholesale in fiery pogroms and wars of faith.

Many mutants display their heresy in bodily form, but the more insidious mutants possess mental aberrations, and are decried as witch, sorcerer, Warp-dabbler, or, more commonly, psyker. Each year, ever more psykers are born or come into their powers, but the vast majority are entirely too weak to control their abilities. If allowed to exist unchecked, they bring down death and destruction on their communities, as some can slay with a mere glance or blast sheets of flames from an outstretched hand. Worse, psykers cannot help but attract the attentions of the denizens of the Warp, for their powers are fuelled by a special connection to that unreal dimension. Unable to fend off such unholy predators, the psyker falls victim to possession, and his mind can become a gateway through which the Daemons of the Warp burst forth into reality. Such daemonic incursions all too often lead to the death of entire worlds and even systems.

The Enemy Without

The second of the trinity of threats to Mankind's dominion over the stars is the alien. While the Imperium stretches from one side of the galaxy to the other, it can never hope to maintain discrete borders. Within this enormous volume of space are innumerable star systems and worlds, the vast majority of which have never been explored. The million or so worlds that fall under the direct rule of Terra must be measured against the hundreds of billions of stars in the galaxy. In between each lies the trackless black void, hiding all manner of blasphemous and horrifying forms of life.

Entire alien empires rise and fall in the depths of space, some never coming into contact with the Imperium of Man. Many xenos species never develop the means to leave the world of their birth and may vanish into extinction, leaving only bones and ruins to mark their passing. When a technologically advanced culture and the Imperium encounter one another, the result is almost always bloodshed on an enormous scale. Such conflicts invariably spell the doom of the xenos, for the one resource the Imperium possesses in limitless reserves is men. Though it cost the lives of billions, once mobilised to war almost nothing can stay the Imperium's hand nor cause it to show mercy, except perhaps the emergence of a more pressing threat. Some races, though, resist their rightful extermination and are persistent dangers to Mankind.

Heavily muscled, brutal, and crude, Orks can be found everywhere across the galaxy, with a barbarous cunning and an innate empathy with the machineries of war. If left unchallenged, even the smallest Ork empire very quickly develops into a major threat as, united under a single leader who has fought his way to the pinnacle of power, countless millions of bellowing green-skinned warriors take to the stars aboard ramshackle warships and space hulks in search of war. These migrations are known as the "Waaagh!" and they fuel the Orks to set entire sectors alight.

Another species of xenos with which Mankind has clashed numerous times represents a far more insidious threat. The Eldar are the fading remnants of a once-great galactic empire, and one that refuses to die quietly. They are divided into many sub-groups, from those who dwell within world-vessels large enough to house countless millions, to their cruel kin who lurk within extra-dimensional lairs and crave the souls of mortal races. All are pernicious and regard Mankind as crude interlopers picking over the bones of the Eldar's former glory. Equally, all are fleeing the horrible doom of their species at the hands of the hungering Chaos God Slaanesh, a horrific being the Eldar's own folly brought into existence ten thousand years ago. The price of this fall is the soul of each Eldar, its ultimate fate to be consumed for eternity by "She Who Thirsts."

Endless other xenos assail the Imperium. Some afflict specific regions; others can appear almost anywhere in the galaxy. The ravenous Tyranids are an ever-increasing danger as they invade from the dark space beyond the galaxy's eastern edge. While successive waves of invasion have thus far been held at bay, albeit at terrible cost, these Hive Fleets now attack from other vectors, closing in around the galaxy as a gargantuan slavering mouth closes upon its prey. Then there are the Tau; not a numerous species, but a technologically advanced one determined to spread its doctrines across the stars. The Necrons present a different type of threat entirely, a race of metallic warriors who have slumbered in stasis-tombs seeded across the galaxy millions of years ago and who are only just awakening to reclaim their lost heritage.

The Enemy Beyond

The third, and undoubtedly the worst of the three great threats to the soul of Mankind, is that which seethes and gibbers but a thought away in the unreal dimension of the Warp. Without the Warp, the Imperium would cease to meaningfully exist. It is only by voyaging through the Sea of Souls, where the rational laws of time and space have no meaning, that it is possible to maintain a galaxy-spanning empire at all. Equally, Mankind relies upon those gifted with psychic powers for interstellar communication. Control over the worlds of the Imperium would be impossible without the Warp.

But as much as the Warp is the basis of Mankind's dominion over the galaxy, it is also the crucible of its doom. The Warp can be likened to a raging sea made from the raw stuff of the soul. All mortals blessed with a soul have a connection to the Warp, but souls most are insignificant and offer poor sustenance to the predators that lurk within its depths. It is via the soul that the beings within the Warp interact with the physical universe, poisoning the hearts and minds of men with the unutterable madness that is their being. The connection flows both ways; for mortal passions feed the Warp, and from these concentrated storms of emotion came sentient creatures of horrid design. These are the Chaos Gods, manifestations of the worst excesses of living creatures. They are the secret that humanity must never know, for the knowledge of the Warp's true nature and this soul-consuming threat would drive men to madness.

The Chaos Gods are raw desire, rage, decay, and hubris, and from terrible kingdoms within the Warp reach out to Mankind to entice and destroy. There are four great Chaos Gods: the Blood God Khorne, the God of Decay Nurgle, the Prince of Desire Slaanesh, and the Master of Fate Tzeentch. These Ruinous Powers await the deluded and desirous, granting power in exchange for souls to those who would betray their Emperor. Serving these terrible entities are their legions of Daemons. These creatures of raw Warp energy can emerge from the Immaterium to form corporeal bodies and directly kill, tempt, and enrapture mortals. Each is an impossible shape, baleful to the mind and imparting soul-wrenching fear upon all who see them. Some are summoned through foul ritual, eagerly venturing into reality and often consuming the souls of those who would seek to bind them. Others pierce the breach between real space and the Immaterium through locations weakened from bloody warfare or uncontrolled psychic emanations. Once unleashed, Daemons are an affront to reality and, until banished back to the Warp, are a danger few can comprehend, let alone withstand.

A few are mortals raised up to the status of immortal Daemon Princes, the reward for exceptionally perverse and dedicated service to their profane god. The vast majority who tread the Path to Glory have not the strength to contain the mutating power of the Warp, however, and are transformed into Chaos Spawn: mindless beasts of tentacle and claw, forever a lesson on the fickle nature of the Ruinous Powers.



The Inquisition

"One cannot consider the fate of a single man, nor ten, nor a hundred, nor a thousand. Billions will live or die by our actions here, and we have not the luxury to count the cost."

–Inquisitor Kryptmann

As dire as the numerous threats to Mankind are, the Imperium is far from defenceless. The Emperor's fleets possesses weaponry capable of reducing the surfaces of entire worlds to ash, and the armies of the Imperium are numberless and imbued with unshakable faith in their master. These are bolstered with towering war machines that bestride the battlefields like gods of metal, and black-clad assassins able to infiltrate enemy armies by changing their bodies to mimic those of their foe. These warriors and untold more give their lives every day to stem the relentless tide of insurrection, invasion, and incursion, but there are those who occupy a unique position in the ranks of the servants of the Emperor and are feared above all others.

These are the Inquisitors—or simply the Inquisition. An Inquisitor calls no man master save the Emperor, and the Inquisition owes no fealty to any in the Adeptus Terra or beyond. The Inquisition serves in the name of the Emperor, and its origins are shrouded in the calamitous age of the Horus Heresy and its aftermath. Each Inquisitor is an individual empowered with the means, will, and authority to face any threat that might assail Mankind, whether that threat emanates from within, without, or beyond. It is within the purview of an Inquisitor to order an entire world burned, that the taint of heresy might not infect a surrounding sector, or to take command of a whole army in order to combat an enemy only he knows how to face. They alone know the truths of Mankind's enemies, and have the will to endure and fight these threats no matter the means or cost. Each knows that the only thing worse than the deeds they must commit to protect Mankind, would be the outcome should they not act.

Each Inquisitor is a unique individual, for to be blessed with the will to bear such a burden one must exist apart from the common ranks of Mankind. Some are bombastic ideologues, while others operate in silence and keep to the shadows. Some are warriors of peerless ability, while others are puppet masters who fight their wars by proxy. Some are blessed with the power of the psyker, while others abhor witches and hunt them down wherever they hide.

Inquisitors commonly recruit others to aid them in their duty. Most of these agents are blessed with specialised skills and abilities the Inquisitor himself does not have or cannot bring to bear at a given time and place. All are expendable, though not all realise it, as indeed the Inquisitor is too in his service to the Emperor. Each Inquisitor fights for Mankind in his own manner, with his own approach to deal with what he views as the direst of enemies. There are many concentrations of thought amongst them concerning tactics and threats. These are the Ordos, with the three largest focused on combatting one of the great threats to Mankind: the flames of the Ordo Hereticus burning the enemy within, the fist of the Ordo Xenos crushing the enemy without, and the hammer of the Ordo Malleus banishing the enemy beyond. All Inquisitors associate themselves with an Ordo; in some sectors, they might gather in mighty fortresses to issue proclamations and train successors, while in others the Ordos exist more as loose connections of shared information and assets. How each Inquisitor serves in an Ordo in his sector is as unique as the Inquisitor himself, as is how other Inquisitors might honour or impugn the actions of their fellow members.



The Ordo Hereticus

Known and feared as the Witch Hunters, the Inquisitors of the Ordo Hereticus concern themselves primarily with combatting the enemy within, no matter the form it may take. Some are firebrands who stir up the masses in order to prosecute bloody pogroms against mutant populations. Others are masters of dogma who hunt the enemies of the Emperor not in the habways of hive cities but in the pages of texts, diatribes, and epistles. The Inquisitors of the Ordo Hereticus prosecute the enemies of Mankind within its own ranks, uncovering treachery, mutation, and witchcraft wherever it may be found. They swoop down upon entire divisions of the Adeptus Terra in search of a single scribe hiding his mutation beneath his ink-stained robes. They execute the most senior of generals for failing to eliminate a suspected psyker in his ranks. They burn cardinals of the Ecclesiarchy for allowing suspected heretical cults to flourish beneath them, twisting the Imperial Creed to the worship of the Dark Gods.

There are some amongst the ranks of the Ordo Hereticus who condemn the existence of psykers and seek to cast them into the fires of their own damnation. Other Witch Hunters are blessed with these powers and use them against their foes, believing they honour the deeds of the Emperor himself, the font of all power and the greatest psyker ever to have walked the land. Such diametrically opposed differences of opinion lead to conflict between Inquisitors; entire wars have been fought and millions slain to settle such clashes between rivals within this Ordo.

The most powerful, feared, and effective of Witch Hunters are those who can lay bare the secret, inner heresies of even the most strong-willed of men. Some use the psyker's arts to tear guilt from the hidden recesses of the mind, leaving nothing but blasted pulp behind; others are masters of the countless ways man can incriminate himself. Many Witch Hunters are also infamously schooled in the dark arts of torture and can use them to extract a confession even from the most unwilling subject. Where there is an enemy hiding within, the fires of the Ordo Hereticus are ready to burn and purify.

The Ordo Xenos

The Alien Hunters of the Ordo Xenos and their servants focus their attentions on combatting the numerous threats to Mankind's dominion over the galaxy. They are masters at hunting down inhuman species and detecting them when they seek to infest the Imperium. They study the spread of xenos empires advancing across the stars themselves and marshal the armies of man to oppose such expansion. They breach tombs constructed before humanity even evolved, seeking out and destroying slumbering enemies before they can awaken. They even seek the taint of the xenos at levels other men cannot even perceive, such as the genetic and the psychic, for the alien has countless means of attacking, enslaving, and preying upon Mankind.

The Ordo Xenos is ever vigilant for alien invasion or incursion from any quarter, even from outside the galaxy. Some races even sleep beneath the cities of Man, awaiting some pre-coded signal or portent to rise up and retake the world of their birth. Others lurk in the depths of planets long settled by humanity, only occasionally preying upon the intruders. Some occupy worlds seemingly devoid of recognisable life, while a few exist in other dimensions, feeding and breeding before vanishing with only befouled corpses in their wake. The alien also threatens through its very inhuman existence, twisting men through perverse philosophies or mechanisms.

When combat escalates, the Ordo Xenos often calls on the Deathwatch. This body of genetically enhanced warriors wields the fiercest devotion to duty, strongest faith, most powerful bodies, and fearsome weapons amongst the ranks of Mankind's champions. The Deathwatch is a unique Chapter amongst the Adeptus Astartes, one formed from Space Marines from other Chapters selected for their skill and experience in fighting the xenos. The most senior Inquisitors within the Ordo Xenos work alongside these mighty warriors and occasionally accompany them into battle, the two forces fighting as one to stem the inexorable tide of the alien foes of Mankind.

There is endless variety to the xenos, each one an abomination to humanity and a threat to be eliminated lest Mankind's rightful rule over the galaxy be thwarted. There can be no rest against this threat, no negotiation or peace with inhuman races. Wherever the alien dares exist, the fists of the Ordo Xenos, backed with the righteous strength of humanity, ensure none survive.

The Ordo Malleus

It is the task of the Ordo Malleus to hunt and combat Daemons. They guard against attempts by men to tap into the power of the Warp, and to combat the forces of the Warp when they attempt to break through from the Realm of Chaos. Most men have no idea of the awful truth of the existence of the Warp, never knowing that travel to other stars requires passage through that hellish realm. Preachers in hive parishes warn of the consequences of evil deeds and admonish those who would have truck with evil powers, without any true understanding of the horrors they speak of. Missionaries on pilgrim transports beseech their shipmates to raise their prayers during travel between the stars to assure safe passage, but are ignorant of the denizens outside their vessels hungrily eyeing their souls. The Ordo Malleus knows these truths and more, for they are the Daemonhunters and know what menaces lurk in the Warp as well as how to fight them.

To belong to the Ordo Malleus is to bear the same soul-shattering, sanity-searing knowledge that is held within the many accursed tomes of those who worship or utilise the unholy power of the Warp. It is to stand against beings that cause the very fabric of reality to bleed in agony at the affront they hold against nature. They must match mortal flesh against Immaterium, against raw emotion spun into nightmares that walk the weeping earth. Light itself shatters on the Daemon, their forms burning retinal scars even through closed eyes. To those with their souls unwarded against the corruption of the Warp, reading the secret name of a Daemon is to rip the thin veil of reality asunder and call that thing into terrible existence, a folly that can only result in the immediate death of the summoner and the subsequent damnation of his soul. Yet the Daemonhunters do this and more; but for their struggle, the Ruinous Powers would surely conquer humanity and feast on its souls for all eternity.

When their investigations uncover a threat even they cannot combat, the Daemonhunters of the Ordo Malleus call upon the Grey Knights, a Chapter of the Adeptus Astartes entirely devoted to the battle against the Daemons of Chaos. Every Grey Knight is a peerless warrior, a paladin of supreme martial skill and psychic ability, though their numbers are vanishingly small compared to the daemonic forces against which they stand.

Alongside these allies, the Daemonhunters fight an impossible war of terrible stakes. A single nascent psyker can unleash the Ordo Malleus's foes in a moment of weakness, wiping out entire populations. Using an unearthed manuscript, a cult might open a gateway allowing creatures to pour forth in a tide of corrupting filth, poisoning an entire world. Against these threats and more, the hammer of the Ordo Malleus is raised, prepared to smite the Daemon back to its foul realm.



Chapter I: Playing the Game

In Dark Heresy, players and their characters take part in adventures that the Game Master crafts, together creating a thrilling story as they combat the many perils that face humanity. Within the game the Player Characters, as well as the Non-Player Characters under the control of the Game Master, attempt all manner of tasks; this can be anything from trying to hit a charging grox with a boltgun or deciphering xenos markings to shut down an alien ship's reactor before it explodes. These can also be tasks where a character pits himself against another character, such as interrogation attempts to force a captured cultist to reveal the meeting locations of other heretics.

Players resolve these tests using dice rolls. To determine if a test is successful or not, players compare the results of a dice roll to a target level that the GM sets. The players may add modifiers to a result depending on the character's proficiency at a task or situational modifiers. A Desoleum bounty hunter, well-schooled in violence, would normally have no problem hitting a fleeing oath-deserter with his trusty laspistol. A deserter running through a crowded hab market while the bounty hunter was standing on an unsteady pile of empty crates, struggling to keep his footing, would make for a much more difficult shot.

It is through these tests and results that the players progress through the story they are creating. These tests are not just rolls, though, for the players also should invest roleplaying into task descriptions and dice resolutions. This brings the events to life, and makes for memorable games. A player simply stating, "I throw a grenade," does not enrich the narrative as would, "I carefully select a frag grenade from my belt, and swiftly invoke the Rite of Smiting as passed down through my forge world while I thumb the activation stud. Offering a blessing to the Omnissiah, I hurl it at my enemy!" Similarly, a Game Master replying, "the grenade hits," after the test is resolved could instead say, "the grenade lands short, but with a lucky bounce hits your foe, and explodes with a mighty shower of shrapnel!" Failures can also make for great roleplaying opportunities. Though the character might not succeed in a task, his player can use this to further the Acolyte's personality and viewpoint, perhaps forsaking las weapons after his new las carbine jams three times in a row. Using the character's nature to drive what he decides to do, letting the rules determine the results of his actions, and then using these results to drive further character development, is an excellent way to make for great character growth.

It is through extra thought and effort like this that characters and adventures become more than printed words, and is the essence of what makes roleplaying games interesting and fun. The more players put into this aspect of the game, the more rewarding their adventures become.

The Core Rules

"A mind without purpose will wander in dark places."

–Anon

Rules in a roleplaying game exist to provide a framework for players, using dice to determine what happens when players declare their actions. The core rules of Dark Heresy establish the ten characteristics that define characters, and the core mechanic is used to determine whether a character successfully accomplishes tasks. Through these, a player can tell not only if his character's attempt worked, but how well he succeeded (or failed). They offer a basis for all the players to commonly resolve their actions, and the basis from which they can drive the ongoing story with heroic victories and dramatic defeats, as well as determining how the Acolytes move forward in their service to their Inquisitor.

Playing Dark Heresy

In Dark Heresy, the GM narrates the story of the adventure to the group of PCs. During this, he allows the players to act in the game world—making decisions, interacting with characters, and then rolling dice to decide the outcome of the story. To resolve the action of the game, the pace of the story is broken up in two different modes: structured time and narrative time. Structured time covers combat and other time-sensitive actions, and is detailed in **Chapter VII: Combat**. Narrative time includes travel, social interaction, exploration, and other instances when time is not of the essence, and is covered in **Chapter VIII: Narrative Time**.

Characteristics

Characteristics represent a character's raw potential and natural physical and mental gifts, such as his strength, agility, intelligence, and skill with melee and ranged weaponry. Characteristic values range from 1 to 100 and the higher the characteristic is, the more raw talent the character has in that particular area. There are ten characteristics in Dark Heresy, and each represents a different mental or physical attribute. Each is listed briefly here, with its common abbreviation (Willpower, for example, is often abbreviated as "WP" in game text).

Characteristics are important to an Acolyte for a number of reasons, not least of which is that they reflect a character's ability to succeed at particular actions. Characteristics are modified by external factors such as skills, and can be improved in a number of temporary and permanent ways. Since characteristics set the base target number for all tests in Dark Heresy, high characteristics are always more favourable than low characteristics. For more information on how to generate characteristics and how they relate to character generation, see **Chapter II: Character Creation**.

Characteristic Bonuses

In addition to its numerical value, each characteristic has a characteristic bonus, a number equal to the "tens" digit of that characteristic. For example, a character with a Strength of 42 would have a Strength bonus of 4.

When a characteristic bonus is abbreviated in text, it uses the normal abbreviation listed for each characteristic with an additional "B" at the end (the Agility bonus, for example, would be abbreviated as "AgB" in text).

Weapon Skill (WS)

Weapon Skill measures a character's competence in all forms of close-quarters combat. Characters with high Weapon Skill values are excellent warriors, renowned with a chainsword or even their bare hands.

Ballistic Skill (BS)

Ballistic Skill measures a character's accuracy with all forms of ranged weapons. A high Ballistic Skill indicates a character is an excellent marksman, someone to be rightly feared in a fire-fight or shootout.

Strength (S)

Strength measures a character's muscle and physical power. A high Strength characteristic value allows a character to lift heavier objects and punch a foe harder.

Toughness (T)

Toughness measures a character's health, stamina, and resistance. Exceptionally Tough characters can shrug off otherwise damaging weapon hits and better withstand poisonous attacks.

Agility (Ag)

This measures a character's quickness, reflex, and poise. High Agility can allow a character to manipulate delicate machinery with finesse, or keep his footing when crossing treacherous terrain. This characteristic also determines a character's movement rate; the higher the Agility bonus, the farther he can move each turn.

Intelligence (Int)

Intelligence measures a character's acumen, reason, and general knowledge. A character with a strong Intelligence value can recall huge volumes of data, correlate esoteric clues, or determine if an ancient archaeotech relic is genuine or not.

Perception (Per)

This measures a character's awareness and the acuteness of his senses. A character who has a high Perception value can pick out a stray bolter shell casing left amidst an underhive morass, or tell when someone is being deceitful.

Willpower (WP)

Willpower measures a character's mental strength and resilience. High Willpower allows a character to exert control over a crowd of near-rioting hab workers or interrogate a captured heretic. It is also often used when wielding and resisting psychic powers.

Fellowship (Fel)

Fellowship measures a character's persuasiveness, ability to lead, and force of personality. Having a strong Fellowship makes for a character who can ingratiate himself into a gathering of suspicious forge menials or make skilled trades with wily vendors.

Influence (Ifl)

This measures a character's connections, reputation, and resources. High Influence can allow a character to quickly summon the aid of local military forces to his side, or arrange for fast transit to another star system. Unlike the other characteristics, Influence changes only as a character performs actions: it would decrease should he fail a mission in a highly visible manner, for example, or increase after he successfully rescues a kidnapped planetary governor.

Rule Zero

One of the most important rules of the game is Rule Zero: Listen to the Game Master. While it is worth bringing any issues players might have with the game to the GM's attention, no one wants to spend valuable gaming time in a lengthy debate. During a session, it is best to let the Game Master adjudicate things, and trust in his judgment. Letting things run their course in this way is usually the best way to keep having fun.

Of course, any GM who tries to use Rule Zero to justify decisions that keep the game from being fun soon finds that he lacks a group of players. Remember, the goal of the game is always for everyone to have an enjoyable time. Clear and open communication is essential to keeping a gaming group going—just recognise that mid-session is not always an appropriate time for it!

Game Dice

Dice rolls in Dark Heresy use only ten-sided polyhedral dice. These are used for three different types of rolls: the d10 roll, the d5 roll, and the percentile (d100) roll.



d10 Roll: When required to make a d10 roll, the player or GM rolls a number of ten-sided dice indicated before the "d" and adds them together to create the final result. For example, a 3d10 roll would consist of three dice rolled and added together (for a total result between 3 and 30). If there is no number before the "d," it is assumed to be a 1.

d5 Roll: This follows the same process as above, but the player or GM divides the result on each ten-sided die by two and rounds up, to create a result between 1 and 5 for each die.

Percentile (d100) Roll: When required to make a percentile roll, the player or GM generates a number between 1 and 100 by rolling two ten-sided dice. One (designated before the roll) is the tens digit; the other is the ones digit. Two 0s represents 100. These tests are commonly abbreviated as "d100" in the text.

Often the rules can call for a dice roll with a fixed modifier to gain a value, such as 2d10+5 or 1d5–1. In this case, the result from the dice is added or subtracted to the fixed modifier to gain the final result. Note that if the final result is less than zero then it counts as zero (unless a rule particularly states otherwise).

Sometimes, a special rule can allow a player to re-roll the dice. When this happens, the second result must be used, even if it is worse than the original result.

Rounding and Multiplying

If a fraction is generated when dividing, unless specified otherwise round the result up, even if the fraction is less than one-half.

When two or more multipliers apply to a value, add them together to form a single multiple, with each multiplier beyond the first adding 1 less than its value to the first multiplier. Thus a double (x2) and a double (x2) applied to the same number results in a triple (x3, as 2 + 1 = 3).

The Core Mechanic

Whenever a character attempts a task that has some chance of failure, the player who controls that character makes a percentile roll (d100) called a test to determine the outcome. The following steps are used to determine if the character succeeds in a test:

1. **Determine Value:** Determine the value of the characteristic or skill being tested.
2. **Apply Modifiers:** Identify and apply any modifiers that affect the test.
3. **Roll Dice:** Make a percentile roll. If the result of the percentile roll is less than or equal to the target number, then the test succeeds. Otherwise, the test fails.

Determine Value

The GM selects either the characteristic or skill (a characteristic modified by training) most appropriate for the task. The player then references his character sheet and obtains the value associated with that skill or characteristic. This value will be a number between 1 and 100.

Apply Modifiers

The GM identifies any modifiers that affect the test, both positive and negative. Modifiers reflect the inherent difficulty of the task as well as situational and environmental conditions that affect the character performing the task. Add all modifiers together to obtain the final modifier. Then, the GM adds the final modifier to the value of the characteristic or skill to obtain the target number used for the percentile roll. It is possible that the target number will be greater than 100 or less than 0, but the target number is typically between 1 and 100.

Roll Dice

The player makes a percentile roll as described under **Game Dice**. If the result of the percentile roll is less than or equal to the target number, then the test succeeds. Otherwise, the test fails. If the result of the percentile roll is 1, the test automatically succeeds, even if the target number is less than 1. Likewise, if the result is 100, then the test automatically fails, even if the target number is greater than 100.

Skills, Talents, and Traits

If the raw potential and natural gifts of a character are described by his characteristics, then his competence, prowess, and rare innate abilities are defined by his skills, talents, and traits. Skills are learned abilities, such as speaking a language or driving a vehicle, that reflect a character's training and life experience. Talents are unique abilities and proficiencies that a character possesses either through his intrinsic nature or from years of hard-won experience. Quick Draw, the ability very rapidly pull a weapon and ready it for use, is a talent. Finally, traits are those abilities a character possesses by virtue of birth, mutation, or innate circumstance. Dark-sight, the ability to see in complete darkness, is a trait, as it is not something humans are normally able to do. More information on skills can be found in **Chapter III: Skills**, and information on talents and traits can be found in **Chapter IV: Talents and Traits**.

Skill Tests

The skill test is the most common test performed in Dark Heresy. Each skill is governed by a corresponding characteristic, which sets the base level of the skill on a scale of 1–100. For example, Dodge is governed by the Agility characteristic, and Scrutiny is governed by the Perception characteristic. To make a skill test, the Core Mechanic is used. The player first adds all relevant positive and negative modifiers determined by the Game Master to the governing characteristic. Once the final result is tallied, the player then makes a percentile roll. A skill test succeeds if the result of the percentile roll is equal to or less than the final target number after all modifiers are applied. A skill test fails if the result of the percentile roll is higher than the final target number after all modifiers are applied.



Succeeding at a skill test is always easier if a character has training in the skill being tested. A character can attempt to use any skill untrained, but does so at a heavy disadvantage. Any attempt to test an untrained skill suffers a –20 penalty in addition to any other penalties. For more about skill tests and their penalties and benefits, see page 94.

Example

Rhia is attempting to sneak into a suspected heretical cult outpost, when she is surprised by some passing tech-scavengers. Not knowing if they are part of the cult or not, she wishes to spin a tale that she was seeking out a nearby market to explain her presence without tipping the group to her true objectives. The GM decides a Deceive test is in order to fool the scavengers. Unfortunately, Rhia has no training in the Deceive skill, and so must make the test with a –20 penalty. As her Fellowship is a 42, she must roll a result of 22 or lower in order to succeed.

Characteristic Tests

There are times over the course of a Dark Heresy game when no amount of education or training suffices, and a player must rely simply on raw physical prowess or mental acumen. Breaking through a reinforced door or resisting torture are two tasks that call for characteristic tests. Again, the Core Mechanic is used. First the Game Master determines the most appropriate characteristic for the test, then the player makes a percentile roll. If the roll is less than or equal to the characteristic after any modifiers are applied, then the test is successful. If the roll is higher than the characteristic after any modifiers are applied, then the test fails.

Table 1–1: Characteristic Tests

Characteristic	Example Tests
Weapon Skill	Make an attack with a melee weapon.
Ballistic Skill	Make an attack with a ranged weapon.
Strength	Break down a door, restrain a captive, push over a massive grox.
Toughness	Resist poison or disease, tolerate extremes of temperature, stave off mutation, resist hunger.
Agility	Determine Initiative in combat, maintain balance on a narrow surface, navigate treacherous terrain.
Intelligence	Recall an important detail, identify a familiar face, solve a puzzle.
Perception	Notice a hidden enemy, locate a secret door, gauge a person's attitude.
Willpower	Resist torture or psychic powers, manifest psychic powers.
Fellowship	Deceive or charm others, make a good impression, inspire confidence.
Influence	Requisition new weapons or gear, obtain services or aid.

Automatic Success and Failure

Although technically all actions require tests, in practice this would greatly slow down the game and make for an unpleasant and repetitious experience. Therefore, particularly simple tests such as driving a ground car along an open road, climbing a ladder, or writing routine reports can be passed automatically, without any test needed. A good guideline is that if the test would not have any consequences for failing, the GM should not call for a text. On the other hand, the GM might determine that some tasks are so difficult that the character has no chance of success and fails automatically. This is to avoid players whose characters have no chance of accomplishing a task attempting to "fish" for a natural 1.

Degrees of Success and Failure

During a Dark Heresy game, knowing whether a test has succeeded or failed is often sufficient. There are times, however, when it is helpful to know just how well a character has succeeded at a given task, or just how badly he has failed. This is of particular importance with social skills, such as Charm and Inquiry, as well as during some combat situations such as when firing an automatic weapon, which can score additional hits depending on the roll.

Measuring a character's degrees of success or failure is a rather straightforward process. Once the percentile roll for the test is made, compare the outcome of the roll with the modified characteristic score. If the roll is equal to or lower than the characteristic, the character has gained one degree of success (DoS). He also gains additional degrees of success equal to the tens digit of the target value minus the tens digit of the roll. Conversely, if the roll is higher than the characteristic, the character has gained one degree of failure (DoF), and gains additional degrees of failure equal to the tens digit of the roll minus the tens digit of the target value.

Example

Rhia has snuck into the outpost, and now is waiting to ambush the cultists with her autogun as they arrive. She fires the moment they appear over a pile of ancient debris, and her player makes a Ballistic Skill test to see how well she did. Rhia has a Ballistic Skill of 51, and her player rolls a 13—a great shot! Rhia gets one degree of success for succeeding the test, plus an additional 4 DoS for the difference between 5 and 1 (the tens digits of 51 and 13). Many of the cultists are sure to be hit and hopefully eradicated, the proper fate for any heretic.

Extended Tests

Occasionally, a character will attempt a task so complicated that it requires quite a length of time to complete. In cases such as these, the Game Master can require multiple skill tests to complete the task. This is known as an Extended test. In general, each skill states within its description whether it requires an Extended test. However, the GM should adjust the time represented by each test to best suit the situation and the needs of his campaign.

Opposed Tests

There are times when a character needs to test himself against a foe, and times like these call for an Opposed test. In an Opposed test, each participant makes his appropriate test normally and whoever succeeds wins the test. If both parties succeed, the party with the most degrees of success wins the test. If the number of successes is equal, then the party with the highest characteristic bonus wins. If there is still a tie, then the lowest die roll wins.

Should both parties fail, then one of two things occurs: either the test ends in a stalemate and nothing happens, or both parties re-roll until there is a clear winner. Either outcome is appropriate and is left to the GM's discretion.

Example

A hidden cultist springs up from behind Rhia, and attempts to pull her autogun away to use it himself—probably on her! The GM calls for an Opposed Strength test to determine who gets control of the weapon. Rhia's player rolls against her Strength of 34 and scores a 22 for 2 degrees of success. The GM roll for the cultist, scoring a 22 as well, but the cultist has a Strength of just 28 he only scores 1 degree of success. Rhia maintains control over her trusty autogun, and can continue to cleanse the area of the foul cultists.

Test Difficulty

No two tests are created equal. Driving an autocarriage across an open field is one thing, while racing through a ruined, debris-choked underhive while under heavy fire is quite another. Both require Operate (Surface) tests, but the latter is demonstrably more difficult than the former. The question, however, is just how much harder is it to drive the autocarriage through the underhive? This is where test difficulty and the GM's discretion come into play.

While the difficulty of a given test is sometimes clearly stated by the rules, often it is left to the GM to determine just how difficult an action is. Once the difficulty of a task has been determined, the GM needs to consult **Table 1–2: Test Difficulties** on page 25 to find the appropriate modifier. The difficulty modifier is then applied to the governing characteristic associated with the test before the percentile roll is made. Some tests can even require multiple modifiers depending on the various factors involved in the attempt. In these cases, the modifiers are added to create the final bonus or penalty to be applied.

Regardless of the source or combined sources, no final bonus can ever exceed +60 and no final penalty can exceed –60. If no modifier is listed when a test is described, the test begins as Challenging (+0).

Table 1–2: Test Difficulties

Difficulty	Test Modifier
Trivial	+60
Elementary	+50
Simple	+40
Easy	+30
Routine	+20
Ordinary	+10
Challenging	+0
Difficult	–10
Hard	–20
Very Hard	–30
Arduous	–40
Punishing	–50
Hellish	–60

Example

Rhia has dispatched the cultists, and now wishes to quickly search the decrepit hovel for further information on their activities. It is dark, and she is in a hurry and also unfamiliar with the location. The GM decides to impose a –20 penalty on her attempt, meaning instead of needing to score equal to or under her Perception of 42 on the Awareness test, she now needs to roll a 22 or less. The Emperor is surely with her this day, as she gets a 21 and discovers an unfamiliar mechanical object secreted deep in the dank bowels underneath the outpost.

Assistance

Acolytes must depend on each other to succeed, and should always be ready to assist fellow members of their warband to combat the enemies of Mankind. There are commonly times during a Dark Heresy game when a task will be too great, an obstacle too insurmountable, or an enemy too implacable, for a lone Acolyte to succeed. The only way for the players to succeed at such a task is to pool their skills and resources to work together.

During a complicated or delicate test (and with the Game Master's permission), the character performing the test can request the assistance of other characters in the group. When the percentile roll is made, only the character who is actually making the test rolls the dice, but he gains a +10 bonus for each character giving assistance to him.

Limits on Assistance

While characters can assist each other in most tasks, there are some restrictions and conditions that must be met:

- To give assistance on a skill test, a character must have training (see page 80) in that skill.
- The assisting character must usually be adjacent to the character performing the test, though certain tests could gain assistance from over a vox channel at the GM's discretion.
- Assistance cannot be given for tests made as part of Reactions or Free Actions (see page 217).
- Assistance cannot be given on tests made to resist disease, poison, Fear, or anything else the GM deems inappropriate.
- No more than two characters can attempt to assist another on a single test, unless the GM decides otherwise (such as if the warband is attempting to right an overturned vehicle).

Example

Rhia approaches the glowing device, certain it is something important. Her player realises, though, that technology is not Rhia's forte: while she has training in the Tech-Use skill, this mechanism is clearly beyond her easy understanding. The GM agrees, and decides she must pass an Arduous (–40) Tech-Use test to unravel its mysteries. One of her fellow Acolytes is more learned though, and she is able to contact him on a secure vox channel for aid. Tech-Priest Calto-Zed also has Tech-Use training, and his assistance makes the test only Very Hard (–30); now Rhia has to roll a 12 given her Intelligence of 42. The venerable Tech-Priest's assistance pays off, as she scores an 08 for 2 degrees of success (1 for succeeding and 1 for the difference between 12 and 08). The GM reveals the device is a powerful explosive that would have torn apart the entire region, probably destroying a nearby voidport and crippling offworld travel. Rhia and her warband cannot rest—they now must race to determine why the cult needed the planet isolated. Perhaps the heretics planned an uprising and wanted to ensure no loyalist reinforcements would be possible, or wanted to keep valuable targets from escaping...



Dark Heresy in Action

Below is an example of game play in Dark Heresy, showing how the Game Master sets a scene, and how the players interact with their environment and decide on actions for the GM to resolve. The warband is investigating an outbreak of horrible deaths in a hive-city, following a lead concerning a suspected dealer of a highly illegal drug called spook that temporarily grants psychic abilities. Their Inquisitor is rightfully afraid that if this drug has become stronger and more widespread, it could be behind these deaths; worse yet, it might lead to a daemonic incursion as denizens from the Immaterium devour these unprotected minds. Sam (the GM) guides the four Acolytes (Kate's highborn bounty hunter Jannasi, Max's feral world Tech-Priest Isen, Anna's Administratum rogue psyker Sophronia, and Tim's voidborn firebrand Lazrus) as they make their way towards a middle-hive hab area where the scum they interrogated said the dealer was last seen.

Sam [GM]: You enter a large room, dimly lit as glow-globes along the walls pulse with uncertain light, and a fat candle flickers in a heavy pool of wax. There is a thick door at the far end, shut tightly, and several overturned containers filled with scraps of rough paper. Along a wall are odd markings that resemble cryptic writing. The floor is littered with more scraps, and in one corner is a large pile of rags and blankets, covered with buzzing flies. What do you want to do?

Kate [as Jannasi]: I'm drawing both my autopistols and moving to one of the walls, the better to cover the area.

Tim [as Lazrus]: Muttering quietly, I ready my shotgun and, trusting in the Emperor to protect me, stride into the room.

Anna [as Sophronia]: With the area covered, I move to the other wall and call forth my servo skull to better illuminate the strange markings while I attempt to decipher them. (Anna rolls and passes a Linguistics skill test to make sense of the writings.)

Max [as Isen]: "Insectoid life often indicates the failings of the flesh." I check the pile, pushing the rags aside with my boot.

Sam [GM]: Isen, you uncover the rags to reveal a fresh corpse with a huge, gaping chest wound as if the flesh exploded outward. The terror-stricken face matches that of the suspected dealer. Sophronia, your examination reveals the markings indicate locations in the hive and corresponding dates.

Kate [Jannasi]: I look at the body. "Certainly not what I'm used to seeing at spire soirées or in my own kills." I want to try and check it over. (Sam directs Kate to perform a Medicae skill test, which she passes easily.)

Tim [Lazrus]: "These blasted sheets of parchment might contain some hint to our quarry's whereabouts!" I inspect the papers on the floor. (Lazrus makes an Awareness skill test and rolls well with a very low result, succeeding wildly!)

Max [Isen]: I activate my auspex, and search the surrounding area for movement. (Max makes an Awareness skill test, but rolls badly; his auspex clearly won't detect anything this round.)

Max [Isen]: "Something has made the spirits of metal surly and unpredictable. This bodes ill."

Anna [Sophronia]: Pulling out a dataslate, I begin comparing the locations on the wall to the known locations of the deaths we investigated earlier. (Anna makes a Logic skill test to correlate the new data with the existing information, and, given the ease of the test, passes without problem.)

Sam [GM]: Jannasi, your inspection reveals the wound has no burn marks or other normal signs of weapons fire or an explosive device. You've indeed never seen anything like it. Sophronia, the information on the wall matches precisely to the dates and locations of the earlier deaths, and indicates three more to come. Lazrus, you recognise these as stalk-rat wrappers from a stall you passed earlier, not far from here at a habway crossing. Your keen eyes also notice a grey-white residue in several of them—spook!

Tim [Lazrus]: With a grin of satisfaction, I pick up one of the wrappers and tuck it away, as it has a clear connection to the deaths. "I suggest we take a closer look at the provisions offered at the stall; the people there might also be involved with this."

Kate [Jannasi]: "I can take lead on that. I've left some gangers in that area alive and owing me favours."

Anna [Sophronia]: My attention turns from the wall to the body Jannasi is inspecting. "Emperor preserve us! Given the presence of spook and the strange wounds, I am concerned that the fell powers from the Warp may have been used here." (Anna performs a Psyniscience skill test on the body to scry for psychic energies, and she passes with several degrees of success.)

Max [Isen]: "Omnissiah, calm this spirit." I perform an Incantation of Iron by tapping the auspex against my mechadendrite three times and offering a binary invocation, then try it again. (Max makes another Awareness skill test for his auspex, and this time manages to succeed.)

Sam [GM]: Sophronia, you definitely detect the taint of psychic energies on the corpse, flowing out of the wound like eldritch blood. Isen, your auspex is working perfectly but still isn't detecting anything...yet suddenly you can all hear wet cries from behind the door. The darkness seems to grow thicker, the air colder, and the candle finally flutters and spits out. The flies annoying the corpse twitch and fall as gravity seems to shift subtly around you. The far door bulges as if it were rubber and not heavy plasteel...

What happens next? The Acolytes might face an unhinged spook user, or a hideous Warp manifestation that resulted from the psychic blast unleashed earlier that killed the dealer, or something even worse. They have gathered several important clues that can help them shut down the spook trade before the users unwittingly unleash a daemonic invasion upon the hive. First though, they have to survive the coming fight!

A Note About Reality

Dark Heresy deals with mature themes and concepts. Daemons, insanity, death, violence, corruption, and despair are all integral elements of *Warhammer 40,000*, and players should expect their characters to face these often in their games. These are all part of the world the Game Master creates, using the rules in this book as tools and guidelines to craft adventures, settings, and opposing characters. All these, including the characters, are imaginary creations designed to enable an enjoyable game for all the players. Dark Heresy takes place in a grim and dark setting, but everyone should keep in mind the goal of the game is to have fun!



Chapter II: Character Creation

Players in Dark Heresy take on the roles of unique and exceptional individuals plucked from across the galaxy to become Acolytes in the service of an Inquisitor. The warband they form fights at the forefront of a battle of which the rest of the humanity is unaware, for only a select few know the true perils Mankind faces. Citizens across the Imperium might know of the dangers mutants pose or the heresy of renouncing the Emperor, but their minds cannot conceive of the Daemons of the Warp that readily devour unprotected souls, the ravenous xenos species that pollute the stars, or the horrors of reality-defying psykers. Inquisitors and those who serve them can and must withstand such knowledge and face such enemies.

At the direction of their Inquisitor, warbands of Acolytes scour the stars to investigate and combat such threats. Theirs is a lonely battle that sets them apart from the countless billions in the Imperium. They face daemonic attacks that can rend their souls apart and the terrible weapons of inhuman aliens. Their adventures take them from ancient worlds steeped in Imperial history to planets newly-discovered, from courts of power to barren wastelands no mortal has stood upon in centuries. Every world has its own unique horrors: foul cults and renegades might lurk not only in the darkness but also in the open, masquerading their true nature behind power and privilege.

Such heresies and conspiracies exist everywhere, and for each threat the Acolytes eradicate, they might uncover two new ones, each twice as dangerous as the first. These can present other types of dangers, as the temptations of easy power, especially through the corrupting taint of Chaos, are always present. Against all of these threats, Acolytes must use their abilities to the fullest, calling on past experience as well as additional skills and armaments acquired in their travels. They must also rely on each other, even though they can never fully trust each other as they know the horrid betrayals that a fall to the Ruinous Powers can bring. They must also trust in their Inquisitor, never fully aware of what other grim truths he hides from them, and knowing they are each expendable in this eternal war.

The struggle is unending, and those who fight it know they are likely to die horribly, unknown and unheralded. There are no rewards, other than knowing that to do otherwise spells the doom of humanity. Each Acolyte is a flickering candle lighting only a tiny fraction of the malevolent darkness, each sputtering, but his flame still keeping the final night at bay for a time. They might fall, but others rise to take up the battle. The war must continue, for to abandon it is to cede Mankind's future to dust, to be forgotten amidst the laughter of vile gods and malignant aliens.

Creating an Acolyte

"My past mattered only to the extent it attracted the attention of a man I cannot name, even here. My future was all that mattered now. Each success ensured I still had a future, if only for one more day, but we all knew a single failure could condemn Mankind to endless death."

–Gex Avrille, from the private memoirs *Recollections of Service*

Before starting a game of Dark Heresy, each player creates a character. These Player Characters (also referred to as PCs) act as alter egos for the players, and star as the protagonists in the ongoing story that they and the Game Master create together. They might have come from the squalid depths of an overcrowded hive city or opulent palaces, devout worlds dedicated to worship or industrial factory planets that revere technology. They could have been powerful scions of noble families, or lowly dregs who lived from day to day on theft or extortion. Their only common aspect is that they have drawn the attention of an Inquisitor, who believes their unique abilities can aid him in fighting the foes of Mankind.

To create a character, each player follows these five stages:

Stage 1: Choose Home World

A character's home world is the planet or location where he was born and likely spent a great deal of his life. It can determine his physical appearance, mannerisms, and perspective on the Imperium as a whole. A character's home world also determines his starting characteristics.

This book contains six home worlds. Four of these are archetypal Imperial planets (feral, forge, hive, and shrine worlds). The other two represent origins that can come from across the galaxy: the power-drenched environs of the highborn, and the artificial, empty reaches of the voidborn.

Stage 2: Choose Background

A character's background represents what the character has done with his life up until this point, including the previous Imperial organisations under which he served. It determines what sort of training the character has received throughout his life, what kind of resources he has access to, and who he knows.

Seven backgrounds are included here: the Imperial agencies of the Adeptus Administratum, Adeptus Arbites, Adeptus Astra Telepathica, Adeptus Mechanicus, Adeptus Ministorum, and Imperial Guard, along with Outcasts who have escaped the confines of any group or organisation.

Stage 3: Choose Role

While home world and background determine a character's past, his role determines what he is in the present. Each character views the world around him and his place in it in a certain manner, which is reflected in his role. This broadly defines how he faces dangers, interacts with others, and seeks to resolve problems. His role also dictates what areas of expertise he excels at, and how he grows and learns with experience.

This book includes eight roles: Assassin, Chirurgeon, Desperado, Hierophant, Mystic, Sage, Seeker, and Warrior.

Stage 4: Spend Experience Points, Equip Acolyte

In this stage, each player customises his character's abilities. Player Characters start the game with a certain amount of experience points (xp) to reflect their lives up until this point, and can spend these points to increase their characters' initial characteristics, skills, and talents. Here, they can also purchase additional equipment such as weapons and gear from the Armoury.

Stage 5: Give the Character Life

Lastly, it is time for each player to give his character the unique personality that sets him apart from his fellow Acolytes. This stage helps the players define their characters' names, appearances, past, histories with their Inquisitor, and more.

Recommended Options

Many of the character creation options presented in this chapter offer recommendations on what other options fit best with that choice. For example, each home world recommends the backgrounds that fit best with that location, and each background recommends the roles that would fit best with it thematically.

Players, especially those new to Dark Heresy, are encouraged to use the recommended options for each stage of character creation. However, if a player feels that there is a reason that a different option would work best for his character's planned history and narrative, this is perfectly fine. He should, however, discuss the selection with the Game Master to ensure the envisioned character fits with the overall campaign narrative the GM might have planned.

Stage 1: Choose Home World

"We were all from different worlds. We never really liked each other; we could rely on each other, but we were never friends. If we weren't bound together against terrors no one else even dreamed existed, we probably would have killed each other quickly."

–Gex Avrille, from the private memoirs *Recollections of Service*

The Imperium of Man is spread across the stars, laying claim to huge reaches of space and encompassing nearly the entire galaxy. It is made up of over a million systems, each an uncertain light flickering in the surrounding darkness. Holy Terra is at its centre, the birthplace of humanity. Surrounding it are the many other planets, void stations, vessels, and other locations where man has established a presence. From these come the teeming billions that are the true measure of the Imperium, each life moulded and shaped from the place of its origin.

The Adeptus Administratum classifies each world into one of many broad categories in a vain attempt to apply organisation over the domains of man. Though each setting is utterly unique, there are enough commonalities to make these generalisations somewhat effective. Hive cities might appear superficially identical, no matter the planet, but in reality each proves to be wildly different once one ventures inside the kilometres-tall metallic spires.. The billions that reside inside of each hive, though, still share more in common with each other than those from a primitive wasteland or massive trawler migrating through the void.

In an Imperium where only a small fraction ever leave their local environs, let alone the actual planet of their birth, home worlds play a huge part in a character's development. They impart certain favoured types of clothing, such as the blood-marked leathers of an ex-ganger or the elaborately braided feathers of a feral warrior. Fashion or grooming styles might also stay with a character long after he has left his home world. A highborn might insist on keeping his distinctive diamond-dust facial tattoos that once indicated his familial sect, or a Tech-Priest might continue to wear the forge-lathe's binary pattern engraved on his first mechadendrite.

Home worlds also instil unique religious beliefs, for though the Imperium officially worships the Emperor as the deific Master of Mankind, each world does so in its own manner. Some worlds might venerate Him as a Sun-Father, the bringer of blessed heat to Mankind. On others, the Cult Imperialis has assimilated local beliefs into worshipping the Emperor as the Storm-Fury, showing displeasure through terrible cyclonic devastation whenever His peoples fail in their service. Even the worlds of the Adeptus Mechanicus, which all worship the Emperor as the Omnissiah, might do so in slightly differing fashions from forge to forge.



Home worlds also shape characters physically and mentally. Those from a rough, feral world usually grow up strong and tough—or do not grow up at all. Voidborn that come from artificial habitats of lessened gravity can develop taller but frailer forms. Hivers are used to dense concentrations of people, and might feel uncomfortable in large, open spaces that lack the usual industrial scents. Highborn are often groomed to rule, and develop charm and social skills at early ages in order to navigate the deadly paths to power.

Though the home worlds in this chapter represent archetypal settings, players are encouraged to use additional information on a location to be found in this or other Dark Heresy books to add greater distinctiveness to their characters' previous lives. A character might be from a hive world, but one from Desoleum would place greater value on personal vows, representing that hive's elaborately binding network of oaths and obligations. An Acolyte from a world gone feral after its pre-Crusade civilisation destroyed itself might view technology as dangerously taboo; one from a violently evolving land could see it instead as useful against the megafauna he battles each day.

Each home world presented here includes a description of its setting, along with an example from the Askellon Sector. Each also includes the following special rules that are applied to a character from this home world:

Characteristic Modifiers: Modifiers that alter how the player generates the Acolyte's starting characteristics (see page 31).

Fate Threshold: A value representing the starting Fate threshold of a character from this home world (see page 293). A character starts with a threshold equal to the listed value, but has a chance at gaining the "Emperor's Blessing" and increasing the value by 1. The player rolls 1d10, and compares the result to the Emperor's Blessing value for his home world. If the result is equal to or higher than the listed value, the player increases his character's Fate threshold by 1.

Home World Bonus: A special ability that a character from this home world gains during character creation. Note that the character does not need to meet the prerequisites for talents (see page 119) granted in this stage.

Home World Aptitude: An aptitude (see page 79) that the character gains based on his home world.

Wounds: The number of wounds (see page 232) a character possesses at the beginning of the game. This is commonly a static value plus a die roll.

Recommended Backgrounds: Several samples representing backgrounds (see page 44) that a character from this type of home world would be likely to follow.



Player Notes: Home Worlds

Home worlds are often strongly tied to archetypal character types and backgrounds, allowing players to pick settings that match their envisioned character. For example, those looking for strong fighters should consider playing a feral worlder, while forge worlds generate excellent tech-savvy characters. Players should read through the home worlds presented in this book, especially the effects each setting has on starting characteristics, to see which one fits with the concept for their characters. Some players prefer to randomly select a home world, then use this plus their starting characteristics as a guide to lead them to a background and role, and thus create a character perhaps not considered earlier.

Imperial organisations dominate or even control entire worlds, though, and many born there have no choice but to enter that society. Those from forge worlds can more easily lead into Adeptus Mechanicus backgrounds, and shrine worlds to the Adeptus Ministorum, but players should also explore less well-worn paths. Feral worlders often are taken into the ranks of the Imperial Guard, but some might have been taken aboard an Explorator vessel and inducted into the ranks of the Cult Mechanicus. Choosing unusual directions such as these can generate interesting characters that stand out from others, and players should work with their GM to create suitable origins for the memorable characters that result.

Each player chooses one home world for his character, and either uses the example given, creates a new, unique world for his character, or leaves the exact world of his origin a mystery. Alternatively, players can use **Table 2–1: Random Home World** below to let chance decide. After the player chooses a home world, his character immediately gains the appropriate home world bonus.

Table 2–1: Random Home World

d100 Roll	Result
01–15	Feral World
16–33	Forge World
34–44	Highborn
45–69	Hive World
70–85	Shrine World
86–100	Voidborn

Generate Characteristics

After choosing his home world, the player should generate his Acolyte's characteristics. These are the basic building blocks that determine the character's strengths and weaknesses, as described on page 21. Characteristics are generated one at a time. To generate a characteristic, the player rolls 2d10, adds the results together, and then adds 20. The result is the Acolyte's characteristic, and the player does this for each of the 10 characteristics, filling in each result on the Acolyte's character sheet. The roll to generate a characteristic can be altered by the characteristic modifiers of the Acolyte's home world. Each modifier lists a characteristics with either a "+" or a "–" in front of it. These affect the roll in the following ways:

+ Characteristic: When rolling to determine the specified characteristic, the character rolls 3d10, takes the two dice with highest results, and adds their results to 20 to determine the characteristic.

– Characteristic: When rolling to determine the specified characteristic, the character rolls 3d10, takes the two dice with lowest results, and adds their results to 20 to determine the characteristic.

Inquisitors do not choose their Acolytes at whim. The Player Characters in Dark Heresy are a cut above the rest of humanity, and fated for a greater destiny. Because of this, the player can re-roll any one characteristic value when generating his Acolyte's characteristics, but must keep the second result.

If the GM and all players agree, players can alternatively perform character generation with adding 25 instead of 20 to reflect more experienced Acolytes ready to face even greater threats. If so, adjust the values in the **Allocating Points** sidebar to start with 30 points, and raise the + and – Characteristics by 5. When using this higher starting score, no characteristic can be raised to a value higher than 45.

Allocating Points

At the GM's discretion, players can instead use point allocations to determine starting characteristics in place of generating the characteristics via dice rolls. To do this, the character starts with a score of 25 in each characteristic and then receives 60 points which he can distribute to any of his characteristics as desired. Each point distributed to a characteristic raises that characteristic by one. No characteristic, however, can be raised to a value higher than 40 in this way.

Characteristic Modifiers

When using point allocations, the characteristic modifiers applied from the PC's home world change the starting score of the respective characteristics:

+ Characteristic: Starts with a score of 30.

– Characteristic: Starts with a score of 20.

Feral World

Savage primitives from backward cultures or untamed worlds; what they lack in knowledge of the stars and the secrets of technology, they more than make up for in strength and survivability.

"Caring little is me about your gun. Caring more should be you about my axe!"

–Karl-Va, First Steel of the Red Clans

Feral worlds are planets where the dominant culture is trapped in a primitive state, often much lower technologically than that of other Imperial worlds. This can range from nomadic human tribes, with little more than spears and a mastery over fire, to once-advanced planets now reduced to barbarism from environmental catastrophes, xenos predations, or other world-shattering events. Natives are likely to have grown up without technology, and had to survive by hunting or farming with primitive tools and their own two hands. This makes feral worlders hardy, strong, tough, and able to survive in the worst of conditions.

Life on a Feral World

At first glance, feral worlds might appear backward when compared to more technologically advanced worlds. They are indeed trapped in superstition and ignorance, but no less so than the denizens on any Imperial world, and the concept of progress is as unknown here as anywhere else. Their barbaric nature is as pronounced as on other planets, but here it displays a harsh, personal brutality and dispenses with any veneer of higher civilisation. Feral worlders can view weather conditions as signs from the sky-gods, and the remains of ancient devastated civilisations as relics from ancestors who touched the heavens before hubris brought them low. This is no different, however, than a hive labourer who tills powerful machinery through rote actions and dogmatic chants, or reflexively makes the sign of the Aquila before entering a hab-room for the first time. Both see the world around them through a thick fog of superstition, not even knowing that there is more to know. To live in the Imperium is to live in ignorance, an awful but blissful experience compared to the horrible truths that Inquisitors know.

Feral World Rules

A character from a feral world applies the following benefits during character creation:

Characteristic Modifiers

+ Strength, + Toughness, – Influence

Fate Threshold

2 (Emperor's Blessing 3+)

Home World Bonus

The Old Ways: In the hands of a feral world character, any Low-Tech weapon loses the Primitive quality (if it had it) and gains the Proven (3) quality.

Home World Aptitude

Toughness

Wounds

A feral world character starts with 9+1d5 wounds.

Recommended Backgrounds

Adeptus Arbites, Adeptus Astra Telepathica, Imperial Guard, Outcast

Feral worlds are as important to the Imperium as any of its planets, and each tithes men and materials just like any other world. This means that even if most of the population is ignorant of other planets, often a ruling elite connects to the Imperium and governs the world for it. Populations on feral worlds are often kept in check by their faith in the Imperial Creed, and the Ecclesiarchy ensures that instilling this faith is the first step when incorporating such a world into the Imperium. On many such worlds, the local religions and beliefs have thus been supplanted by the faith in the Emperor, although it could be that He is known by different names, such as the Sky-Father, Master of Storms, or Star Lord by the primitive natives. Even if a feral worlder knows little of the Imperium, it is doubtless that he has heard tell of the Emperor and was raised to revere Him as a god.



There is a near-limitless variety of feral worlds, each different from the next, often mixing ancient cultures and technological levels in a myriad of combinations. For example, one could be little more than an alien wilderness of volcanic tundra, where ignorant tribesmen bow down to effigies of the Emperor, whom they call the Father-of-Lightning. Here they hunt flying lizards across deserts of ash and dust, using weapons of black volcanic glass, until the sky-men call them to serve beyond the world's edge, never to return. Another world could be an endless swamp, covered with complex territories of nomadic tribes who wear the bones and skins of great amphibians, and constantly war with each other for survival. Some show the signs of previously-advanced civilisations, long since blasted to ruins from war or natural catastrophe. Man might live in crude caves nested in crashed orbital towers that could predate the Imperium, or perhaps be of xenos origin. Hunters could use spears tipped with fractal metal shavings to fend off beasts mutated from domestic pets.

Feral worlds are defined only by their limited level of technology, where populations have little choice but to live in a primitive state. Feral worlders may become inured to the appearance of voidships in their skies and mighty armoured warriors in their cities, their people accepting their place in the universe, perhaps even scorning the sky-men for their feeble reliance on metal trickery when the test of a true man can only be measured in muscle and bone. Feral worlders might one day leave their planet, either taken as part of manpower tithes or as part of an Inquisitor's warband, but still retain the primal essence their upbringing provided.

Feral World Characters

Feral worlders can be as diverse, and might encompass nomadic hunters, cave dwellers, and village craftsmen. What they have in common is that they are tempered by a hard life of living outside, fighting constantly to survive with little more than the skin on their back and the blade in their hand. This makes the Imperium favour feral worlders as soldiers and warriors, where their brutality and survival instincts serve them well, while their lack of knowledge and their limited understanding of the galaxy matter little.

Many feral world characters took up arms for the Imperium and later used the skills they learnt in the service of an Inquisitor. They are drafted into the Imperial Guard by the millions, whole regiments formed from single tribes or clans; soon their swords, spears, and shields are replaced with lasguns to fight the enemies of Mankind. It can be a brutal and unforgiving way to leave their surroundings behind, thrust into a war light-years from their home world. Those that survive are destined to become among the best the Imperium has to offer, skilled in the arts of war but retaining their hardy origins, able to adapt and endure where others fail.

They might also leave their world by choice, seeking out the tales and legends they have heard of far-off worlds and men that walk between the stars. These are rare individuals indeed, fighting their way up from nothing to take their place among the Emperor's faithful. More likely, feral worlders seek help to explore the stars, impressing an Imperial Acolyte or even an Inquisitor with combat prowess or tracking skills and earning a place at his side.

Some are burdened with the psyker curse. These damned souls can expect only a lifetime of being feared and reviled as shamans, wizards, or oracles. Many face a brutal death at the hands of their own people, or become a sacrifice to their ancient gods. Taken away by the Black Ships of the Adeptus Astra Telepathica for sanctioning and training in the use of their gifts, some might in time come to be of use to the Imperium and their new masters.

Sample Feral World: Gregorn

Gregorn is a world of violence, where primitives fight each other while struggling to survive against tectonic upheavals and predatory megafauna. The natives favour thick lizard-hides and helms of bone. Their martial societies mask highly nuanced customs, which has led them to butcher more than one expedition to a man for an unknowing insult. Many seem to have an instinctual fear of plasma weaponry, though there are no indications the world ever hosted a developed civilisation. It is possible, however, that volcanic lava and earthquakes long ago eradicated traces of ancient cities.



Forge World

Skilled with machinery and commonly using the most advanced forms of technology known to the Imperium; surrounded with sanctified technology and often granted cybernetically augmented bodies, they manifest the Omnissiah's blessings.

"Cease. You dishonour the machine spirit. Speak the litany first, and only then strike the siding so."

–Osmin Ril, Inspector of the Rites, Factorum Aleph VII

Forge worlds are the main armouries and assembly lines of the Imperium. On these densely-populated worlds, citizens toil endlessly to craft weaponry for the armies of the Emperor, their bodies often enhanced with technology so that they might better fulfil their tasks or survive the toxic conditions of the factories. The denizens are likely to have been born to do a specific task, like their parents before them and their children that will come after, focusing their entire lives on a single job. It is a rigid society from which few escape, where the great Machine Cult and Tech-Priest overlords enforce the construction and toil of the teeming billions working below.

Life on a Forge World

Forge worlds are a vital part of the Imperium; they are the great factories without which its armies would falter and cease to exist. Because they provide the bulk of its armaments and munitions, forge worlds utilise technology unseen elsewhere in the Imperium. Around them might be tracked cities that continually move lest their toxic clouds dissolve the walls, or orbital elevators reaching from the surface into the depths of space like skeletal fingers. The teeming workforce swells with hordes of servitors fashioned from the bodies of lobotomised humans and mechanical parts.

Forge World Rules

A character from a forge world applies the following benefits during character creation:

Characteristic Modifiers

+ Intelligence, + Toughness, – Fellowship

Fate Threshold

3 (Emperor's Blessing 8+)

Home World Bonus

Omnissiah's Chosen: A forge world character starts with either the Technical Knock *or* Weapon-Tech talent.

Home World Aptitude

Intelligence

Wounds

A forge world character starts with 8+1d5 wounds.

Recommended Backgrounds

Adeptus Administratum, Adeptus Arbites, Adeptus Mechanicus, Imperial Guard

Technology is both embraced and feared within the Imperium, and much of what was once known has been lost. What remains is bound in ignorance, ritual, and mystery. This is the purview of the Adeptus Mechanicus, the keepers of Imperial technological lore and secrets and overseers of forge worlds. For the Machine Cult, and by extension the Imperium, technology has become a complex religion shrouded in mystery and ritual. For most citizens, it is frightening and strange, hidden behind odd rites, prayers, and the dire warnings of their preachers. For a forge worlder, technology is more omnipresent but no less revered. He might have greater familiarity and access to technology, but he has just as little true understanding. For him, the metal and plasteel marvels around him are perhaps less strange but no less sacred.

Everyone born on a forge world has his place, often mere cogs in the huge machines that keep its factories running. Some might rise into positions within the Machine Cult, and take on the mantle of Tech-Priest. Others live out their days as mere drones, mastering their trade until they can pass it down to the next generation.

Forge World Characters

A forge world is not one, but many, societies pressed together in a carefully constructed system. Characters that hail from a forge world can come from several classes, either overseeing the forges, serving in the armies of the Omnissiah, or toiling on the manufactorum floor. Others might even operate illegal enterprises, or merely try to survive in the dark areas between abandoned habs. What they all share is exposure to fabulous and terrible technological mysteries, and are often fitted with augmentations only available on a forge world. This makes them favoured to become part of the Machine Cult, but also makes them favoured with other organisations focused on the use and abuse of technology.

Those who aspire to become Tech-Priests are most likely to originate from forge worlds, where the training they receive can set them on a path within the Mechanicum. From here, they can then serve in any number of capacities, or be sent to aid another Imperial organisation, such as the Imperial Guard to maintain tanks and weapons, or the Imperial Navy to oversee a starship's machine spirit. They can even find a place in the service of an Inquisitor, where their technological expertise can prove invaluable.

Forge worlds also sometimes provide tithed manpower for forces such as the Imperial Guard. Service here is often a worker's first exposure to open air and sunlight away from the oppressive heat of his manufactorum. Unlike those pressed into service, or those who must suffice with whatever meagre weapons the Imperium can provide, regiments from a forge world might be equipped with weaponry beyond what might be granted to a lesser world. The men making up these ranks often forge the very weapons they carry. Imperial fighting forces always have a use for those raised among the manufactorums and habs of a forge world, their supreme reverence for the machine setting them apart from the countless masses of the Imperium.

Sample Forge World: Rhodin IV

The Cult of the Machine God has occupied this planet for several thousand years, ever since it was awarded to the Adeptus Mechanicus for its aid in repelling a nearby Ork uprising. Rich in promethium and other useful ores, this once-verdant world has since become layered with plasteel and pollutants. Factories many kilometres tall churn out a wide variety of armaments and munitions. Deep mines weave through the planet's crust, so invasive that elaborate networks of cyclopean support beams are needed to buttress the immense weight of the manufactorums that cover the surface. Many of the Tech-Priests spend their entire lives underground, feverishly directing legions of servitors to maintain these complex metal webs.



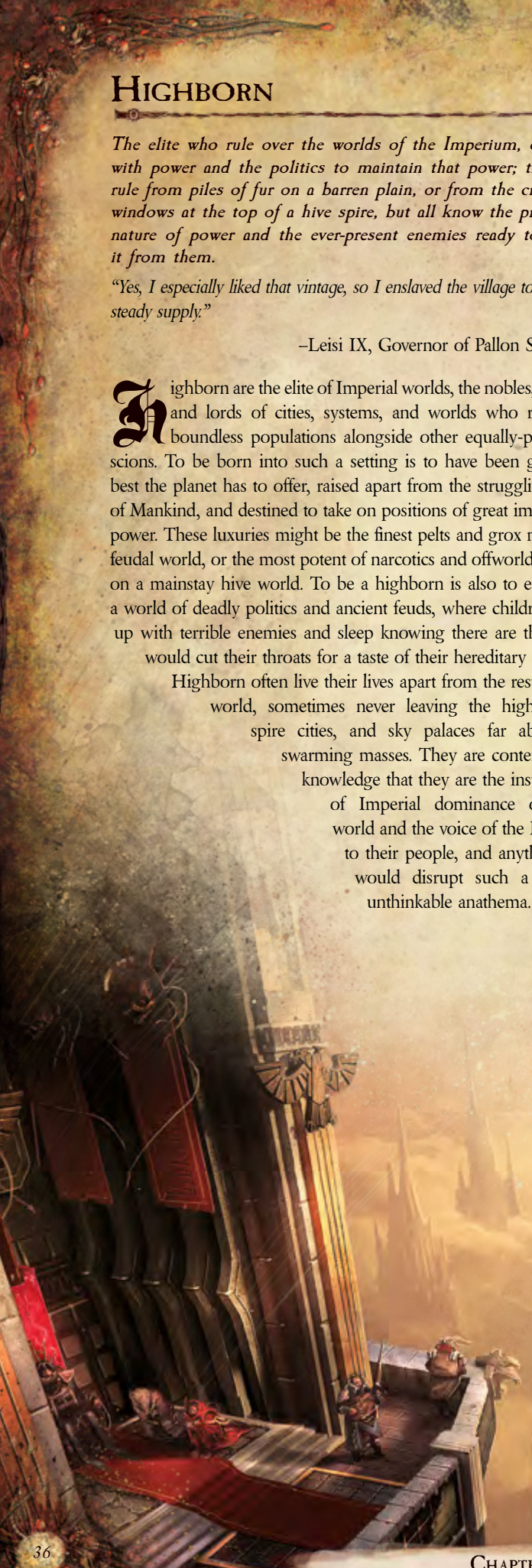
Highborn

The elite who rule over the worlds of the Imperium, obsessed with power and the politics to maintain that power; they may rule from piles of fur on a barren plain, or from the crystalline windows at the top of a hive spire, but all know the precarious nature of power and the ever-present enemies ready to snatch it from them.

"Yes, I especially liked that vintage, so I enslaved the village to ensure a steady supply."

–Leisi IX, Governor of Pallon Secundus

Highborn are the elite of Imperial worlds, the nobles, princes, and lords of cities, systems, and worlds who rule over boundless populations alongside other equally-privileged scions. To be born into such a setting is to have been given the best the planet has to offer, raised apart from the struggling ranks of Mankind, and destined to take on positions of great import and power. These luxuries might be the finest pelts and grox meat of a feudal world, or the most potent of narcotics and offworld delights on a mainstay hive world. To be a highborn is also to enter into a world of deadly politics and ancient feuds, where children grow up with terrible enemies and sleep knowing there are those that would cut their throats for a taste of their hereditary position. Highborn often live their lives apart from the rest of their world, sometimes never leaving the high castles, spire cities, and sky palaces far above the swarming masses. They are content in the knowledge that they are the instruments of Imperial dominance on their world and the voice of the Emperor to their people, and anything that would disrupt such a state is unthinkable anathema.



Highborn Rules

A highborn character applies the following benefits during character creation:

Characteristic Modifiers

+ Fellowship, + Influence, – Toughness

Fate Threshold

4 (Emperor's Blessing 10+)

Home World Bonus

Breeding Counts: Any time a highborn character would reduce his Influence, he reduces it by 1 less (to a minimum reduction of 1).

Home World Aptitude

Fellowship

Wounds

A highborn character starts with 9+1d5 wounds.

Recommended Backgrounds

Adeptus Administratum, Adeptus Arbites, Adeptus Astra Telepathica, Adeptus Ministorum

Life as a Highborn

Highborn exist on nearly all Imperial worlds, from the towering spires of its hive cities to the stone forts and caves of its feral kingdoms. They are the privileged and powerful of their worlds, those fit for governance not by the will of the people but by the providence of their birthright. While their powers and purview might differ from world to world, their function remains the same: to lead their people and control the resources and political might of their planet. Most highborn grow up being groomed for this power, either taught to govern justly by fair and even-handed peers or, more likely, instilled with a disregard for those below and ingratitude for the influence and position they have been given. Many are so ingrained into their opulent lifestyle that they have little or no notion of how the majority lives. Generations can be spent in supreme—if relative—comfort, be that a heated cavern shielded from perpetual blizzards or an orbiting pleasure-satellite that rides auroral clouds. Here they are content to shield themselves in the trappings of wealth and privilege, while focusing on the real threat to their existence: other highborn.

The scale and size of the Imperium is reflected in the nobility of its worlds. Just as it has endured for millennia and covers the majority of the galaxy, so too are there noble families, sector lords, and planetary governors whose lineage stretches back thousands of years, and whose holdings comprise whole systems or wide regions of space. It is also reflected in its diversity, with each world's ruler as unique as the world itself. Some worlds are ruled through agencies such as the Adeptus Ministorum or Adeptus Mechanicus, where the rulers are more the result of power plays than hereditary bloodlines or the decree of the Adeptus Administratum. Some rulers flicker and fade, having barely made their presence known. Others form dynasties lasting the entire history of a world. Often a family or lineage can draw great power to itself, slowly but surely acquiring planetary control and resources, seeding its progeny throughout positions of influence and authority until there is no place on a world untouched by its grasp.

Being a highborn means more than being born into power and position; it means the lifelong obligations and struggles both to protect the interests of the family or clan, and to try and better them. It is the nature of power that those that do not have it crave it, and those that have it crave more. Noble families thus conduct warfare with each other to garner and defend power, in battles often masked with subtlety, disguise, and innuendo, but no less deadly than open combat. At such levels, mere currency is worthless, and power is traded in favours and debts. In these struggles for power there are few rules, and should a family fall from favour they have little recourse for justice when targeted by blackmail, treachery, or murder, save to respond in kind.

Highborn Characters

While born to power, highborn characters might also be born with little or even nothing to look forward to beyond a lifetime of idle excess and family infighting. Even among the most powerful families, there are usually dozens if not hundreds of heirs to the true positions of power, and a highborn, while afforded all the luxuries of his station, may find little with which to content himself. This idleness can lead them in wildly different directions, either choosing to try to climb the social ladder of their family, proving themselves in the bloody politics of the Imperial nobility, or rejecting the control their family has placed upon them and seeking their own fortune elsewhere. Those that remain find they are never truly free of their family. The ties that bind them to the home are always present, as is the taint of their family and its reputation, which clings to their name as long as they wear it. Even those that try and escape might not be able to run far enough to outdistance their noble obligations and their family's long reach, inevitably dragged back into its petty squabbles and bids for power long after they considered themselves free.

A highborn character not fortunate enough to have a place of real power could spend his days in luxurious indolence, or find adventure on his own in other areas of his world to pass his time. Some might be ceded to one of the Imperial organisations operating on his system or world, thus extending the influence of the family. Here the highborn might rise through the ranks or be as idle as he desires, putting in token effort and continuing a decadent lifestyle secure in the knowledge that the weight of his family can protect him from any chance of dismissal. It is not uncommon for a highborn youth to be given a commission in the Imperial Guard or Imperial Navy. While it falls to such a highborn to decide if he cares to strive in his position, he might easily earn the resentment of those officers who have had to earn their rank, at least until he has proved himself in some way.

Those that endeavour to escape their families also often choose the Imperial Guard or Navy, hoping it can take them far away from those that know them. In this role they strive to earn their place upon their own deeds and not the word of their family, but it is a dangerous game. Imperial forces are filled with those of noble blood, and the chance of encountering someone that recognises the highborn never goes away. Some truly cut ties with their family, becoming criminals or pirates after first stealing as much of their house's wealth as possible. Others, even worse in their family's eyes, forge a reputation for themselves as liberators and freedmen, living lives impossible for their relations to comprehend.

Sample Highborn Setting: The Platinal Palace of Snope's World

Far atop the main hab-city on Snope's World lies the glittering Platinal Palace. Formed of fractalised sheets of iridescent metals, it shines like a beacon above the solemn clouds and polluted swamps that cover much of the planet. It is said that the palace's surface holds a million million angles, each one unique across its conical form. Within are the hive's ruling families, each as superficially gleaming and beautiful as their dwelling. Here they plot endlessly against each other. None dare openly battle, fearing expulsion from the archaeotech-supported environs, but instead use pain-poisons, rumour plagues, and other soft weapons to cripple their rivals.

Hive World

The struggling masses of humanity, one among uncounted billions living out their lives in vast towering cities; hardened by living among such dense populations, they are savvy talkers and adept criminals.

"Meet is set. Twelve levels down, just above the tox drains along the Killian wall and near the border with the Ironmongers. Bring extra stubber shells."

–Etregan "Ganner" Haiyn, Desoleum ganger

Hive worlders exist in cities that reach kilometres into the sky from the wasted surface of toxic, hostile environments, ruined through many centuries of industry. Sealed off from the planet outside, they live stacked on hundreds of levels, each one packed with millions of souls working, eating, and dying without ever venturing beyond the steel caverns of their birth. To be a hive worlder is to have grown up among overpopulation and artifice, where the sun is only a myth. Unfortunates know only a desperate existence, barely surviving in the dank depths far below the surface, in underworlds where the very air cannot be counted on from one day to the next. For a hive worlder, his life is but one cog in a gigantic city-machine, living and dying in the same few cubic kilometres in which he was born.

Hive World Rules

A character from a hive world applies the following benefits during character creation:

Characteristic Modifiers

+ Agility, + Perception, – Willpower

Fate Threshold

2 (Emperor's Blessing 6+)

Home World Bonus

Teeming Masses in Metal Mountains: A hive world character ignores crowds for purposes of movement, treating them as open terrain. When in enclosed spaces, he also gains a +20 bonus to Navigate (Surface) tests.

Home World Aptitude

Perception

Wounds

A hive world character starts with 8+1d5 wounds.

Recommended Backgrounds

Adeptus Arbites, Adeptus Mechanicus, Imperial Guard, Outcast

Life on a Hive World

Hive cities are ancient constructions, each century slowly growing wider across the barren ground and higher into the polluted air. A hiver lives out his life never seeing the sky and often never even leaving the city level on which he was born. Most hive worlds have scores of hives, each existing in isolation and rising up from the toxic fog and cursed lands like monuments to its eventual demise. Hivers are often born into a house or family with their vocations decided. Thus they work endlessly at their task in the factorums and industrial habs of their hive, producing goods to be shipped offworld or maintaining the many systems of the hive essential for its survival.

Nearly everything is recycled and reused. The air a hive worlder breathes, the water he drinks, and the food he eats has all passed through the bodies of countless others, endlessly restored to be consumed once again. When a hiver dies, his duty to the hive and house is not done, and most hives reconstitute their dead. All of his possessions, from the hab room where he lives to the clothes on his back, likewise come from those before him. There is a definite class division in most hives, however. Resources become scarcer as one descends from the spires at the hive top, where the rulers enjoy all the wealth the Imperium has to offer, down through the guilds and houses where some live in relative comfort, to the lower levels where workers and dregs exist in crushing poverty. The farther downhive one goes, the more decayed and dangerous it becomes, the detritus of billions drifting down to rest among the darkness. The rule of law breaks down in the depths of these wild and deadly domains. Some come here to escape their lives above, but most find only death and despair among the mutants and violent gangs.

Hive World Characters

Hive worlds are a perfect expression of life in the Imperium in many ways, and the result of what it has done to survive within a hostile and decaying galaxy. Hive worlders reflect this too, and are resourceful and hardy in a way that only those born into an overcrowded society with finite resources can be. Within a hive, only the strong survive and only those who are both strong and cunning truly prosper. Even those who choose not to break the law are often forced to bend it to get their way; the oppressive nature of life within a hive is often devoid of any opportunities that a man does not make for himself. Positions within the system of control are one route a hive worlder can take, becoming part of the Administratum or Ministorum in an effort to live above the law, or at least have some control over it. Equally, he might rise to the governance of his family house, trade cartel, or other group, though such a position is usually only coloured by another kind of obligation and duty. The alternative is to reject the trappings of society and embrace the criminal element or be branded an outcast. Both can bring great wealth and personal freedom, but a man does this at his peril, for the hammer of hive justice is swift and heavy.

All of the great Imperial organisations have their place with the maintenance of a hive world. The Administratum governs its resources and sees it meets its tithes, the Ministorum cares for the souls of its citizens, and the Mechanicum oversees the ancient machines that clean its air, recycle its food, and keep it running. Hive worlds also contribute large numbers to both the Imperial Guard and the Imperial Navy, and a hiver can often be found in these organisations.

Where a hive worlder really comes into his own, and a path all too many of those who finally escape the hive take, is that of the Outcast. Whether he is a true recidivist or simply an anti-authoritarian, a hiver who rejects the world he has been given and tries to twist it to his own advantage starts down a path he can never turn back from. These Outcasts might be petty crooks or rise to become the heads of powerful organisations, controlling vices and illegal enterprises throughout their hive. However, to really escape the shackles of hive life, he must travel away from structured society. This might be into the depths of an underhive, into the wastelands surrounding the city, or even offworld. Here he can live free, provided he is quick with a gun and willing to do whatever it takes to survive.

Sample Hive World: Hulee V

Hulee V hosts many hive cities with the largest, Hive Krakex, appearing more like a huge mountain than a building. Generations continually build new outer layers that roll off the hive's outer surface like lava dripping down a massive volcano. Each new layer widens its circumference across the surrounding wastelands and consumes kilometres of land from the ragged millions teeming outside the hive shell. Billions more exist inside, transforming bulk-imported raw ores into the plate armour that protects many of the tanks and fortresses across Askellon. Most never see sky or sun, and cannot imagine a life without enclosed roofing, processed air, and immense crowds omnipresent on all sides.



Shrine World

Born in the shadow of great saints, the light of the Emperor blinding and embracing since birth; pious and devout, they see the world through eyes of fanatical faith and righteous hatred.

"Tread carefully, and with each step reflect on the sanctified remains surrounding you."

–Yantho Carl, Thaur Caretaker

Shrine worlders grow up on worlds that the Imperium has deemed holy places, where the Cult of the Emperor's power is omnipresent. While their birthplace might range from cluttered, decaying cities to scattered farmlands, or their planet from a green paradise to a forbidding rock, the power of the Emperor saturates it. Perhaps some great deed was committed here, a bold hero turning back the alien tide, or because it is the resting place for a saint with a hallowed grave dominating the surface of the world and drawing pilgrims from far and wide to gaze upon its glory. While all citizens of the Imperium are taught to venerate the glory of the Emperor in one form or another, it is the shrine worlders who perhaps have the greatest understanding and reverence of the teachings of the Imperial Cult.



Shrine World Rules

A character from a shrine world applies the following benefits during character creation:

Characteristic Modifiers

+ Fellowship, + Willpower, – Perception

Fate Threshold

3 (Emperor's Blessing 6+)

Home World Bonus

Faith in the Creed: Whenever a shrine world character spends a Fate point, he rolls 1d10. On a result of 1, the character's total number of Fate points is not reduced.

Home World Aptitude

Willpower

Wounds

A shrine world character starts with 7+1d5 wounds.

Recommended Backgrounds

Adeptus Administratum, Adeptus Arbites, Adeptus Ministorum, Imperial Guard

Life on a Shrine World

Religious grace permeates every part of a shrine world, the very spirit of the Cult of the Imperial Creed embodied by the world itself and its citizens, who embrace His divine worship. Shrine worlders live their days with the strength of the Emperor in their hearts, and are exposed to His word in many aspects of their lives. The constant exposure to clerics, priests, and pilgrims impacts upon their lives and gives them greater veneration for the Imperial Creed. Pilgrims also offer a rare glimpse into worlds and sectors beyond a shrine worlder's home planet, and a taste of the wider Imperium told from the lips of those who have travelled far distances just to visit the shrines.

There is no established norm for a shrine world, only that it was the place where a saint was entombed or committed some great deed, worthy of the Adeptus Ministorum's attention. It might have been a feral or a hive world with a well-established society before the coming of the saint. Equally, many were only outposts or dead worlds before a saint fought a final battle, or came there to find his final rest. In both cases the presence of the saint and the millions of pilgrims who make the trek have changed the world forever, giving it a new purpose and focus.

While the planet exists for the glory of the saint and as a place to worship the might of the Emperor, the constant flow of pilgrims and visitors makes such places a breeding ground for criminals and smugglers. Either selling false relics or using the pilgrim trail to transport illicit goods, a shrine world's underbelly can be as active and dangerous as any underhive. Many shrine worlders are drawn into this shadow society, either aiding such illegal endeavours or seeing it as a chance to move offworld and make their own fortune. Even so, while some succeed and go on to find a life on the fringes of the Imperium among vile company, they remain shrine worlders at heart. They never forget the teachings of the saint, whether they live by them or not.

Shrine World Characters

A shrine worlder has a unique perspective on the Imperium, raised among the harsh realities of the Imperial faith but also exposed to a constant stream of travellers from strange and far off places. Some develop a slavish devotion to the Imperial Creed and those that claim to speak in the Emperor's voice. Alternatively, the character might find inspiration and rise up within the ranks of the faithful to do great things, buoyed up by the glory of the Emperor. Just as the inhabitants of a forge world are ideally shaped to enter into the ranks of the Adeptus Mechanicus, so too are those raised in these holy cities and domains are well suited to a place within the Adeptus Ministorum.

Service within the Emperor's fighting forces is also fitting for one born on a shrine world, there being no greater mark of devotion to the Emperor than sacrificing one's life to protect others. Some of the greatest regiments were founded on shrine worlds, known for their fervour and fearlessness. Even those that find their way into the priesthood seek out battle to prove their devotion, acting as regimental priests or shipboard confessors.

Many shrine worlders follow in the footsteps of their patron saint. The population is also moulded by faith in the saint to which it is dedicated, and even those who do not join the Ministorum or choose religious vocations often carry the saint's teachings with them. This can also include the saint's venerated characteristics or legendary nature, and shrine world characters could reflect their unique saint in a particular recklessness in battle, an abiding hatred for a specific xenos, or a disdain for technology.

Sample Shrine World: Ossuar

Located in the Pollom System, the Creed of Remembrance rules Ossuar in the name of the Ecclesiarchy. A mausoleum covers much of the main continent, where several of the blessed saints who helped found Askellon are laid to rest in archaeotech stasis chambers. Flocks of attendants labour constantly here, the idea of the saints becoming exposed to time too horrible to contemplate. Many more oil the gleaming statuary and herd the many millions of faithful through the labyrinthine walkways. After spending years to reach the planet, many pilgrims perish in the additional years travelling from the outskirts to the sanctified remains within.



Voidborn

Solar nomads and planetary outcasts living out lives in the inky blackness between worlds; touched by celestial winds and their closeness to the Warp, they are often shunned by all but their own kind.

"Of course I want walls. How can you possibly live with all that nothing around you?"

–Unjo Re'Asmulle, after stepping onto the plains of Attila

Voidborn spend their lives in the expanses of space, growing up on ancient orbital stations, generation vessels, merchant freighters, or remote asteroid outposts. They spend much of their lives without the stability of a real world beneath their feet, knowing the cold, deadly grasp of empty space is only a few metres of bulkhead away. This makes them exceptionally skilled when it comes to living on voidships and space stations, more so than any who have spent their lives crawling around in the dirt of a world. It also often makes them strange even amidst other Imperial subjects, tall and willowy, hairless, or with large dark eyes.

Living so close to the still blackness of the void also touches their souls. There is something deeply odd about the voidborn, something intangible that lurks below the surface, writhing in the dark like the Warp lurks below space itself, waiting and watching for its moment to surface.

Voidborn Rules

A voidborn character applies the following benefits during character creation:

Characteristic Modifiers

+ Intelligence, + Willpower, – Strength

Fate Threshold

3 (Emperor's Blessing 5+)

Home World Bonus

Child of the Dark: A voidborn character starts with the Strong Minded talent, and gains a +30 bonus to tests for moving in a zero gravity environment.

Home World Aptitude

Intelligence

Wounds

A voidborn character starts with 7+1d5 wounds.

Recommended Backgrounds

Adeptus Astra Telepathica, Adeptus Mechanicus, Adeptus Ministorum, Outcast

Life in the Void

For the Imperium to emerge, Mankind has conquered the stars, and so space travel is a constant across the galaxy. Billions cross the void as they travel from one world to the next or safeguard the shipping lanes. Over the millennia, more and more of the Imperium's infrastructure and control has extended into the depths of space, until many worlds boast dozens—if not hundreds—of transports, voidships, and orbital stations. Generations are born and die here, never setting foot on the surface of a planet. Even those that spend long periods in space, such as the crew of a Rogue Trader's ship, cannot compare to the natural affinity the voidborn has with life between worlds.



Much like a hive city or the factories of a forge world, a voidship or space station can become a completely closed society for its inhabitants, and some voidborn might never consider what lies beyond the sealed walls and bulkheads. More than a few might not even know that they are in space, growing up seeing the interior of their ship as the limits of their world and never questioning what lies beyond. It is possible for primitive civilisations to thrive here, living by an intuitive understanding of how the ship's life support systems function. Even voidborn acquainted with the stars are indoctrinated into the ritual of maintaining their floating home, from an early age made acutely aware of the price that negligence can cost their family. Death is the constant companion of the voidborn, the blackness of space a reminder of its finality. While others might have the comfort of high blue skies to protect them from the dark, the voidborn has only the honest plasteel and sturdy airlocks of their home. Living so close to the cold embrace of space makes men very conscious of their own mortality and the mortality of those around them. All know that a broken seal, fractured bulkhead, or failed radiation shield could wipe out their society in a matter of minutes.

Voidborn Characters

Living in outer space brings with it more dangers than the mere lack of gravity, oxygen, or warmth. It also brings one closer to the Warp and the malign touch of the dark powers that live just beyond the sight of man. Travel across the stars means travel through the Warp, and each journey leaves the soul one small step closer to daemonic perils. This grants the voidborn unique advantages over their fellow man, beyond just an intimate understanding of life aboard a ship or station. Voidborn are naturally touched by the Warp, and many seem more sensitive to psychic powers and the stain they can leave upon the material universe. Voidborn also often have an innate sense for their artificial surroundings. With just a sniff of the air or a moment's attention to the myriad creaks and hums within a vessel, they can usually tell everything from the state of the air scrubbers to how well the plasma reactors are faring.

Voidborn often find themselves in spacefaring vocations, such as in the Imperial Navy, the Adeptus Mechanicus, or civilian merchant vessels. A lifetime spent aboard stellar craft can make the gravity of a world feel too heavy, the air too rich, and the sunlight too bright for sensitive eyes and pale skin. Fortunately, the Imperium has a significant presence in the emptiness between worlds, and there is always a need for humans to serve without ever descending into the gravity well of a planet.

Voidborn can be counted among prominent organisations like the Imperial Guard or Administratum. They are more naturally Outcasts, though; it is far easier for them to work those areas which exist outside the structured classes of the Imperium. Voidborn also know how to walk within the shadows, operating as criminals, pirates, and scavengers. In many cases, the voidborn find acceptance hard to come by, as the people of their home ship or station are the only ones who will ever truly understand them and welcome them without suspicion or prejudice.

Sample Voidborn Setting: Echonis Augury

Drifting along the sector's rim and away from regular traffic, this ancient station originally served as a major Adeptus Mechanicus research site. Hundreds of Tech-Priests and servitors worked here to info-scour the surrounding parsecs in a secretive quest. Several centuries ago, a supply vessel arrived to find the station empty and barren. Since then it has become a popular trading post for Rogue Traders and common merchants alike. Thousands live on it, with extended generations working to maintain and expand it, all with occasional concerns over the fate of the previous occupants.



Stage 2: Choose Background

"I still remember the old regimental motto: With Las and Faith and Flamer, for Oath and Emperor and Desoleum! Simple, but it remains with me even now."

–Gex Avrille, from the private memoirs *Recollections of Service*

The Imperium operates on the blood and sacrifice of the untold billions who call the Emperor master, yet without organisation and focus, their efforts would be wasted and Mankind would swiftly fall. Where once the Emperor walked amongst men and directed their actions, now impossibly massive bureaucracies administrate in his name. Backgrounds represent these organisations and other groups that Acolytes come from, and just as home worlds represent the birth and development of an Acolyte, backgrounds represent the organisations that drove his training and indoctrinations. While home worlds establish a place of origin, backgrounds indicate an Acolyte's previous life experience before an Inquisitor noticed the aptitudes and abilities he developed there, found them to be of use, and forever changed the Acolyte's destiny.

Acolytes come into these backgrounds in a variety of ways. Most are simply born into their stations, fulfilling their places as their fathers and forefathers have done for generations. They might be repaying a hereditary debt that stretches back to the founding of their sector, or to when an Imperial organisation established itself on their world. Some might come from families dedicated to a particular function within a voidship or manufactorum, where members spend their entire lives devoutly maintaining a torpedo bay or reactor intake. Similarly, lineages might continue for many generations in pious duty, ensuring that a shrine entrance is properly anointed, or that the censers are always lit with the correct blend of blessed flowers. For nearly all of the Imperium's teeming billions, this is life. There is not only no other way possible, but no other way imaginable.

Some come to their organisation through no action of their own, but due instead to outside circumstances. The Schola Progenium takes in countless children, each the orphaned offspring of those who died well in service to the Imperium. Trained from youth, these can become the most zealous and loyal of the Emperor's servants. Many go on to join the grim forces of the Adeptus Arbites and other supremely dedicated services, such as the Officio Prefectus or the Militarum Tempestus.

For some, there is no choice in their new vocation. They might be conscripted in planet-wide impressment to form new Imperial Guard regiments or to replenish the bloodstained decks of an Imperial Navy vessel. They might have been imprisoned criminals or dissidents, but now they fight and die as the planet fulfils its tithe to the Imperial war engine.

Others face a far worse fate as part of the other great tithe, the collection and offering of psykers. Taken aboard the Black Ships, they now face a lifetime in the Adeptus Astra Telepathica. This life might be a very short one, as some do not even survive the journey to Holy Terra. As each world searches and determines suspected psykers in its own unique manner, it is possible many are also falsely captured, never to see their home again.

Player Notes: Backgrounds

Backgrounds allow a player to flesh out his character's previous life and experiences, and as such can either complement an established home world or be used to broaden him in unusual ways. At this stage, a player has often formed a mental image of his character and possibly already has a role in mind. Selecting a background that strengthens this image, such as Imperial Guard for a Warrior or Adeptus Astra Telepathica for a Mystic, can lead to iconic *Warhammer 40,000* characters. There is certainly nothing wrong with this, and for new players it is often the best way to fight heresy in the Imperium for the first time. Veteran players, or those looking for unusual characters, can use alternative selections to perhaps guide their character into new directions.

Almost any background can be matched to a home world; the Adeptus Astra Telepathica for example, can originate in any world or setting, given that the Black Ships visit every habitation across the Imperium. Outcasts can be found everywhere. Selecting a background that deviates from the norm can offer a character skills, talents, and equipment he might not otherwise possess, and create a more well-rounded Acolyte for an Inquisitor.

Most backgrounds carry with them distinctive dress, mannerisms, and religious practices, and players should also consider these in their decision. These can offer interesting ways to roleplay a character, such as an Adeptus Mechanicus character who would rather converse with his servo-skull than his fellow Acolytes, or a dour Imperial Guardsman convinced he should have died with the rest of his regiment.

There are no incorrect backgrounds as long as the selection further guides the character's history from his home world to his role.

Like suspected psykers, some rare individuals may become part of an organisation through selection. Those with an affinity for communing with the machine spirits might be taken in as apprentices to the Omnissian priesthood, and those adept at transcription and recitation enfolded into the data-vaults of the Adeptus Administratum. A very small minority chose their occupation, perhaps naively volunteering for the glory of their local Imperial Guard regiment in a new founding, or renouncing their estates and wealth to lead prayers at hive temples.

Then there are those who reject being part of any group, and make their own destiny as Outcasts. Not all do this of their own volition; many are forced out of disgrace, impoverishment, or other situations not of their making. Once separated from normal means, their new lives can move in directions never before imagined, for better or worse.

While a character occupied this background, his Inquisitor noticed something about him: exceptional skills, impressive competencies, or useful connections. The background also illustrates how the character gained such distinction. For an Inquisitor to notice indicates someone who could be useful in his endless fight. This could come from formal training, practical experience, or most commonly a mix of the two.

Backgrounds are also instrumental in determining a character's possessions: the weapons, armour, support gear, and other accoutrements an Acolyte has gathered as part of his life and occupation. These could range from a lovingly maintained lasgun used in wars across the sector to a scavenged stubgun that has witnessed many an underhive gang fight. These can also be items such as his normal garb, from gang leathers to Arbitrator armour, primitive hides to perfumed clerical robes. Backgrounds can even guide hairstyle preferences, favourite foods, common speech patterns, and other details that make an Acolyte unique. An Acolyte's prior lifetime also helps mould how he views the Imperium and other agencies, sometimes reinforcing impressions from his home world or creating new ones.

Each world in the Imperium is utterly unique, however, as is each background and even the variations within a background. Given the difficulties of Warp travel and interstellar communication, this is of little wonder. For example, while to an outsider the Adeptus Mechanicus may appear uniform, the priesthood of each forge world possesses subtle but significant differences from its fellows. Factions within a forge are also unique on close inspection, one always wearing crimson tunics a shade precisely 37 Angstroms lower than their rival smelters or canting their prayers to the Omnissiah in a slightly different binary dialect. Each faction encompasses its own background as well, offering myriad possible Mechanicum backgrounds from a single forge. Similarly, almost all worlds are devoted to the Imperial Creed, but how each actually worships the Emperor can be radically different. The background a character selects is essentially singular, as often Acolytes from the same organisation might bear little resemblance to one another.

Each background presented in the following pages includes a description of its place in the Imperium and an example from the Askellon Sector. Each includes the following special rules that are applied to a character with this background:

Starting Skills: A list of skills (see page 94) that the character starts with at the Known (rank 1) level, due to his previous life in that background.

Starting Talents: A list of talents (see page 119) that a character from this background gains at character creation. Note that the character does not need to meet the normal prerequisites for any talents granted during this stage of character creation.

Starting Equipment: A list of weapons, gear, and other items from **Chapter V: The Armoury** (see page 140) that a character from this background gains at character creation. All ranged weapons come with two clips of their standard ammunition.

Background Bonus: A special ability that a character from this background gains.

Background Aptitude: A choice of an aptitude (see page 79) that the character gains from this background.

Recommended Roles: A list of roles (see page 60) that a character from this background would be likely to follow.

Each player chooses one background type for his character and creates his character's history. He can either draw on the example background for inspiration—creating a new, unique background history—or leave his character's exact story a mystery for now. After choosing a background, the character gains the appropriate starting skills and talents, acquires his starting equipment, and gains his background aptitude and special ability.



Adeptus Administratum

The great bureaucracy of tithes and tallies that holds the Imperium together and keeps it running; they keep the lore, histories, and secrets of a million worlds so that the Imperium might prosper.

"Our records show that datum is located in the tertiary infocrypt of the fifth vault-level. I can arrange for an expedition to retrieve it, however."

–Honsa Illum, Data Warden of the Primary Tier

Such is the size and scope of the Imperium that it takes an innumerable legion of scribes, officials, and bureaucrats to maintain it. Connected across the stars on a web of scribbled notes and secret data caches, the Administratum is a lumbering behemoth, churning at a speed only slightly higher than deathly rest as it ensures that every planet has paid its due and contributed to the Imperium's continuation. Without the Administratum, the Imperium would dissolve into madness and mayhem. It would be cut off not only from those hidden hands that guide its wealth and resources, but also from its history and the centuries of secrets kept deep within the data vaults of the Imperium's largest organisation.

Role within the Imperium

The Adeptus Administratum, as the name implies, administers the operation of the Imperium. The Imperium survives on a system of tithes, where each world gives men and resources to the Emperor for the protection of all Mankind. The Administratum decides how to use the tithed goods, whether it is to raise an army, evacuate a world, or eradicate a xenos species, all for the betterment of the Imperium. So closely are the workings of the Administratum woven into the fabric of the Imperium that none can escape its attention, and every world has hundreds, if not thousands, of officials and adepts devoted to overseeing its obligations. In many ways, the Imperium is the Administratum, and more than the stern faces of Imperial Guardsmen or the zealous gaze of Ministorum clerics, it represents the hand of the Emperor and His control over all men throughout the galaxy.

The Administratum observes a rigid hierarchy within its ranks to carry out endless tasks. Some adepts are charged with record-keeping, living out their lives in huge data tombs. Here they might spend their days cataloguing endless new texts, carefully recording everything so that after they are dead, another can catalogue their catalogues, and so on in an eternal cycle. Some may do the reverse, burning records deemed heretical or no longer in compliance with the Imperial truth. Most Administratum adepts spend their time sifting through reams of information or completing endless reports. They pass these on to other adepts, all in small ways contributing to the Administratum's greater—but still greatly limited—understanding of the Imperium and its status. This is still only a poor glimpse of factual reality, and usually so out of date that it is worthless for practical use. Some lords within the Administratum are acutely aware of this, but still work on as they cannot imagine any other method to maintaining the Imperium. Many others blindly operate the same way, blissfully ignorant of the futility of their work.

Adeptus Administratum Rules

A character with the Adeptus Administratum background applies the following benefits:

Starting Skills

Commerce *or* Medicae, Common Lore (Adeptus Administratum), Linguistics (High Gothic), Logic, Scholastic Lore (Pick One)

Starting Talents

Weapon Training (Las *or* Solid Projectile)

Starting Equipment

Laspistol *or* stub automatic, Imperial robes, autoquill, chrono, dataslate, medi-kit

Background Bonus

Master of Paperwork: An Adeptus Administratum character counts the Availability of all items as one level more available (Very Rare items count as Rare, Average items count as Common, etc.).

Background Aptitude

Knowledge *or* Social

Recommended Roles

Chirurgeon, Hierophant, Sage, Seeker

Because the Administratum works on all levels of Imperial society, and processes such enormous quantities of information, those within its ranks can sometimes gain understanding of the workings of the Imperium unlike any other. However, this can be as incorrect or antiquated as the data they process. Often possessing talents unknown to others, such as the knowledge of arcane languages, data cyphers, and numerical manipulations, an Administratum adept can detect meaning where others only see random scribblings or base nonsense. This is due in part to the slow decay of knowledge into rote learning on many Imperial worlds, but it is also due to the Administratum's secretive nature. It jealously guards its holdings, and uses specialised codes, insular lexicons, and technical cant. An Administratum adept is the key to unlocking this secret world of records and information, and bringing its considerable might to bear can be vital to finding a single citizen among millions, clearing important cargo through quarantine, unravelling a strange local weather pattern, or performing any one of a thousand other tasks.

Adeptus Administratum Characters

Members of the Adeptus Administratum can come from any world or station. A certain degree of intelligence is desired, though a devotion to assigned tasks and an obsession with their completion is more essential. Advancement is, of course, only as fast as the Administratum itself; those who start by merely laying out parchment next to autoquills might one day have their descendants carry the completed scrolls away for filing. Even lesser worlds can have many scores of Administratum officials to oversee them, while larger worlds might have entire cities of scribes and adepts working tirelessly to review its government and maintain its tithes. Sometimes this might be done locally via Administratum datavaults maintained within planetary capitals, while some planets are so remote or uncivilised that only a scant few scribes labour in small, forgotten sector-level offices to watch over the far-distant world.

The most common kind of Adeptus Administratum character is the adept or scribe who has lived out his life surrounded by records, toiling in a data store or as part of the apparatus of governance and only connected to the outside world by the reports he receives and processes. They can develop an almost preternatural relationship with data, able to sift through endless piles of information and find key words, phrases, and lines, which they can then weave together into in a coherent picture often invisible to others. Exceptional adepts like this know how the Imperium functions on a level unknown to even its sector and system lords, and are able to work their way into the great mechanisms of the Administratum to turn the wheels in their favour.

Less common, but also possible, are those who have fallen, discontent with their lot, who tried to enrich themselves or gain illicit power over local dominions. Even disgraced Administratum workers can have their uses, though, and can find new purpose and service elsewhere.

Sample Adeptus Administratum Background: Jovus Infocrypt Regimentum

Dwelling deep within the bowels of the world's main city, this organisation is devoted to maintaining one of the planet's largest infocrypts. Here information dating back many millennia is stored, some records perhaps originating in the mythical days of the sector's founding. The loyal workers toil ceaselessly to preserve and organise countless parchments, dataslates, and scrolls. Each day tonnes of information are laid to rest here, but also each day towering mountains of parchment are lost to fire or mould, vermin and invading marauders destroy centuries of records, stacks of dataslates fail or crumble, and tomes are rendered useless as their languages fade and die. Even so, the Regimentum continues its unending battle in the name of the Adeptus Administratum.



Adeptus Arbites

Keepers of the Imperium's laws, who see that the rule of the Emperor is brought to His worlds; they are judge, jury, and executioner against any—high or low—that would break the Imperial rule of law.

"Of course I know who you are. You were the governor here, until you turned your back on your rightful ruler. Now, you're dead."

–Marshall Ranx Wayner

Only through constant vigilance and the execution of brutal law can the Imperium survive, and the Adeptus Arbites carries out this function. While the armies of the Imperial Guard struggle to hold back the aggression of alien empires and protect worlds from without, the Adeptus Arbites roots out rebels, recidivists, and threats to the stability of the Imperium from within. Its agents, collectively known as Arbitrators, operate as they best see fit, using their greater training and weaponry to tackle foes that might be beyond the scope of local agencies, or in many cases to deal with a government which has itself become corrupted. Remorseless and single-minded, they do not forgive or forget any crime, and pursue their quarry relentlessly until the Emperor's Justice has been served.

Role within the Imperium

The laws of the Imperium are a complex web of tradition, obligation, and local custom. Thus, they can vary from world to world or sector to sector, with each planetary governor, local prefect, or headman pronouncing his own laws. Arbitrators care little for such trivialities, and enforce the serious crimes against the Imperium while leaving such petty matters to local officials. Murder or theft, for example, are considered inconsequential unless they affect the Imperium directly, are perpetrated against Imperial officials, or somehow fundamentally threaten a world's security or safety.

Arbitrators have little pity or compassion for the transgressions of Imperial citizens. Years of dealing with the scum of the galaxy has made many of them cynical and bitter. Others have become zealots, seeing the Emperor's hand in the letter of the law and believing anyone who would break it deserves only death. A few might maintain idealistic notions for bringing order to the Imperium, but the realities of endless—sometimes horrific—crimes constantly erode such notions. The arrival of an Arbitrator patrol is seldom welcome, given the brutal way in which they operate during their investigations, arrests, and executions, even though it might mean an end to vicious criminal enterprises.

An Arbitrator must deal with ineffectual or corrupt local agencies. These are often an Arbitrator's greatest foes as he must clean up a local situation, taking over the unfit local law enforcement of a hive city, orbital station, or even entire planet to purge it of crime and corruption in a series of bloody and unforgiving sweeps.

Adeptus Arbites Rules

A character with the Adeptus Arbites background applies the following benefits:

Starting Skills

Awareness, Common Lore (Adeptus Arbites, Underworld), Inquiry *or* Interrogation, Intimidate, Scrutiny

Starting Talents

Weapon Training (Shock *or* Solid Projectile)

Starting Equipment

Shotgun *or* shock maul, Enforcer light carapace armour *or* carapace chestplate, 3 doses of stimm, manacles, 12 lho sticks

Background Bonus

The Face of the Law: An Arbitrator can re-roll any Intimidation and Interrogation test, and can substitute his Willpower bonus for his degrees of success on these tests.

Background Aptitude

Offence *or* Defence

Recommended Roles

Assassin, Desperado, Seeker, Warrior

On Imperial worlds, the Adeptus Arbites is the last, most absolute law, answering only to its commanders and the Judges of systems and sectors, and not to local authorities. It is a thankless task, for the anonymous, helmeted Arbitrator usually receives only fear and hatred for his actions. He and his cohorts are the final bulwark against heretical uprisings and other major threats. Their precinct-fortress is the often last bastion of Imperial rule during revolutions or invasions, holding out to the very end whilst alerting outside agencies of the dire situation. Each member knows that should he fall, so follows the planet. To merely survive in such a hostile environment, Arbitrators must show no hesitation, regret, or compassion for those they protect, and they must consider every citizen guilty until he is proven innocent.

Adeptus Arbites Characters

The Adeptus Arbites faces a monumental task in enforcing the law across countless Imperial worlds. Those that take the oaths, don the carapace armour, and wield the shock maul are often obsessive and pitiless individuals, men and women who see the law as an extension of the Emperor's will upon His subjects, and its enforcement their sacred duty. Whether they are skilled in combat or possessed of a keen mind, Arbitrators know they face an implacable and remorseless foe, one which they must counter with all the talents at their command. To be part of this agency is

to be apart from their original surroundings, for after training in the Schola Progenium, Arbitrators are never assigned to the world of their birth. They are beyond local authorities, serving none but higher Imperial law. Once a man puts on the distinctive dark armour he stops being merely a man, and is now a representative of the greater Imperium upon a world, there to ensure planetary compliance with Imperial law.

Arbitrators are always engaged in investigation and enforcement, for crime never sleeps. The surrounding populace overwhelmingly outnumbers them, so it is essential to detect and crush crime before it grows too strong. On many worlds, they bring massive firepower to bear at the slightest hint of resistance, often reacting to crimes before they occur, and pre-emptively arresting citizens who are "at risk" of become criminals. Skilled Arbitrators are masters of urban conflict and crowd control, with an instinctive understanding of Imperial societies such as the packed hab-blocks of an overpopulated hive world or the savage villages of a feral world, and the differing tactics needed to police them.



Arbitrators often tap local vox-networks, develop networks of spies and informants, and even infiltrate suspect organisations to snare the lawless in surgical strikes, where their superior weaponry and training can prevail over larger forces. Such investigations require long hours of dedicated detective work, patience, and cunning to root out violations of Imperial law amidst the myriad other offences against lesser authorities. Their lives are often at risk, and not just from their obvious criminal quarry. During the course of an investigation, all manner of things might come to light, including the secrets of powerful individuals. In these cases, Arbitrators can face more danger from a supposedly loyal ally than the scum they pursue.

Sample Adeptus Arbites background: Precinct Delta, Hive Desoleum

One of several Adeptus Arbites precincts within this immense hive city, Delta is carefully hidden and even more heavily fortified than usual. Within are the most powerful of weapons, such as mobile lascannon emplacements and plasma cannonades, plus a small cache of priceless archaeotech grenades, normally unnecessary unless the hive faces insurrection or worse. As none of the Arbitrators stationed here are native to the world, let alone this hive, some take time acclimating to the crowded conditions. None of them dare let their guard down an instant, however, knowing the weaponry and other secrets stored behind the heavy plasteel doors of their precinct. This fortress-precinct, as well as one carefully hidden within the hive that houses their Astropathic choir, represents the last line of defence should Hive Desoleum begin to fall.

Adeptus Astra Telepathica

The ancient and sacred organisation vital to the survival of the Imperium and Mankind; guiding ships and transmitting information across millions of scattered worlds, they bind the Imperium with their web of minds.

"My eyes were a small price to pay for what I can now see."

–Astropath Leto Loi

Psykers are a vital part of the Imperium, linking its worlds together, aiding its soldiers in battle, and guiding its ships across the stars. They are also dangerous, for the very gift that allows them to draw power from the Warp, that otherworldly realm that exists beneath reality, can also make them conduits for its unholy power and gateways for Daemons. An untrained psyker can bring doom upon an entire world if his abilities are not kept in check. The Imperium has a rigid structure in place to watch for any who display even a hint of psychic talent and remove them from society, usually through force. Once in custody, they are trained to serve the Emperor or, if they prove too unstable, destroyed for the good of Mankind. The Adeptus Astra Telepathica oversees psykers within the Imperium, scouring the galaxy for new psykers and then examining and training their catches. Those that are not worthy to live must instead serve the Emperor directly, their life energies sustaining His continued existence for one more day.

Role within the Imperium

It is the cruel jest of the psyker that even though he acts to protect the Imperium, his very existence is a threat, and his mere presence draws the attentions of the denizens within the Warp. The Imperium understands the importance of using psykers. They can be found at every level of command and on nearly every world, but psykers forever remain apart from the rest of humanity, no matter how useful they might be. Living with the constant fear of death (often at the hands of one's allies) or the terror of daemonic possession frays all but the hardest of minds. Thus, their lives are ones of constant stress and ostracism. Only the strongest can hope to survive against years of attack from the Warp each time they attempt to use its powers.

To ensure the Imperium's safety, the Adeptus Astra Telepathica oversees the recruitment of these dangerous individuals. Its fleet of Black Ships travel endlessly from world to world, gathering anyone who shows the taint of psychic talent to take back to Terra for testing. Only a fraction of those taken survive to serve in the Adeptus Astra Telepathica. Most are sacrificed to sustain the Emperor, perhaps the most potent psyker even known. Others fall during their training, their minds or bodies torn asunder by the creatures of the Warp, or executed should their powers prove too uncontrollable or their minds unsuitable. Only after years of rigorous schooling in the Scholastia Psykana, the Adeptus Astra Telepathica's training facilities, are they deemed fit to serve the Imperium either among its armies or as part of the great network of Astropaths conveying messages across the stars. The cycle often repeats itself, and those psykers that become sanctioned to serve within the ranks of the Adeptus Astra Telepathica sometimes go on to work the Black Ships. Others become instructors, imparting their knowledge to new generations of psykers.

Adeptus Astra Telepathica Rules

A character with the Adeptus Astra Telepathica background applies the following benefits:

Starting Skills

Awareness, Common Lore (Adeptus Astra Telepathica), Deceive *or* Interrogation, Forbidden Lore (the Warp), Psyniscience *or* Scrutiny

Starting Talents

Weapon Training (Las, Low-Tech)

Starting Equipment

Laspistol, staff *or* whip, light flak cloak *or* flak vest, micro-bead *or* psy focus

Background Bonuses

The Constant Threat: When the character or an ally within 10 metres triggers a roll on **Table 6–2: Psychic Phenomenon** (see page 196), the Adeptus Astra Telepathica character can increase or decrease the result by amount equal to his Willpower bonus.

Tested on Terra: If the character takes the Psyker elite advance during character creation, he also gains the Sanctioned trait (see page 138).

Background Aptitude

Defence *or* Psyker

Recommended Roles

Chirurgeon, Mystic, Sage, Seeker

Those who do not serve the Adeptus Astra Telepathica directly find themselves fulfilling duties elsewhere, as there is always demand for sanctioned psykers. This could be fighting in Mankind's constant wars, turning their powers against the foes of the Emperor. Alternatively, they might find relative safety ensconced in the palaces of a planetary governor, a novelty for the idle nobility as they send and receive messages for their master. No matter where they live, they are always viewed with suspicion and fear. Often, this mistrust comes most strongly from their fellow psykers, for all psykers are but one faltering mental defence away from allowing the horrors of the Warp into reality.

Adeptus Astra Telepathica Characters

Psykers are in reality mutants, a divergence of the human evolutionary process into something different and often terrifying. They have lived their whole lives with this taint, while the Imperium exploits and uses their unique abilities. As conduits to the Warp, they have also lived in constant fear of possession, or of death at the hands of the terrible denizens of that unholy place. Their earlier lives may have been filled with unexplained accidents or mental breakdowns, and at some point, discovery and capture. Many do

not live long enough to be discovered, destroying themselves in bursts of uncontrolled power. Untold others are never detected and culled, a constant worry within the Adeptus Astra Telepathica and the Inquisition. On Terra there is the painful process of sanctioning, where they are tested, branded, and broken to serve the will of the Emperor. Most are unfit for continued existence, and their service ends as their energies are used to fuel the Emperor's life force and the eternal light of the Astronomican. Those remaining are admitted to the ranks of Adeptus Astra Telepathica, deemed safe and strong enough to serve the Imperium. It can be a harsh and thankless life that breeds bitterness, the psykers' minds in constant stress and surrounded with fear and hatred. Each day can push them further from humanity and closer to the whispering promises of the Ruinous Powers.

As part of the Adeptus Astra Telepathica, psykers have numerous areas where, though they might not be welcomed, their gifts are appreciated. Astropaths provide vital services, psychically connecting worlds and voidships and allowing the Imperium to exist. They are often more than just transmitters, and act as accomplished diviners and telepaths as well. Sanctioned psykers are also employed in Imperial Guard regiments or other Imperial forces. Such lives are often short and unforgiving, ending burnt out fighting mental battles no other human can imagine, or executed for displaying any hint of possession or madness. This is the other fate that waits for most psykers, regardless of their role in the Imperium: a slow decay of the mind until the powers of the Warp consume them, and they are turned against those they once fought so hard to protect.

Though psykers dominate the bulk of this agency, there are others. Numerous unblessed humans act as warders and minders, perhaps on Terra or on the Black Ships, all watching for any signs a psyker has become a deadly threat. Worse still for psykers are their opposites: the even more unnatural psychic untouchables. These soulless humans can negate psychic energies, and their mere nearby presence can bring a psyker to his knees with intense waves of debilitating pain. No matter their role, those from the Adeptus Astra Telepathica are always seen as outside the normal ranks of humanity, and must prove themselves with every action.

Sample Adeptus Astra Telepathica Background: Primaris Psyker Detachment 14

Assigned to the Havarth 237th Heavy Infantry, one of Askellon's larger Imperial Guard regiments, this organisation consists of several dozen battle-ready psykers and their support personnel. Many are veterans of countless combats, and even somewhat skilled in the use of their sidearms. While most are assigned to combat duties to aid troops at the direction of tactical officers, it is customary that a specially-selected psyker is made part of the regimental commander's staff. This psyker does not provide battlefield power, but instead uses his abilities to divine enemy actions, a practice that has caused some derision amongst other regiments in the sector.



Adeptus Mechanicus

Keepers of the ancient secrets of technology and the Imperium's most venerable and treasured artefacts; they serve the Machine God in the quest for lost knowledge.

"Your assertion is flawed. It is you who venerate the Omnissiah, only you do so in His guise as the Emperor."

–Magos Tonnus Mu Kepplar

Much of Mankind's mastery over technology has been forgotten, and what remains are closely guarded secrets, held in jealous hands of the Adeptus Mechanicus. Wrapped up in superstitious beliefs and rites, the knowledge of how to operate the Imperium's most advanced devices falls to these followers of the Machine God. The Adeptus Mechanicus guards and oversees the ancient knowledge and the mysteries of making technology function, for even its dogmatic and superstitious understandings are far beyond those of anyone else in the Imperium. They embrace technology to such a degree that they try to transcend the flesh of their bodies with the purity of metal. To those outside the Mechanicum, they can appear unfeeling and emotionless, more akin to their blessed machines than to other humans, and most would welcome such views.

Role within the Imperium

The Adeptus Mechanicus are the custodians of all Imperial technology. From the red planet of Mars, they maintain a parallel empire that venerates the Emperor in His guise of the Omnissiah. Their beliefs grant technology a mystic power that must be respected and maintained with prayer, ritual, and careful rites. In their worship of the Machine God, the Tech-Priests try to become more like their divine master. Their elders are more machine than man, with even the majority of their brains replaced by cold logic circuitry and whirring cogitators. This is the ultimate ambition of any true devotee of the Machine Cult: to rise through the ranks of the Tech-Priesthood to become a Magos of the order, replete with metal skin and an iron heart.

The Mechanicum is also the keeper of the greatest weapons known to Mankind. Foremost among these are the war engines of the Adeptus Titanicus, the Titan Legions. Towering humanoid battle engines standing as tall as a hab-block and carrying weapons capable of levelling entire hives, Titans are only deployed against the direst of foes. Each is an ancient and sacred piece of technology, venerated as a walking expression of the Omnissiah's might. The Mechanicum also controls other deadly weaponry, including virus bombs and vortex torpedoes that can only be fabricated and deployed with its help. To this end, Tech-Priests can be found in all Imperial organisations. Even the otherwise proudly self-sufficient Adeptus Astartes send Battle-Brothers to Mars for training in the secret ways of the machine. These Techmarines then return to their Chapter and use their knowledge to maintain its arsenals.

There is little, if any, innovation or progress within the Imperium; the principles of power systems, weapons, and voidships are all based on designs and patterns often thousands of years old. This is in part because of the dangers such rampant technological advancement has brought down upon Mankind in the past, when legends tell of thinking machines and terrible planet-killing weapons that wrought havoc upon the galaxy. It is also because of the Adeptus Mechanicus itself. Every major Imperial organisation is oath-bound to the Cult Mechanicus, which closely guards the secrets of technology; even the most powerful of rulers must defer to the Mechanicum in matters of technology. Tech-Priests rule over worlds, have their own fleets, and even raise their own military forces to protect their manufactorums and research outposts.

Those who serve the Machine Cult are often obsessed with technology, seeing the divine glory of the Omnissiah in every circuit and rivet and treating the operation and care of such devices as a sacred duty. Their very appearance sets them apart; even in an Imperium where cybernetics are not uncommon, their heavily augmented bodies are nearly inhuman. Many even chose to strip away healthy flesh and replace it with bionics to the point where they no longer see themselves as human, but rather as something that has transcended mortal bonds. Their mental processes are also augmented, with emotional responses edited or removed altogether and leaving many incapable of normal human interactions.

The result is often a contempt for the bulk of Mankind, seen as the wasteful by-product of evolution and an inefficient component in the divine precision of the Machine God. For the most part, the rest of the Imperium is content to allow the Mechanicum its mastery over their technology, raised to accept that the secrets of the machine are for it and it alone, though this does breed an aura of distrust.

Adeptus Mechanicus Rules

A character with the Adeptus Mechanicus background applies the following benefits:

Starting Skills

Awareness *or* Operate (Pick One), Common Lore (Adeptus Mechanicus), Logic, Security, Tech-Use

Starting Talents

Mechadendrite Use (Utility), Weapon Training (Solid Projectile)

Starting Trait

Mechanicus Implants (see page 137).

Starting Equipment

Autogun *or* hand cannon, monotask servo-skull (utility) *or* optical mechadendrite, Imperial robes, 2 vials of sacred unguents

Background Bonus

Replace the Weak Flesh: An Adeptus Mechanicus character counts the Availability of all cybernetics as two levels more available (Rare items count as Average, Very Rare items count as Scarce, etc.).

Background Aptitude

Knowledge *or* Tech

Recommended Roles

Chirurgeon, Hierophant, Sage, Seeker

Adeptus Mechanicus Characters

From the depths of the Imperium's greatest cities to the engine rooms of its grand interstellar navy, it is the duty of the Adeptus Mechanicus to preserve and maintain the great technological works of man. Once a Tech-Priest has been trained and taken his oaths to the Omnissiah, he is dispatched to tend to some part of these great works, spending his years intoning the sacred prayers and rituals that keep a machine's spirit alive and functioning. Some move beyond these simple processes of maintenance, rising in the ranks of the order to take on more responsibility or expertise. Others aid war efforts directly as Enginseers for the Imperial Guard. They may rule one of the many forge worlds, vital to feeding the Imperium's insatiable appetite for war machines and other materiel. They could also serve as part of an Explorator Fleet in the holy quest for legendary Standard Template Constructs dating to the pre-Imperial Dark Age of Technology. Equally, they might engage in xenos research on the foes of the Imperium, such as the voracious Tyranids or the brutal Orks. A few might command their own outposts and stations, becoming lords of their own domains and devoting their long lives to the personal pursuit of technological mastery.

Others, such as forge labourers or adept minions, have lesser functions. Most aspire to one day join the Tech-Priesthood, so that they may better serve the Omnissiah. Rarely, some might reject the Machine God and seek lives elsewhere, but still retain more skills and familiarity with technology than almost anyone else in the Imperium.

Many within the Cult Mechanicus aspire to become as close to the Machine God as possible, slowly enhancing their bodies with mechanical components until they are more metal than flesh. This can make them devoid of emotion, as they embrace the cold logic of the Machine God they serve, and sometimes put them at odds with others around them. Just as it relies on psykers, the Imperium could not function without the presence of the Adeptus Mechanicus, and whether its citizens favour a servant of the Omnissiah or merely tolerate him, they could not survive without his knowledge and skills.

Sample Adeptus Mechanicus Background: Cerix Magnus Regimen Affirmator

Cerix Magnus is perhaps the greatest of the many forge worlds within Askellon, and is strict in following only the most sanctified of technology patterns. The Tech-Priests of the Regimen Affirmator work there to ensure no forge strays from the correct dictates of the Omnissiah, and that all proper obeisances are made. This office carefully checks that each offering of holy oil is at the proper temperature and consistency before it is used to anoint a new machine spirit, monitors binaric prayer levels for proper frequency, checks manufacturing liturgies to verify that none have attempted unconsecrated actions, and more. Through these actions it ensures that the taint of tech-heresy never gains a foothold.



Adeptus Ministorum

The great religious agency of the Emperor of Mankind; with shrines and cathedrals on a million worlds, they are dedicated to spreading and teaching the word of the Emperor so all might bask within His light and fear His wrath.

"So as you love and fear the Emperor, so must you love and fear those that carry His divine word."

–Cardinal Erasmus Pontium

The Adeptus Ministorum, also known as the Ecclesiarchy, is the religion that venerates the Emperor of Mankind. Powerful and ancient, it embodies the Imperial Creed, the myriad systems of belief that bind humanity together, gives it purpose, and keeps it safe from soul-imperilling threats both within and without. Its members are devoted servants of the Emperor, dedicated to bringing His word to the faithful, and rooting out any which would stand against Him. Whether with words or deeds, a member of the Adeptus Ministorum never forgets his earlier service. Even should he fall from grace, the teachings of the church remain branded upon his soul, and the fire of the Emperor's faith still burns strong in his belly.

Role within the Imperium

According to Imperial belief, ten thousand years ago the Emperor fell after ending the greatest civil war the galaxy has even known. As the Emperor was the unifier of the galaxy and father of the Imperium, it took little time for a cult to rise in worship, idolising Him for saving Mankind and preventing the demise of humanity. This cult spread, maturing to become a religion. As the centuries passed it became the unifying creed of the Imperium, until every citizen could look up at the cold, fearful darkness of the night sky and know it was the Emperor who kept them safe. This religion exists in all levels of Imperial society, though the details of this worship are unique on every world and every society. This is a minor concern to the Ministorum, for so long as a citizen holds the Emperor as his god, then he is indeed a loyal worshipper. Fanatical missionaries, blessed saints, and preachers ensure the propagation of the Imperial Cult to maintain the Ecclesiarchy and its law, binding together the Imperium in devotion to the Emperor.

The Ministorum does not exist simply to ensure devotion to the Emperor; it also exists to ensure that His enemies are purged from humanity, and only those of pure spirit and faith survive. This includes maintaining the faith among the Emperor's soldiers as they fight xenos and other threats. Most Imperial forces have cadres of devout clerics to see to their souls and stir them to righteous fury. The Ministorum also serves to convert newly-discovered pockets of humanity and transform any native beliefs to the Imperial Creed. It seeks to root out mutants, witches, and other heretics from among every population.

These are the true enemies of the Ministorum, those who would hide within, masquerading as humanity when they are anything but. They are stains upon the purity of the Emperor's domain, and it is the sworn duty of all members of the Ministorum to uncover these unholy deviants and see them burn upon the pyres of holy retribution.

Adeptus Ministorum Rules

A character with the Adeptus Ministorum background applies the following benefits:

Starting Skills

Charm, Command, Common Lore (Adeptus Ministorum), Inquiry *or* Scrutiny, Linguistics (High Gothic)

Starting Talents

Weapon Training (Flame) *or* Weapon Training (Low-Tech, Solid Projectile)

Starting Equipment

Hand flamer (*or* warhammer and stub revolver), Imperial robes *or* flak vest, backpack, glow-globe, monotask servo-skull (laud hailer)

Background Bonus

Faith is All: When spending a Fate point to gain a +10 bonus to any one test, an Adeptus Ministorum character gains a +20 bonus instead.

Background Aptitude

Leadership *or* Social

Recommended Roles

Chirurgeon, Hierophant, Seeker, Warrior

The Ministorum enjoys extensive power and influence due to its integration into almost all Imperial agencies. There is practically no place within the Imperium where one can be completely free of its presence, and most lords and governors have at least one member close at hand to give them counsel. For some, the presence of the Ministorum is a welcome one, a steady hand to augment their own faith and aid them in their decisions. For others, it is a hated reminder of the limitations of their own power. However, this is a battle that even the most powerful lord is doomed to lose, as no planet or even sector can hope to stand for long against the influence of the Ecclesiarchy given its power to prosecute any man, or even any world, for the taint of heresy.

Adeptus Ministorum Characters

The Ecclesiarchy reaches out into every aspect of life within the Imperium, its presence the face, voice, and hand of Emperor's divine will on countless worlds and systems. Citizens are taught from birth to fear and respect the might of the Ministorum that keeps them safe, even from themselves. Those of the Ecclesiarchy are filled with even greater faith and zeal, knowing that the Emperor is the salvation of Mankind. Some might have been born into the Adeptus Ministorum, their family line forever melded to holy service. Others may have left behind their old lives and positions to enter local temples as mere novitiates. Imperial worlds commonly feature imposing temples and chapels hosting

Ecclesiarchy members, each devoted to the Emperor in their own manner. Their faith defines all within the Adeptus Ministorum, and they give themselves over completely to their service, swearing their lives for the betterment of the Imperium, to face the foes of the Emperor wherever they are found.

Most who rise within the Ministorum find a place as preachers, overseeing flocks of Imperial citizens and safeguarding their souls against the influence of witches, mutants, and foul xenos cults. They also act as teachers and guides to the future generations that come after. Such a post is not without its dangers; dissidents and unbelievers often target them for attack or assassination as such actions can be seen as a blow against the hated Imperium itself. More often, they find peril within the Ecclesiarchy as the sprawling might of the Ministorum constantly struggles against itself while attempting to control the Imperium's citizens. In time, a priest or cleric might rise up to command the Ministorum's interests on an entire world, and become mired in system and sector politics.

Others might travel the wilder areas of the galaxy, spreading the word of the Emperor or stoking the fires of faith within those who fight in His name. As firebrands and witch-hunters, some members of the Ecclesiarchy seek out heresy and subversion while their brothers in the priesthood maintain the faith of the populace. These travels can take them from the frontlines of the Imperium's bloodiest wars to the depths of primitive worlds where they bring word of the Emperor to feral savages. It is a task frequently fraught with danger, but one of little concern to those that travel with the faith of the master of Mankind in their hearts and the glory of the Imperium at their backs.

Sample Adeptus Ministorum Background: The Blessed Charnaven of Thaur

The shrine world of Thaur is the resting place of billions, overflowing with the remains of the powerful and the saintly. Millions more of the humble and poor strive to ensure that their remains also find a place on this holy world, arranging in life for their dead forms to be shipped there. Their untold tonnes arrive at the Blessed Charnaven, where bones are prepared for a final rest. The Osseiates of the Charnaven inscribe a unique prayer onto each bone before it is used to fortify a basilica or pave one of the kilometre-wide walkways that encircle the world. No bone is unused, and each becomes an eternal offering to the Emperor.



Imperial Guard

Vast armies drawn from countless worlds; skilled warriors and hardened veterans of mankind's many brutal and bloody wars, they are all that stands between the Imperium and its innumerable foes.

"Let the Hammer of the Emperor fall upon this world."

–Lord General Hanto Rhem

To protect the Imperium from its many enemies, the Imperium maintains a massive fighting force known as the Imperial Guard. Tithed from the worlds across the galaxy, the Imperial Guard is an immense force of countless billions, always at constant war, and always recruiting more soldiers to replace the fallen. No accurate records exist as to its exact size and strength, and such is its nature that it is in constant flux, troops moving from system to system or scattered across the stars fighting wars long forgotten. Many Guardsmen do not live even a full day after entering battle, but those who survive become hardened combat veterans skilled in the bringing of death and facing the worst foes the galaxy has to offer. Scarred and broken, such veterans can hope for little comfort beyond the battlefield, but may find service in other parts of the Imperial war machine or more secretive duties in less overt wars.

Role within the Imperium

The Imperium covers much of the known galaxy, with borders stretching many thousands of light-years across, containing millions of worlds spread across the darkness of space. It struggles for survival against numerous alien foes as well as rebellion and subversion from within. Fighting these wars is the largest army Mankind has ever known: the Imperial Guard, also known more formerly as the Astra Militarum. Not even the Adeptus Administratum knows how many are serving at any given time, though in a single sector alone it can easily reach the billions, thousands dying each day to be replaced with thousands more. These soldiers form the thin line against a violent universe eager to scour the stars clean of all traces of humanity. When alien races and planetary uprising threaten, it is the weight of the Imperial Guard that is wielded like a mighty hammer blow intended to crush all resistance to the Emperor's rule. Even so, engagements can last for years, decades, and longer in seemingly endless wars of attrition where generations fight and die for the promise of future victory.

Service in the Astra Militarum follows many paths, some following in the traditions of their world to join famous regiments like millions before them. Others might enter via lottery, conscription, punishment, or blind chance. Each world is responsible for tithing a percentage of its population to this service, and a world that slackens in this duty often faces the fury of the Imperial Guard bringing it into compliance. Once a man becomes a soldier, he usually never sees his home world again, sent off across the galaxy to fight wars on far-off worlds for strange peoples and foreign lords. Every Guardsman knows, though, that there is no real escape from service, and only in death is he free of this sacred duty to the Emperor. For their part, the regiments of the Astra Militarum combine both those dedicated and fanatical to the cause with those that serve only out of fear or penance. Thus, an Imperial Guardsman can be anything from a hero heaped with glory or a zealot ready to spend his life for unseen masters, to a self-serving coward merely trying to survive or a criminal running from his crimes, and all manners of man in between. All have their place in the Imperial Guard's plan, sometimes serving as mere cannon fodder so that other more valuable assets might be protected. However, even the greatest of soldiers might still be squandered in the hands of a callous commander, of which the Astra Militarum has more than its fair share.

The rare veterans that survive to see life beyond the Imperial Guard are hardened fighters, the product of countless wars and engagements. Often trained in a variety of the Imperium's most deadly weapons and armoured vehicles, their skills are always in demand. Each is unique, but all share the common trait of being survivors, having come through the meat grinder that is Imperial war, and somehow survived where millions have not. This in itself is a valued ability, one that only those that have fought in the Emperor's service can truly understand. Within some regiments, however, veterans might find little chance of advancement or survival due to incompetent or careless commanders. They inevitably die in battle, their skills, like their blood, spent in another of the Imperium's endless conflicts to hold onto its fragile empire.

Imperial Guard Rules

A character with the Imperial Guard background applies the following benefits:

Starting Skills

Athletics, Command, Common Lore (Imperial Guard), Medicae *or* Operate (Surface), Navigate (Surface)

Starting Talents

Weapon Training (Las, Low-Tech)

Starting Equipment

Lasgun (*or* laspistol and sword), combat vest, Imperial Guard flak armour, grapnel and line, 12 lho sticks, magnoculars

Background Bonus

Hammer of the Emperor: When attacking a target that an ally attacked since the end of the Guardsman's last turn, the Guardsman can re-roll any results of 1 or 2 on damage rolls.

Background Aptitude

Fieldcraft *or* Leadership

Recommended Roles

Assassin, Desperado, Hierophant, Warrior

Imperial Guard Characters

Imperial Guardsmen come from many worlds and are masters of many skills, each combination of both often unique to their regiment or unit. A character who has served here is adept in the use of weapons and has likely tasted combat, seeing first-hand just what the Imperium must do every day to survive. This can fill him with a deep hatred of heretics and all xenos life. It has also made him into a survivor. Often entire regiments are consumed only hours after their arrival in a warzone, and it is rare for a Guardsmen to live through an entire campaign, or sometimes even a single battle. That the character has lived through many such combats marks him as valuable and rare, even if few within his command structure notice. Fortunately, there are often others that do identify the character's unique attributes and can put his talents to good use.

Imperial Guardsmen also can become specialists with a specific weapon or method of fighting, and it is likely such a character has one or more specialisations under his belt. These can include sniper training among the regiment's recon elements, driving Leman Russ battle tanks, or operating the gargantuan Imperial artillery pieces. A Guardsman might also learn less combat-oriented skills that are also essential to prosecuting wars, such as logistics, material support, or advanced intelligence-gathering techniques.

Some Guardsmen might rise to a position of command, and learn something of the tactics and strategy of warfare along with logistics and politics. These skills can prove invaluable in other vocations, as an understanding of one's foes and how to best counter them can be applied to myriad situations. The Imperial Guard are among the few elements of the Imperium to face the alien threat head on, and a man that has spent time within Astra Militarum has seen things few others could even imagine. This marks him out from the majority of the civilian populace who have never heard of many of these threats, let alone seen them. His rank alone can also serve him well in the presence of others with similar service. Those still within the Imperial Guard, especially if they are aware of the character's regiment, may often hold him in greater respect for his service, knowing first-hand the price of duty he must have paid and the comrades he lost along the way.

Sample Imperial Guard Background: Hrax 33rd Regimental Demolitions Squad

Part of the vicious Hrax Bloodknives, this unit specialises in infiltration and destruction, and has breached impassable fortifications and forced tank formations to a grinding halt. As in all Hraxian forces, the unit's lasguns are fitted with chainblades for close-quarters fighting. Accompanied with Tech-Priest Enginseers, the demolitions squads venture deep behind lines to plant explosives and mines, and the 33rd is well known for always finding enemy units to rip apart with their silenced chainblades.



Outcast

Living in the shadow of the might of the Imperium, gangers, criminals, and dregs prosper and thrive; cunning survivors and experienced outlaws, they exist only for themselves and those who have bought their loyalties.

"You're asking too many questions. That makes it cost extra."

–Rikko Delarn, previously known as Ricard Al'Delaroique IV

Even within the Imperium, where most are born into the same position for life, there are those that work their way free to make a life on their own terms. Some may have deliberately forsaken the role they were given, or slipped between the cracks of their ossified civilisation. They exist as criminals, vagabonds, and renegades on the fringes of Imperial life. These Outcasts live in the shadows of society, living by their wits and charm. They are able thieves, assassins, and bounty hunters; suspicion and fear often dogs their steps, as others know that where they tread, crime follows. Despite the epithet, Outcasts can be connected to all levels of Imperial life, and while their concerns are primarily for themselves, they can be enlisted to larger pursuits. They have connections, knowledge, and skills unheard of for proper Imperial citizens, and the willingness to use them through bribery, coercion, or other base appeals often more effective than simple calls to Imperial duty. They can also retain associations and bonds with their previous lives and organisations that allow them to operate across many strata of Imperial life.

Role within the Imperium

Every society has its margins, its underworld and forgotten peoples. This is the realm of the Outcast, where no true law reigns, where there is no justice other than that of the gun, where only the strong and insane prosper. On hive worlds and those with dense populations, these elements are usually criminal in nature, hiding among the ordinary citizens. On less-populated worlds or those on the fringes of the Imperium, they might simply be trying to maintain their independence from distant Imperial rule. More likely, these places are havens for crime and sedition, filled with illicit organisations and heretical cults pushed to a sector's remote edges to escape the wrath of Imperial authorities.

Though few would admit it, most worlds need Outcasts. They smuggle illegal but sought-after goods, and provide a semblance of order in abandoned and forgotten regions. Many worlds rely on them as their primary workforce, especially for those tasks unfit for even the lowest of citizens. While reviled and hated, Outcast mutants are sometimes enlisted or forced to work in toxic factories, dig radioactive ores, or till continent-spanning agri-fields on worlds with dangerous atmospheres or gravities. Outcasts also make prime recruits for the Imperial Guard, as their harsh lives make them well-suited to the rigours of combat. More commonly, authorities use them as scapegoats for the ills of a world, whether they are responsible or not.

While the Ministorum would have the citizens believe that all Outcasts are deviants, renegades, and heretics, in reality many simply dare to exist outside of the Imperium's dictates. In the eyes of most authorities, however, all who flout the Emperor's Law are the same. In some cases, Outcasts counter threats to humanity, as xenos hunters holding back the influence of alien powers on fringe planets, or vigilante executioners bringing a form of justice to lawless realms within civilised worlds. Outcasts may be shunned by the pillars of Imperial order, but that certainly does not mean they favour Mankind's enslavement or eradication.

Outcasts do not come only from the lowest reaches of the Imperium, or those that exist beyond its light. Some noble houses, or large portions of their families, may essentially become Outcasts through choice or force. These noble Outcasts sometimes cling to their power, even in the face of denouncement and exile, setting up their own private kingdoms where they continue to hold court. Inevitably, such concerns turn to criminal endeavours for enrichment or revenge. They often justify rejection of lawful society for no other reason than that society allowed their fall from grace. The distinction on the fringes of the Imperium between these kinds of Outcasts and legitimate planetary governors and warlords is a thin one indeed, and is often of little consequence to human travellers who accept local power in whatever form it takes.

Outcast Rules

A character with the Outcast background applies the following benefits:

Starting Skills

Acrobatics *or* Sleight of Hand, Common Lore (Underworld), Deceive, Dodge, Stealth

Starting Talents

Weapon Training (Chain, and Las *or* Solid Projectile)

Starting Equipment

Autopistol *or* laspistol, chainsword, armoured bodyglove *or* flak vest, injector, 2 doses of obscura *or* slaught

Background Bonus

Never Quit: An Outcast character counts his Toughness bonus as two higher for purposes of determining Fatigue.

Background Aptitude

Fieldcraft *or* Social

Recommended Roles

Assassin, Desperado, Seeker

Outcast Characters

Outcast characters are not always criminals, though most might view them as such. Many Outcasts, exiled from proper society, find themselves operating in the shadows, often among the very people who exiled them. Such is the fractured nature of Imperial powers and their goals, that the powerful find uses for Outcasts. As they are rarely connected directly to such great agencies, Outcasts can operate beyond normal rules and resolve tasks in manners their masters could never authorise. Most, though, have no masters, and many live freely to act on their own. Hated or hunted, they can do business knowing that at some time or another even the lords they have turned away from might come calling for aid.

Many Outcasts are loners, solitary wanderers existing in the forgotten places of the galaxy. There are groups of Outcasts, though, that form and even prosper on the brutal borders of existence. Many Outcast factions are gangs that live at the bottom of the Imperial society in every sense. These can range from pirates plying merchant lanes and criminal cartels running entire hab-cities, to thuggish guns for hire strutting around frontier outposts and info-brokers dealing in stolen whispers. Some of these are somewhat tolerated for their useful services. Others are continually opposed, engaged in endless struggles with the forces of law and order. With sufficient wealth and power, many gangs may rise to power and influence rivalling that of highborn princelings.

Other groups of Outcasts gather together for survival. Followers of forbidden religions, nomadic tech reclamators, violent seditionists, mutant gangs, xenos-worshipping infestations, and others band together against a universe that would see them dead if they lived alone. The normal routes to power denied to them, or desiring not only just power but the actual downfall of Imperial rule in their hive or planet, these factions are often very dangerous, as they can breed individuals with little concern for the Emperor's Will. Outcasts of these groups can have access and skills useful for penetrating heresies far greater than mere criminal cartels.

Characters from Outcast backgrounds are in the end a breed apart from most others. Highly unique in outlook, appearance, and belief, their only common attributes are usually an aim to ensure their own safety and profit first, and a disposition to ignore or circumvent anything that stands in their way. An Outcast character always walks a fine line between being an enemy and an asset of the Imperium; the very independence that sets him apart from the rest of the people and compels him to live apart makes him a useful operative for organisations like the Inquisition.

Sample Outcast Background: The Pale League of Port Aquila

While the Greater Askellon Trade Combine has a stranglehold on commerce across the asteroids that make up the port, the Pale League operates across the belt as one of the premier smuggling operations in the region. Made up of failed merchants and sometimes even Rogue Traders who saw their fortunes fall due to catastrophic expeditions or piratical raids, it is a relatively recent formation, but is growing in power. As the League begins moving xenos relics and other forbidden treasures, it has made rivals of other Faceless Trade groups such as Desoleum's Trade Sable.



Stage 3: Choose Role

"There wasn't much thought needed, other than just staying alive from combat to combat. Theft filled the time nicely, and I was so good at it, better than just shooting a lasgun. One mistake was all it took. The Commissar never discovered who made off with his shiny pistol, but someone else noticed and had me by the short ones. He pulled me out, and my new duties began. Ones much more dangerous than open war."

–Gex Avrille, from the private memoirs *Recollections of Service*

Roles illuminate an Acolyte's essence. While a home world establishes where an Acolyte came from, and a background indicates his prior experiences, a role helps reveal who he really is underneath his clothing, armour, and cybernetics. It is an internal quality, a product of both a lifetime of training and his natural talents, and combines a great many things to help define him and how he fits into life in the 41st Millennium.

Each Acolyte has an image of himself that guides his actions, and this is a major aspect of his role. This image also guides how he views his surroundings and those around him, and most importantly how he interacts and resolves the many situations he faces. An Assassin is enraptured with death, and seeks to offer it as often as possible. When faced with recalcitrant hive functionaries, he might simply begin killing them one by one until he earns their cooperation. A Sage who relies on knowledge and research might view the same problem as requiring careful analysis to determine a more effective approach. He might instead suggest targeted bribes against one official he learns is corrupt, or blackmail against another who has a secret obscura addiction. Similarly, when a warband is on the trail of a suspected underhive cult, a Warrior could approach the problem with force and proffer violent questioning with threats of worse to come in order to gain information. A Seeker, however, might rely on stealthy surveillance and infiltration of nearby stickrat taverns in the same quest. Even within each role exists a broad range of styles, and just as each home world and background is unique, even if of the same named type, each role can offer a wide range of approaches though. A Hierophant might approach a newly discovered tribe of humanity with stern words and burning flames, or might insinuate the Imperial Creed into existing beliefs with guile and subtlety. How each Acolyte carries his role is another facet of how he serves his Inquisitor and the Emperor.

Roles can come about in many ways, but while home worlds and backgrounds act externally on an Acolyte to form his previous life, roles more commonly emerge from within as mental attitudes and outlooks develop over time. Some might even crystallise in childhood, or come about from life-altering experiences. It is possible that society, lineage, home world, or an organisation might mould an Acolyte into a preordained role, or cause him to seek out certain roles for service. The Imperial Guard needs Warriors, for example, as the Hammer of the Emperor is nothing if not a brutal, violent agency devoted to crushing the foes of the Imperium. Some Guardsmen are likely of a Warrior mindset, but others might view themselves as elite killer Assassins or as Chirurgeons who are primarily healers. Someone born to a shrine world could be strongly guided to a Hierophant role, but could just as easily instead become a Warrior as a missionary for the Imperial Creed. Roles are internally developed, sometimes despite an Acolyte's surroundings or duties, and could come from other sources such as mentors or family members who have personally guided him earlier in life.

An Acolyte's role might be clear on the surface: many Warriors wear heavy armour and hold their weapons proudly, a Mystic could be covered with protective runes and icons to ward off the Ruinous Powers, and a Sage might carry reams of parchment and autoquill needles on his belt. This may be done without conscious thought; the Warrior mentioned above—who is clearly a fighter—dresses thusly as he is often fighting. His predilection for combat is the result of his often violent approach to challenges, which in turn defines his role. Other Acolytes might not reveal their roles, again either through conscious decision or otherwise. An Assassin might wear drab, unremarkable clothing to aid in his stealthy infiltration before a kill. He might wear the same simply because it is what he enjoys wearing, or because it is the

Player Notes: Roles

Deciding on a character's role is perhaps the single most important stage of character creation for the player, for it determines what type of Acolyte he plays in Dark Heresy. Home world and background contribute a great deal to the character's history before he became an Acolyte, but his role sets out his days to come and how he operates in the warband. Players who enjoy certain types of roleplaying experiences can use this to help guide their role selection; those who seek out mysteries to solve might favour a Seeker or a Sage role, for example. The role also helps a player determine how his character should react and progress as the adventure unfolds. These are powerful roleplay tools and a player should always remember his role and use it when deciding new courses of action.

Roles are also something the players as a group should consider together, as a solid warband is one that encompasses a wide range of roles. A warband filled with Warriors might excel at physical combat, but likely suffers with the investigations needed to find heretics to fight. Developing a good mix of roles makes for a more successful warband, and also allows each player a chance to shine during an adventure. This is not to say a warband dominated by only a few roles cannot be interesting to roleplay, but the players and GM should work together to ensure the characters face adventures that fit into the type of game desired.

It is common parlance in the Imperium to mention someone as coming from a feral world, or working for the Adeptus Astra Telepathica. Roles, however, do not actually exist as titles or Imperial designations; they are more a mindset or attitude that any character adopts over his lifetime and operate only within the context of the game. There is no actual "Desperado" or "Seeker" as a real occupation or title in the 41st Millennium; there are instead Trade Sable smugglers or Hive Desoleum Bondhound Sanctionaries. No character would refer to another using his role; players should use them as aids in roleplaying, but not have their characters use them as names or titles.



clothing people from his background or home world commonly wore, and his all-consuming passion for death is something only his dying victims see in his eyes.

Though the Acolyte can grow and change in the course of service to his Inquisitor, even perhaps becoming an Inquisitor himself, his role does not change. He can learn new abilities, acquire new wargear, and make new connections, but this does not change how he uses them. A Desperado might grow in influence and power, guiding a xenos artefact smuggling ring as a front to track down this illicit trade, gaining him enormous status across the sector, but he still watches for new angles to work and new targets to con. A Sage can become as proficient with the bolter and chainsword as the Arbitrator in their warband, but when a new cult is discovered, still acts to ensure this new threat is fully researched and investigated before any other action is taken. Roles are an integral part of each Acolyte's identity, and, like duty itself, only end with death.

Each role presented in the following pages includes a description of the type of character it embodies along with an example of a character of this role from the Askellon Sector. Each includes the following special rules that are applied to a character with this role:

Role Aptitudes: The aptitudes (see page 79) the character gains from this role during character creation.

Role Talents: The talents (see page 119) that a character with this role gains at character creation. Note that the character does not need to meet the normal prerequisites for talents granted during this stage of character creation.

Role Special Ability: A unique ability that a character with this role gains during character creation.

Each role also includes two examples of how a player can develop his chosen role using advancements in characteristics, skills, talents, and even psychic powers to create an evocative Dark Heresy character.

Each player chooses one role for his character, and decides his character's function before and after joining the warband. The example character included with each role offers narrative origins and motivations that a player can use to help develop his own creations, and aid in deciding what kind of role best fits his planned character. After the player chooses his character's role, the character immediately gains the appropriate role special ability.

Assassin

Talented murderers dedicated to the art of taking life; death merchants of the highest calibre, they are trained to kill and adept at slaying their targets in a variety of gruesome and grisly ways.

"Death has come for you, and will not be denied."

–Tallan Quot, Order of the Stilled Flesh

Even in a universe saturated with blood and death, there are those which turn murder into a sublime art form. The Assassin is such a being, spending their lives perfecting talents in the kill, rising to greater heights with each life they take. While many who serve the Emperor are proficient in battle, Assassins revel only in the act of killing and often care little for commonplace combat. Driven with either an unhealthy thirst for the blood of others or a cold detachment leaving them bereft of their humanity, they can come in a variety of forms, linked together only by their desire to deliver death in the most efficient or grandiose way possible. They are inevitably drawn to those organisations which revere killing as much as they do or are in need of such artful killers. Many join death cults, societies devoted to the act of murder. Others might be recruited to mysterious Imperial organisations devoted to the art of sanctioned killing. In all cases it is the desire to take life and develop the skills of doing so which defines the Assassin, a journey which will end only when they themselves succumb to death.

The Role of the Assassin

Assassins are often not just masters at killing, but also at closing on their prey and striking without warning. Like the Imperium's most deadly predators, an Assassin stalks his quarry before he attacks, choosing the precise moment to inflict the maximum amount of damage and the best chance to make the kill. These techniques are the result of his skills in stealth and infiltration, slipping past sentries or guards and finding ways into seemingly impregnable fortresses. Like murderous ghosts, they appear out of nowhere to silently take down their targets before vanishing once again. A truly masterful Assassin can kill without detection, leaving only terror, confusion, and a corpse in his wake. In this capacity, an Assassin makes an excellent scout or skirmisher, gathering information and spreading discord among his enemies, while his fellow Acolytes conduct their mission.

Part of an Assassin's abilities extend to the arts of deception and disguise. When he cannot move about unseen or comes up against a barrier which he cannot breach, he can sometimes hide in plain sight. While not a staple of the role, the finest are often adept chameleons, changing their appearance to match surroundings and mimicking their enemies to hide amongst them. Here they can become talented liars, and learn to match the speech and mannerisms of their foes to slide into their ranks unnoticed. Such methods are excellent ways of getting close to a target, passing freely through security checkpoints and other barriers before attacking an unsuspecting quarry and using the confusion to fade into the background undetected.

Assassin Special Rules

An Assassin character gains the following benefits:

Role Aptitudes

Agility, Ballistic Skill *or* Weapon Skill, Fieldcraft, Finesse, Perception

Role Talent

Jaded *or* Leap Up

Role Bonus

Sure Kill: In addition to the normal uses of Fate points (see page 293), when an Assassin successfully hits with an attack, he may spend a Fate point to inflict additional damage equal to his degrees of success on the attack roll on the first hit the attack inflicts.

Assassins are also skilled the application of precision violence, taking out specific foes or striking targets that might have otherwise considered themselves safe. Either close up with blades and poisons, or from afar with sniper rifles and remote explosives, the Assassin can hit a foe swiftly and suddenly. Whereas a less subtle Acolyte can be forced to expend huge amounts of ammunition or saturate an area with explosives to eliminate a target, the Assassin needs but one shot or one thrust of the blade to do his work. This talent for precise murder can be useful when collateral damage must be kept to a minimum or only a key figure needs removal to crush an uprising or cult.

In addition to skills in moving about unseen, bypassing security, and reaching difficult targets, the Assassin also makes for a solid support combatant. Alongside the more heavily armed and armoured Acolytes, he can offer long range assistance, covering the battlefield with sniper fire, or skulking around the flanks of his foes to take out stragglers and wounded enemies. Using his skills in death, an Assassin can do terrible damage in the right circumstances, and open the way for his fellow Acolytes to complete their goals. This could be taking out combatants unseen from kilometres away with sniper fire, the only evidence of his presence in the battle the exploding heads of his targets. It could be close and bloody with blades and pistols, appearing suddenly to tear open throats and exposed joints before rejoining the shadows.

Assassin Characters

Assassins typically view most problems as solvable through precise and exact application of deadly force, and as such mould their bodies and minds to best execute it. Most delight in such applications and eagerly seek them out, or view them as acts of devotion as part of their veneration to the Emperor. The worlds of the Imperium are home to numerous death cults, murder guilds, lifetaker orders, and other places to train in these arts of murder. Surrounded by such death and destruction, and living in the shadow of constant danger, some sects revere death as a force of nature, a vengeful god, or fickle ally. An Assassin character can hail from any one of these divergent sources, or even have learned his skills alone after long hard years selling his talents as a mercenary.

Assassins born into a hive or as part of the factories of a forge world often favour guns and technological ways of killing. The death cults on these worlds often advocate training in advanced and exotic weaponry, such as elaborate micro-explosives and electro-garrottes. In contrast, the Assassins of a feral world rely on more primitive means. Even if they later trade a metal sword for a power blade, theirs is a talent for getting in close to cut their foes down. Living in such conditions also grants a greater understanding of the natural environment, and these Assassins may also be adept at the use of native poisons on their home world.

Highborn Assassins represent another facet of death, using not only the resources to those born on developed worlds, but also exploiting the subtle ways of social conflict, and mastering the skills of moving unseen by means of disguise and deception. They can also often call upon greater resources than their more humble brethren. The noble houses of the Imperium sometimes foster such men and women so that they might retain the services of trusted killers, tied to the family through bonds of blood. Many death cults venerate Imperial saints, and Assassins from shrine worlds can view their murderous art as an essential part of religious life, reinforcing their faith to the Emperor with each kill. Assassins across the Imperium are bound in their common devotion to death and murder, their varying origins all but of little matter to the dead they leave behind.

Sample Assassin: Karris Tarydro

Karris is formerly of the Razor Angels, one of the deadlier Fleshcutter gangs of Hive Desoleum. He left his gang on a quest to find his equally lethal sister Karinne, who disappeared after her own gang, the Bloodlines, was massacred several years ago. His search took him all across the hive. With each new kill to further the quest, he became more enamoured of the act itself, until it became equally important to his life. He now travels across the sector, killing as directed, but always finding opportunity for personal acts of murder in pursuit of his sister.



Assassin Sample Paths

Many Assassins concentrate on stealth to facilitate dealing death, using ranged weaponry to kill a foe before anyone is aware of their presence. In this path, a player can develop his character into a dreaded sniper, able to quietly manoeuvre into position and pick off heretics, either to begin or end a clash. While he can only see the lethal results through a magnocular or rifle scope, he savours the kills all the more for surprised expressions on those surrounding the cooling corpses.

Recommended Advances:

Characteristics: Agility, Ballistic Skill, Perception
Skills: Acrobatics, Athletics, Security, Stealth
Talents: Deathdealer, Double Tap, Exotic Weapon Training, Eye of Vengeance, Marksman, Mighty Shot, Nowhere to Hide, Precision Killer, Target Selection, Weapon Training (Las, Solid Projectile)

Anyone can kill, but for some it is a calling. Here death is not a goal to be achieved, but an art to be created. They delight in intimate killing and are enamoured of serrated garrottes and exotic poisons. Developing an Assassin in this way would include advancing his skills in melee combat, especially in a variety of weaponry as well as unarmed combat. He can also further these pursuits by crafting unique concoctions to coat their blades or inject into the raw canvases of their targets.

Recommended Advances:

Characteristics: Intelligence, Strength, Weapon Skill
Skills: Forbidden Lore (Chymistry), Medicae, Trade (Chymistry), Trade (Morticator)
Talents: Assassin Strike, Blademaster, Blind Fighting, Deathdealer, Inescapable Attack, Killing Strike, Precision Killer, Unarmed Specialist, Weapon Training (Low Tech)

Chirurgeon

Masters of the flesh, with a knowledge of sacred anatomy that lends itself to both the arts of healing as well as torture; they are devoted to the study of biological forms and the limits of mortal bodies.

"You did well to stay alive long enough to reach me. I'll ensure you stay that way."

–Medicae Yu Attrin

The secrets of the flesh are closely-guarded lore within the Imperium. Just as the Adeptus Mechanicus jealously protects the rites and rituals governing its technology, so too do others hoard knowledge about the human form. Chirurgeons have been ushered into these hidden ways, peeling back the skin of biological science to gaze upon its wet, raw, beating organs. They see the understanding of the blessed form of Man and other biologics as paramount to life, either to preserve it or control it, and can become obsessed with perfecting their understanding of such matters. Some may come from the ranks of the Adeptus Mechanicus Biologis, others serving as Imperial Guard medicae or Adepta Sororitas Sisters of the Orders Hospitaller. Some may have operated as unguilded hab-docs, feral shaman-healers, or personal medilords to spire rulers. Their abilities place them in a position of great power within the Imperium, gifted as they are with the talent to either heal or harm depending on their own whims and those of their lords. As such, a good Chirurgeon can always find a place as a torturer or excoriator, his ability to cause pain a vital commodity within the hierarchy of Imperial society. More than a talent for torture or a skill at mending mangled bodies, the Chirurgeon is defined by his thirst for knowledge and a drive for experimentation, often at the expense of his patients and their wellbeing. It is an obsessive drive that can lead to great discovery and triumph, but also to the creation of abominations which were never meant to be.

The Role of the Chirurgeon

The science of the body and the mind are shrouded in mystery within the Imperium, secrets privy to a specialised few. As an Acolyte, the Chirurgeon gains free reign to practise his arts and finds no shortage of subjects, be they for healing or for harm. Principal among the gifts of the Chirurgeon is the ability to mend broken flesh, shattered bones, and twisted minds, either replacing them with augmentations or grafts, or by means of complex surgery, before returning an Acolyte to service. Whereas a battlefield trooper or gang skin-stitcher might know the basics of lasburning to cauterise a wound or binding a bleeding limb, the Chirurgeon transcends these through devotion and skills to preserve and cure. In his hands, flesh can be made better than before. What the Chirurgeon does is often not just medicine but art, manipulating the flesh into new and superior configurations.

Healers exist on all worlds, though their form and ability can vary wildly depending on societal factors and local taboos. The Biologis of the Adeptus Mechanicus contain specialised Chirurgeons entrusted with the secrets of the human form. Here they learn the mechanics of the flesh and how to emulate it with blessed technology, though some might heretically seek to better it where possible. The Imperial Guard perhaps has the greatest numbers through the sheer size of its armies across the galaxy, with each regiment containing many medics.

With the talent for healing also comes the talent for harm, and Inquisitors have great call for the Chirurgeon and his skills when it comes to bleeding the truth out of their prisoners. Many Inquisitors have a raw ability when it comes to putting someone to the question, trading pain for truth. The Chirurgeon, however, can keep a subject alive almost indefinitely and in constant, excruciating pain. A good Chirurgeon is inventive in his torments, as he must be to overcome the hatred and resilience of some of the Mankind's foes, and in time grows to have a large repertoire of tortures at his ready disposal.

Chirurgeons do not just heal the injured or interrogate prisoners; they may also be intellectuals and researchers plunging into the depths of Imperial secrets, or keeping the ancient lore of the Adeptus Mechanicus. Those that operate outside the boundaries of the Machine Cult must tread with care, the Mechanicum having little patience for those that dabble in the mysteries of science. This usually means they must conduct their research in secret, hidden from the eyes of the Imperium, safeguarded by their service to an Inquisitor. Many rogue Chirurgeons have found a place within a warband when they were persecuted by the Mechanicum for their crimes, an Inquisitor finding a useful place for their talents. Others are hunted, leaving a trail of monstrous failures and stacks of hidden bodies in their wake, finding a refuge for their madness in service of a higher purpose.

Chirurgeon Special Rules

A Chirurgeon character gains the following benefits:

Role Aptitudes

Fieldcraft, Intelligence, Knowledge, Strength, Toughness

Role Talent

Resistance (Pick One) *or* Takedown

Role Bonus

Dedicated Healer: In addition to the normal uses of Fate points (see page 293), when a Chirurgeon character fails a test to provide First Aid, he can spend a Fate point to automatically succeed instead with the degrees of success equal to his Intelligence bonus.

Chirurgeon Characters

The Adeptus Mechanicus is one source of one that has chosen the path of the Chirurgeon, plucking him from his upbringing to serve the Omnissiah and delve into the secrets of the Biologis. This is especially true should he come from a hive or forge world, working daily beside those that have taken their oaths to the Machine God. By the time a Chirurgeon comes to serve an Inquisitor, the stamp of the Machine Cult is often firmly upon him. Only the shadow of his former life remains, hidden under augmented limbs and artificial organs.

A character who learns the skills of the Chirurgeon outside the rigid structures of the Machine Cult is often more an expression of the world that created them. Shrine world Chirurgeons master the healing arts as a divinely inspired path, tending to the flocks of faithful. Like the Inquisition, the Ministorum makes great use of Chirurgeons as torturers, though for very different reasons. A skilled Chirurgeon can make a name for himself as a redeemer, using pain as a tool not to extract the truth but to cleanse the soul, searing away the taint of sin with agonising precision.

Even without the use of advanced technologies, a Chirurgeon can find a place in society. Many feral world shamans, witch doctors, and spirit-healers represent gifted minds. While their methods might seem antiquated and their means backward, these primitive Chirurgeons can still do wondrous things with the flesh of man, their stone blades and foul brews just as potent as many Mechanicum medicae technologies. Many of these kinds of Chirurgeons also find a home within the Imperial Guard as the medical officers for regiments raised on their worlds, given basic battlefield training and then thrust into the fires of war to tend to those maimed in combat. For Acolytes seeking to remain alive in their service to the Emperor, a Chirurgeon is a valued and essential member of the group no matter his origin.

Sample Chirurgeon: Jol Pollux

Tech-Priest Pollux has been a Magos Biologis on Core Theta for five decades now, devoted from early age to the mysteries of the flesh. Like many of her colleagues on this extreme forge world, she worked on the edge of tech-heresy; in her case it is concerning the limits of the organic and not the technological. Constant experimentation on the rigours of flesh and limits of life have made her an excellent physician as well, a practice she often disdains, but that others working with her have come to rely on.



Chirurgeon Sample Paths

The mastery of flesh and blood requires a sprawling intellect and long decades of study; the application of such skills in service of an Inquisitor also requires resilience to survive the ever-resent dangers. Players can develop a Chirurgeon down this path through honing the character's intellect and physical resistance. Skills that allow the character notice and treat injuries and ailments—and survive through the process of treating them in a fire-fight—will serve the character best.

Recommended Advances:

Characteristics: Intelligence, Perception, Toughness
Skills: Awareness, Medicae, Scholastic Lore (Chymistry), Scrutiny, Trade (Chymist)
Talents: Hardy, Infused Knowledge, Keen Intuition, Mastery (Medicae), Resistance (Poisons), Sound Constitution, Sprint, Superior Chirurgeon

Despite their immense power and reputation, Inquisitors often encounter those who are unwilling to share the information they know. In these cases, the services of an individual with the knowledge and talent to forcibly extract the information are invaluable. Players who want their Chirurgeon to possess such skills can develop their character's abilities in melee to apply the needed pressure to a subject, as well as their intuition and perceptive abilities to notice subtle cues during the process.

Recommended Advances:

Characteristics: Intelligence, Strength, Weapon Skill
Skills: Athletics, Forbidden Lore (Heresy), Interrogation, Intimidate, Medicae, Scrutiny
Talents: Battle Rage, Clues from the Crowds, Coordinated Interrogation, Cover-Up, Delicate Interrogation, Frenzy, Unarmed Specialist

Desperado

Rogues and mercenaries that live by their wits and the gun on their hip; talented thieves, outlaws, and criminals, they sell their services to the highest bidder to line their pockets with coin.

"Turn around slowly. I get less if you're dead, but I'm willing to take that cut."

–Jaz Kimba, guild-bounty collector

Every world has men and women that live out on its fringes or survive by their skills with a gun, selling their talents to those in need of a bit more muscle with no questions asked. Desperados are a motley group, comprising scum, bounty hunters, slavers, pirates, and renegades, all people who exist on the border or beyond the law. They can be charmers using roguish appeal to further their latest con, or harsh men who know nothing but violence. Most are singular individuals who know no allegiance other than the current best offer. Having found a talent for shaking down the rich and poor alike, some drift between semi-legitimate jobs as bodyguards and enforcers to outright theft and murder. Those that survive long enough become adept at sensing danger, dealing with others of their kind and knowing well when to cut and run. They can also become talented gunslingers, frequently using their weapons to protect their lives or take the lives of those in their way. Desperados are defined by their selfish natures and scorn for authority, choosing the path of the outlaw if it means living free and getting a quick score to see them though another day.

The Role of the Desperado

Desperados thrive on a level of Imperial society that is harsh and unforgiving, and where a man must survive by his wits as well as his weapons. Most Imperial citizens are born into a place or position, and even those that must suffer the hard labour of toxic factories or the mindless drudgery know that as long as they do their work, they will always have a place and a corner in which to lay their head. Not so for the Desperado, who has slipped away from the castes and classes of his birth to find some semblance of freedom on the fringes of society. This life brings with it skills and talents that can be invaluable for Acolytes, who are often forced to follow their prey into such places or investigate crimes and heresy committed in these shadowy outlands.

Unconstrained by petty laws, Desperados can find a way to do most things, be it breaking into a secure building, fencing illegal goods, bribing Enforcers into dropping an investigation, or tapping into contacts and contractors which only exist for those in the know. When skirting the law of a world, as Acolytes are wont to do, these abilities can mean the difference between blundering into a crime lord's den and being welcomed as potential clients.

Beyond the relative safety of Imperial society, Desperados are also adept at survival, having had to live their lives without the help of others. On a densely populated hive world, this can mean knowing how to find the purest water or the tastiest kinds of fungus, or which areas of the underhive are unstable and so must be avoided. On a wilder frontier world, a Desperado quickly becomes schooled in which towns offer a welcome and which shoot first and then ask about him later. The most valued skill a Desperado can have is the ability to determine whom to trust, and just how far to trust them. This in turn makes him skilled at dealing with people, and also useful when trickery and deception is needed. A Desperado's skills with people can allow him to obfuscate inconvenient truth into a more useful resource.

In combat, a Desperado's knack for survival is expressed with dirty fighting and a readiness to draw his weapon. Any Desperado that has lived long enough knows that the difference between living and dying is often knowing when to run and when to fight. Hesitation can be just as deadly a mistake. While an Imperial Guard officer obsesses over the greater tactical situation, the Desperado tries to end the fight as quickly as possible and get out alive. He might think nothing of drawing and gunning down an unarmed foe if the target appears to be a threat. These traits serve them well in areas where only a quick gun and a quicker wit can see them through.

Desperado Special Rules

A Desperado character gains the following benefits:

Role Aptitudes

Agility, Ballistic Skill, Defence, Fellowship, Finesse

Role Talent

Catfall *or* Quick Draw

Role Bonus

Move and Shoot: Once per round, after performing a Move action, a Desperado character may perform a single Standard Attack with a Pistol weapon he is currently wielding as a Free Action.

Desperado Characters

The Imperium is plagued with criminals at every level of its society, from Highborn crooks using legal authorities to crush their foes for a profit, to baseborn scum knifing each other over a handful of meagre belongings. Desperados drift through these worlds surviving as best they can, turning adversity and ill fortune into opportunity and wealth. On developed worlds in the Imperium a Desperado lives in the shadows of society, among the gangs and street thugs, making coin where he can. He is not a man to be crossed, as likely to gun someone down as show his hand in friendship, turned bitter by long years of betrayal and the worst that humanity has to offer. These Desperados from hive, forge, and shrine worlds are familiar with living among the press of humanity and know human nature all too well, becoming skilled at turning it to their advantage. Those that excel can rise high, skipping along social strata through guile and force, using a charming tongue and smoking laspistols every step of the way.

Voidborn and feral world Desperados develop in different ways, the wild frontiers and empty spaces of their worlds and star-faring vessels a different environment for those that would reject the controls of society. In a primitive wilderness, Desperados might become bandits plying their trade in the lonely stretches of land between civilisations. Such men might rise to become rogue lords, the heads of criminal bands or similar lawless groups, until drawing the notice of an Inquisitor and turning their talents to the protection of the Mankind. In the depths of space, this story can unfold much the same, and Desperados might come to dominate the limited underworlds of their home station or vessel, or even break free to sail the void as stellar marauders.

Highborn Desperados are perhaps the most ingenious of their kind, using the full weight of their families or the ample resources gifted to them by birth to aid them in their illicit endeavours. A Desperado from a well-positioned noble line might live for years uncontested on his world as he robs his people of their wealth, only coming to grief when his people rise up against him or he crosses someone more powerful than himself. In these cases, noble Desperados might flee away to other systems to escape their crimes, sometimes turning up within the service of the Inquisition, where few questions are asked about their past provided they can prove their use.

Sample Desperado: Timo Sar'se

Timo spent years serving in the Vigil on Juno, enforcing the capital city's many laws. After investigating a murder, he discovered a cache of smuggled xenos relics and soon learned how much others would pay for them. After making a deal that earned him more than he would have seen in his lifetime, he abandoned his post (but not his weapons) and quickly arranged for offworld transport to avoid the fury of the Vigil. As a smuggler and acquisitionist, he dealt both with the Trade Sable and the emerging Pale League in other unusual items, until he attempted to cross the wrong man. As a somewhat reluctant Acolyte, his contacts in the shadow markets and eye for illegal actions now serve a higher cause.



Desperado Sample Paths

The unforgiving fringes of society out of reach of the law reward those who are quick on their feet and even quicker with a trigger. When in the service of the Inquisition, their skills and speed with a weapon have to be exceptional, bordering on legendary. To bring their Desperado down this path, players can focus the character on talents which allow him to wield two weapons at once, and other abilities which help keep the character alive when the bolts start flying.

Recommended Advances:

Characteristics: Agility, Ballistic Skill, Toughness
Skills: Acrobatics, Dodge, Operate, Stealth
Talents: Ambidextrous, Double Tap, Hard Target, Hip Shooting, Leap Up, Quick Draw, Two-Weapon Master, Two-Weapon Wielder, Weapon Training (any Ranged)

Some people have the ability to survive and thrive in any strata of society. That this comes often though not totally legitimate means is of little concern for such characters. These individuals rely on their ability to lie and use other deceitful interactions to achieve their goals. Player who want their Desperado to focus on this path can develop the character's social abilities. They can also build up the character's abilities at stealth and skulduggery, the better to fool and deceive those around him.

Recommended Advances:

Characteristics: Agility, Fellowship, Perception
Skills: Awareness, Charm, Deceive, Inquiry, Scholastic Lore (Underworld), Sleight of Hand, Stealth
Talents: Catfall, Clues from the Crowds, Constant Vigilance, Contact Network, Cover-Up, Face in a Crowd, Keen Intuition, Leap Up

Hierophant

Zealous followers of the Emperor with an unwavering devotion to the faith; they are missionaries and priests whose sole purpose is to spread the word of the Emperor and bring righteous death to His foes.

"To live without the Emperor is to live a false life, and thus a life no one should be allowed to keep."

–Pastor Davos Po, before the Culling of Hive Fedilus

The Cult of the Emperor exists throughout the Imperium. The glory of the master of Mankind is found in the teachings of the Ministorum, the ancient secrets of the Machine God, and a million more faiths all linked to the veneration of the blessed Emperor. Hierophants are those dedicated to the Imperial Creed, as priests and confessors, clerics and wise men, or as orators and demagogues spreading His word and enforcing the tenets of the faith upon the teeming masses of humanity. As men of the Emperor, there is an aspect of the divine in all Hierophants, a spark of fervent conviction that drives them against the darkness and keeps the spirit of the Imperium alive even as it crumbles from without and within. With fire and swift justice, the Hierophant stands with ten thousand years of faith at his back, ready to strike down any who would oppose him and his god. He is defined above all else by his certitude and his relationship to the Emperor; this is his shield and his sword against the enemies of the Imperium, and where others succumb to doubt and fear, the Hierophant charges on, the word of the Emperor on his lips and an unshakable truth in his heart.

The Role of the Hierophant

Faith in the Emperor binds the Imperium together and gives it the purpose to move forward against corruption and the reckless aggression of xenos empires. A Hierophant embodies this faith and brings it to his service as an Acolyte. The Emperor is worshipped in endless aspects across the galaxy, and a hierophant might follow any one of the many branches of the Imperial Creed. More than mere words and deeds, the Imperial Creed is a living, breathing thing with the power to inspire and fortify the human soul, as well as protect it from the horrors of the universe. It is the duty of the Hierophant to look after the souls of those around him, to keep them pure and shield them from the corruption of the Warp or the insidious lies of alien emissaries. They are often the only means of thwarting the fear and insanity that lie in wait for Acolytes among the uncaring stars. Against foes whose very existence is unconscionable to the human mind, only faith keeps them alive and gives them the endurance to continue in their sacred duty to the Emperor. To this end, a Hierophant is a beacon of light to those he fights alongside, and his is the word of the Emperor, which exists to give all men grace in their darkest hour.

Much like the talents of a psyker or a Tech-Priest, there are foes to which the Hierophant is ideally suited: namely, those that use the Warp as a weapon, or creatures that wither in the Emperor's burning light. A Hierophant is a weapon of the Emperor in this way, and anathema to all things from the great beyond. His conviction can sear the flesh of Daemon spawn, close rifts between the worlds, and cast down the witch, along with other equally glorious miracles. It is also an ample shield against the fear sown by xenos races, which prey on primordial terror. The Hierophant can steel a man's soul against these threats, and replace petty thoughts of mortality with inspiration for his duty to the Emperor and the glory of service to Him.

In his role as guide and indoctrinator, the Hierophant often becomes a great orator, weaving his words and speeches into a web of influence over all around him. A skilled Hierophant can shift the mood of a crowd with a few well-chosen phrases, or turn their minds to murder. Years of training in the Ministorum or other agencies of the Imperial Creed grant him unique insight into the minds of Mankind, and how the will of a mob might be directed by those that know how. Few Imperial citizens do not respond to this kind of persuasion, especially when coming from a member of the Adeptus Ministorum. Something deep within their souls stirs to the sound of the Emperor's sermon, planted there through years of indoctrination and Ecclesiarchal teachings.

Hierophants are often invaluable when dealing with those of the Ecclesiarchy, knowing the methods and means to communicate with them—or manipulate them as only ones who have served among them can. Wherever the Acolytes go, they will find the shadow of the Ministorum is never far away, its priests and clerics woven into the fabric of the Imperium, holding it together with the faith of the Imperial Creed. The Hierophant can excel in these situations, a guiding hand for his peers just as he in turn is guided by his faith in the Emperor.

Hierophant Special Rules

A Hierophant character gains the following benefits:

Role Aptitudes

Fellowship, Offence, Social, Toughness, Willpower

Role Talent

Double Team *or* Hatred (Pick One)

Role Bonus

Sway the Masses: In addition to the normal uses of Fate points (see page 293), a Hierophant character may spend a Fate point to automatically succeed at a Charm, Command, or Intimidate skill test with a number of degrees of success equal to his Willpower bonus.

Hierophant Characters

The worship of the Emperor comes in many forms, and each world reveres His might in a different way. Hierophants represent this diversity across the Imperium, from the primitive holy men of a feral world to the complex priesthoods of a prominent shrine world. As messengers of the word of the Emperor, a Hierophant exists to spread his faith. Provided it is the Emperor and the Imperial Creed that motivates his teachings, the Ministorum is not concerned overly with the presence of local beliefs. Thus, a Hierophant character can have his own complex interpretation of the Imperial Creed, woven into the ancient tenets of his world,

where the Emperor is represented by his world's sun and stars, or its saints are great sea creatures or flaming volcanoes. He also often brings the trappings of his world's religion with him, bearing regalia that he wore as a member of his local sect, or conducts ritual and rites sacred to those of his own people.

Whereas a feral world Hierophant's belief in the Emperor might include natural phenomena and powerful beasts, that of a hive worlder or voidborn could translate into the spirit of his ship or city. So ancient are these places that natives often attribute a soul to the hive or voidship, revering it as a god which watches over them, and carefully noting its many hums, creaks, and rumblings as signs of its assent or displeasure. When the Imperial Cult establishes itself in these worlds, these local superstitions are absorbed into the Imperial Creed, and the hand of the Emperor is now seen at work behind the spirit of the hive or voidship. As a result, a Hierophant from such a place might see the divine in any city or ship he enters, treating it as a sacred place and taking care not to anger its spirit. Though puzzling to those that have never lived in a hive or on a space-going vessel, there is often common sense woven into these teachings, and they would be wise to heed the words of a Hierophant when it comes to leaving certain doors alone or respecting the colour of a glowing rune. All these and more are supremely important to a Hierophant as signs of his faith, and for a Hierophant there is nothing more important.

Sample Hierophant: Eizeil Skyspeaker

When the Missionarus Galaxia landed on the feral world of Rund, Eiziel was the first of her tribe with the courage to approach the still-smoking comet and the wondrous beings that emerged from within. In months, she left her people to spread the word of the Sky Father across Rund, eyes burning like the midday sun with her fiery conviction. She now serves the Sky Father across an even wider area, equally ecstatic to enlighten and preach, or burn and destroy any who would threaten her new god.



Hierophant Sample Paths

For the truly pious, the threat of pain, injury, and death are little more than mere obstacles. For it is said, "only in death does duty end." A man whose faith in the Emperor is pure fears no setback, for his conviction is as a shield against all dangers. Players can develop this path through strengthening the character in both mind and body. This Hierophant wields his faith like a suit of armour and shrugs off blows, persevering despite grievous injuries and terrors that would fell lesser men.

Recommended Advances:

Characteristics: Toughness, Weapon Skill, Willpower
Skills: Forbidden Lore (Daemonology, Mutants), Medicae, Parry, Survival
Talents: Adamantium Faith, Bastion of Iron Will, Counter Attack, Deny the Witch, Jaded, Never Die, Resistance (Psychic Powers), Sound Constitution, Strong Minded, True Grit

At all turns, mankind risks being plunged into darkness by the alien, the heretic, and the mutant. It rests on the shoulders of Hierophants such as this one to burn brightly and hold that darkness at bay. With his words and actions, this character incites his fellow man to feats of bravery and sacrifice, and with prometheum-fueled flame he scours from the galaxy those that would threaten Mankind.

Recommended Advances:

Characteristics: Fellowship, Strength, Willpower
Skills: Command, Intimidate, Linguistics, Scholastic Lore (Imperial Creed), Scrutiny
Talents: Battle Rage, Combat Master, Devastating Assault, Frenzy, Halo of Command, Hatred (Heretics), Inescapable Attack, Peer (Adeptus Ministorum), Resistance (Fear, Heat), Thunder Charge, Weapon Training (Flame)

Mystic

Souls touched by the Warp and filled with its eldritch power; psykers, Warp-seers, and shamans both cursed and blessed with the power to manipulate the arcane energies of the Immaterium and turn them against their enemies.

"Your power is fleeting. Mine is eternal, a flame that will burn long after my death."

–Primaris Psyker Kalleen Ka, beginning the Immolation of the Razored Cartel

Millennia of human evolution have given rise to whole generations of psykers within the Imperium, gifted souls with a talent for manipulating potent yet unpredictable power. Mystics are those the Warp has touched in some way, gaining a measure of control over its unnatural tides and a glimmer of insight into its use. Either as Primaris Psykers, primitive Warp-seers, or renegade sorcerers, Mystics represents Mankind's connection to the Sea of Souls and the powers and denizens which dwell within. Their cursed gifts lead many of them to view all things as interconnected. Even the slightest occurrence can be seen as signs from beyond, and technology as an unreliable prop against the terrors unseen. To even glimpse what exists beyond the veil is to see the fragile nature of reality, and know of horrors no ordinary Imperial citizen can be allowed to see. The Immaterium and its use can offer a man salvation when he needs it most, a weapon to use against his enemies, or a glimpse of the future to guide his actions. However, like the ancient Terran sea of old, it is unpredictable, untameable, and can change in an instant. This is the peril that all Mystics must live with, the knowledge that for all the power their gifts might bring and the position it might grant them, eventually it will likely destroy them. Mystics are defined by their connection to the Warp, providing them with knowledge beyond that which man was meant to know, and of humanity's only true defence against the terrible entities which hungrily wait across this gulf in reality.

The Role of the Mystic

Psykers are a constant within the Imperium, used to communicate across the Warp, fight wars, and probe the minds of its citizens. Mystics understand the nature of these psychic powers better than most, having powers themselves or some other rare insight into the nature of the Warp. Many Inquisitors are psykers themselves or employ them as Acolytes, using their powers to shift though minds in search of information. A Mystic understands that the galaxy is simply not a collection of stars and planets, but rather a skin over another realm of mental energy in which the souls of men burn like the flames of guttering candles. Those that understand such things can learn to see these energies, and eventually manipulate them, until reality becomes a fluid and changeable quantity no more of an obstacle than a dense fog.

The aid and support a Mystic can provide is often limited only by his own strength to manipulate the Immaterium. Unfortunately, with such power always comes a price, and Mystics may be as much the victim of their own forbidden knowledge and eldritch power as they are masters of it. In a heartbeat, a Mystic can lose control and become an open portal between reality and the Warp, releasing unfettered energies, rampaging Daemons, or worse. At best, this manifests as psychic phenomena with ghostly voices, breaking mirrors, or frost spreading uncontrollably around them. At its most violent, it can mean possession or wholesale destruction of everything and everyone present. Understandably, this can make other Acolytes nervous when dealing with Mystics, even those that exhibit complete control and have no history of instability. It is hard to ignore the possibility that a Mystic might inadvertently turn his powers upon his allies.

Regardless of the risks, the value of a Mystic remains, and more than just a means of protecting against sorcery. The Mystic is often a font of hidden knowledge. Whether it is looking into the thoughts of others, testing their souls for taint and corruption, or peering into the Warp for some insight into the future, a Mystic can provide answers and council when none are available through normal means. Because time is a fluid concept within the Warp, a Mystic can gain knowledge of events far in the past or things which are yet to come. Such attempts can be perilous, as are all such interactions with the Warp. The risk can often be worth the reward, and many Inquisitors are not above resorting to such methods to defeat their foes.

The price for their gifts is that Mystics are often kept at a distance within the company of fellow Acolytes. It is natural for men to fear what they do not understand, and a Mystic embodies the unknown, both with his access to forbidden knowledge and his ability to manipulate reality, often in disturbing and violent ways. Few wish to spend time around someone who can read thoughts or disturb reality, even should he be a comrade in service to the Emperor. Mystics often emanate an unconscious, uncomfortable feeling in those around them. As a result, the path of a Mystic is usually doomed to be a lonely one, kept company only by the voices in his head and the creeping shadow of his eventual doom.

Mystic Special Rules

A Mystic character gains the following benefits:

Role Aptitudes

Defence, Intelligence, Knowledge, Perception, Willpower

Role Talent

Resistance (Psychic Powers) *or* Warp Sense

Role Bonus

Stare into the Warp: A Mystic character starts the game with the Psyker elite advance (see page 90). It is recommended that a character who wishes to be a Mystic have a Willpower of at least 35.

Mystic Characters

The psyker gift is indiscriminate, and a man or woman is often just as likely to develop psychic powers no matter where in the Imperium they reside. Some view it as a mutation, and thus posit that areas with higher mutation rates also lead to greater numbers of those touched by the Warp. In reality it strikes more according to fate or the unfathomable whims of powers beyond the ken of Mankind. Mystics are treated differently depending on the nature

of the society into which they are born, reviled as abominations and hunted to the edges of civilisation or given a place of position and influence as those honoured with the gift of sight. They always stand apart, for even if their society tolerates them, there are few places in the Imperium where they can find welcome. Mystic characters are also likely to fall into one of two groups, those sanctioned on Terra and trained to use their gifts, and those which have somehow remained unsanctioned and unknown, living in secret as best they are able.

Sanctioned psykers that survive training can come from a variety of areas, serving in the Imperial Guard alongside its regiments, spread across the galaxy as Astropaths, or even acting as advisors to ruling councils and governments. Even in such positions, there are always others standing ready to act should their powers overwhelm them. A bolt round to the head has ended many a Mystic's career.

Unsanctioned psykers live a much more dangerous existence, to both themselves and those around them. They often learn their skills from the handed-down teachings of shamans and witches or from half-understood tomes, and live with the constant fear of discovery and death. On a frontier or feral world, a psyker can live for years in such a state, hidden away from society, protecting themselves by formulating a terrible reputation as a dark witch or wizard. Only the strongest of these live long into adulthood, their will powerful enough to ward off daemonic possession and maintain their sanity. An Inquisitor may recruit such an individual to his service for all manner of reasons, using his absolute authority to shield his unsanctioned servant from the rest of the Imperium.

Sample Mystic: Eos du Aquila-14

Eos lived amidst the asteroids of Port Aquila, working in one of the many trading posts strewn across the belt. She grew enraptured with any fires she could find on the station. Dozens of candles dripped wax along her stall, offering warmth when unexplained cold frosted around her. She found staring into the flames revealed secrets to her, hints of things yet to happen. It came as no surprise when the oddly dressed strangers arrived one orbit, their leader's face now familiar to her from countless appearances in her candles, and took her away with them to ensure the Emperor's fire is never extinguished.



Mystic Sample Paths

It is not uncommon for a psyker to perceive the twisting strands of fate. To most, he is a mere charlatan at best or a dangerous witch at worst, but he also can be a powerful force against the foes of man. A player can develop a Mystic in this manner through focusing on Divination powers as well as strengthening his abilities in relating his visions to others.

Recommended Advances:

Characteristics: Fellowship, Perception, Willpower
Skills: Awareness, Charm, Forbidden Lore (Occult, the Warp), Trade (Soothsayer)
Talents: Blind Fighting, Clues from the Crowds, Constant Vigilance, Flash of Insight, Keen Intuition, Nowhere to Hide
Psychic Powers: Foreboding, Forewarning, Precognition, Prescience, Warp Perception

To wield the forces of the Warp is to invite disaster. Yet, there are those who use their power to safeguard their fellow man and stand resolute against the terrors within, without, and beyond. This character has turned his psychic powers to such an end, manipulating arcane forces to gird his allies and to crush those who would dare to threaten them.

Recommended Advances:

Characteristics: Agility, Toughness, Willpower
Skills: Awareness, Dodge, Medicae, Psyniscience
Talents: Constant Vigilance, Die Hard, Favoured by the Warp, Resistance (Psychic Powers), Strong Minded, Warp Lock
Psychic Powers: Endurance, Invigourate, Telekine Dome, Telekine Shield

Sage

Brilliant minds with a talent for numbers, logic, and cyphers; dedicated scholars and savants brimming with knowledge and lore, they are keepers of truths, and possess an unrivalled understanding of the galaxy.

"They thought the data-caches lost or destroyed, but I hold proof that neither is true."

–Pellucidan Toom, Desoleum Infomagister

Such is the unimaginable depth of information the Imperium deals with that only Acolytes specially trained or augmented to understand can hope to use it with any degree of skill. Sages are talented individuals known by many names, such as Autosavants, Lexmechanics, and Calculus Logi. They are often members of the Adeptus Administratum or Adeptus Mechanicus, and trusted with the storing and cataloguing of huge amounts of data. Comprising millions of worlds and billions of souls, the Imperium exists in many ways only on the yellowing parchments of a scrivener's tally sheets, dusty dataslates piled in forgotten shelves, and gigantic data-crypts larger than many cities. Sages record, store, and navigate the mountains of data the Imperium accumulates each day. They can see patterns that others cannot, making connections to either retrieve or uncover data considered lost or unattainable, and translating it into useful knowledge for those around them. It is a process that takes great mental strength and skill, and often the implanted aid of artificial cogitator arrays or logis circuits that provide swifter reasoning and retention of facts. Sages have the ability to access the thousands of years of sorted Imperial data to find missing secrets, or making leaps of logic to identify them when they remain elusive.

The Role of the Sage

Knowledge is power, and a Sage is a repository of much of the Imperium's knowledge, having spent his life sifting through reams of data and tracing the patterns that link the great organisations and sectors of the Imperium together. While the Hierophant concerns himself with the teachings of the Imperial Creed, and the Mystic looks into the beyond for answers, the Sage knows that truth already exists, one just needs to know where to look for it. There are few Acolytes with minds as keen as that of the Sage, able to process such huge amounts of information and weed out the gems of fact from the torrents of lies. A Sage knows not just how to read and comprehend endless streams of information, but where they came from and where they lead. The result of these talents is sometimes the ability to use logic to unlock enigmas that seemingly have no answers, making leaps of reason to come to new conclusions, whether it is deciphering an alien tongue, or determining an opposing organisation's next move.

To a Sage, everything is a puzzle, a code to be deciphered and defeated piece by piece. He thrives on data, and sees patterns where others only see chaos. A Sage becomes a store of information and a font of knowledge, using his craftiness and intelligence to guide the blunt instruments of those more focused toward combat. Even in open conflict, he can be found directing fire and identifying weaknesses in his enemies, proving that a modicum of knowledge applied at the right time can have devastating consequences. His own battlefield is in dealing with the Administratum, planetary governments, and local authorities. Where others become lost or confounded with levels of bureaucracy, he sees though the administrative entanglements and cuts right to the heart of things. Coupled with the power of the Inquisition, there are few things he cannot achieve within the framework of Imperial authority, be it bringing in reinforcements, diverting supplies, or even locking down entire cities through manipulation of planetary agencies.

Sages tend to know a little bit about everything; even if they have not studied the subject expansively, there is always a good chance that they have come across it in one of their other research endeavours. Even when presented with a subject which they know little or nothing about, it takes them little time to process new information or engage in extensive research. This often makes them exceptional strategists, their natural inclination to observe and report often more effective than the reckless violence most Imperial forces would advocate.

The common drawback of the Sages' obsession with data and information is that they can never be sated or feel they have learned enough, always seeking out the next piece of lore or next hidden fact to add to their great cache of secrets. It is a drive that sees them poring over inconsequential data and useless trivia, endlessly reading and researching, often to the detriment of the task at hand. The wealth of knowledge they keep within their heads can also cause them to be oblivious to current concerns, mix up past and present, or shift conversations to places and peoples unknown to their present company. It is a sickness for which there is no cure, with only the steady stream of new information to keep it in check and the constant presence of one task after another to occupy the their busy minds.

Sage Special Rules

A Sage character gains the following benefits:

Role Aptitudes

Intelligence, Knowledge, Perception, Tech, Willpower

Role Talent

Ambidextrous *or* Clues from the Crowds

Role Bonus

Quest for Knowledge: In addition to the normal uses of Fate points (see page 293), a Sage character may spend a Fate point to automatically succeed at a Logic or any Lore skill test with a number of degrees of success equal to his Intelligence bonus.

Sage Characters

Information is everywhere, writ across the many worlds of the Imperium in the movements and structures of its societies and the staggering data stores of the Adeptus Administratum. Sage characters can draw upon this information, whether they are members of the Administratum or another of the Imperium's great organisations. Sages of the Adeptus Mechanicus on hive and forge worlds are constantly linked to the ebb and flow of figures that crosses their world, gigatonnes of parchment, or even purely

aetherical information streams that exist without physical form. Drawn into the web of data, they exist only to learn and reach deeper and deeper into the lore of the Imperium. After coming to the notice of an Inquisitor, Sages can move on to more valuable pastures of information, and should they prove mentally strong enough, can immerse themselves in the endless well of secrets over which the Inquisition resides.

Those with other origins often have different functions, becoming chroniclers and lore keepers of their own world's history and secrets. A voidborn Sage might have absorbed all there is to know about the class of vessel or type of station on which his clan lives, and much about the movement of the stars themselves. A feral world Sage might be a storyteller or bard to his people, collecting centuries of tales and legends, as well as a wealth of lore about its plants, wildlife, and weather patterns. A shrine world Sage likely served as a scholar of the Imperial Creed, and knows extensively about the saint his world is famed for, to the point where his specific knowledge on the subject outstrips even that of the local Ministorum hierarchy. In all these forms, a Sage is the most learned of his people, well-known if not necessarily well-respected for his obsessive gifts for analysing and extracting the endless data that defines the Imperium.

Sample Sage: Harlon Onnis

Once a lowly Clerk-Ensign of the Muster, Harlon had lived his entire life on Laran 9k, and there worked several of the sector's largest regimental launches. Tens of thousands of men, tanks, and support vehicles regularly prepared for embarkation and outfitting here; he carefully recorded each detail, as well as engraving the regiment's name on the grand arch each marched through on their way to their shuttles. His life was unchanging, until a man emerged from the shadows of his tiny office along with the High Lord of the Muster, demanding information none of the senior clerks could produce. Harlon's immediate recall, as well as his ability to sequence and pick out the data the fierce man demanded, soon ended his time on Laran and began a life more exciting than he had ever desired.



Sage Sample Paths

If knowledge is power, then ancient knowledge is the most powerful. Such data is often more legend than fact in the Imperium, where there is little history that has not become apocryphal myth, but such lore often can contain hidden secrets that can illuminate the darkness of heresy. Relating these legends to others can also help bind outsiders to the warband's cause. These sages would look for advancement in lores, languages, performing arts to better gain and share these legends.

Recommended Advances:

Characteristics: Agility, Intelligence, Fellowship
Skills: Acrobatics, Common Lore (Askellon Sector, Imperium), Forbidden Lore (Legend), Linguistics (High Gothic, Low Gothic), Scholastic Lore (Heraldry, Legend), Trade (Loremancer, Performancer)
Talents: Jaded, Halo of Command, Infused Knowledge

Knowledge is not enough—it must be protected and kept secure, for exposed knowledge is lessened knowledge. This is especially true in an Inquisitor's warband, where security of its mission and identity is paramount. Secrets become an obsession for these sages, both in uncovering them and maintaining them. Such a character can develop into a master of cryptography and espionage, as well as an expert in defeating enemy security. Heretical psykers abound as well, so he must also be prepared to defend his mind.

Recommended Advances:

Characteristics: Agility, Intelligence, Perception
Skills: Logic, Scholastic Lore (Cryptology), Security, Stealth, Trade (Cryptographer)
Talents: Bastion of Iron Will, Contact Network, Cover Up, Face in a Crowd, Resistance (Psychic Powers), Strong Minded

Seeker

Skilled hunters and investigators obsessed with the pursuit of their prey; they sift through the secrets of the Imperium, seeing what others do not and using it to flush out their quarry before closing in for the kill.

"Clearly xenos blade marks, but then ripped wider to disguise the clean slices. Someone does not want others to know who was really here."

– Arbitrator Sebastine Natto

An Acolyte that treads the path of the Seeker is driven by the hunt, relentless in his investigations. Where others might choose easy violence or give up the pursuit, the Seeker sees signs and clues to the passage of the prey, whether it is an individual fleeing from Imperial justice, or a secret hidden behind a web of lies. He can obsess over the unknown, never resting until a puzzle is solved or a chase completed. Sometimes the mystery or the manhunt can become more important to him than the actual eradication of a revealed heresy or capture of an escaped psyker, and he loses interest once he arrives at a solution or detains his prey. A Seeker is a natural detective and interrogator, ferreting out the truth wherever it might hide among the byzantine power structures of the Imperium and its labyrinth of cities and societies. Where others find only dead ends and false leads, the Seeker uses his perceptive senses and keen insight to discover vital clues, decipher plots, and resolve mysteries. It is this attention and obsession with detail which defines the Seeker, and whether or not he uses it to become a hunter or investigator, it continually haunts him, pushing him on to uncover the next truth, unravel the next lie, and catch the most elusive of prey.

The Role of the Seeker

For an Inquisitor to eliminate Mankind's enemies, he must first find them. A Seeker has a talent for the chase, which give him an edge in these investigations. He can root out the truth behind a secret or uncover the hidden nature of things with skill. A seasoned hunter, he is adept at gauging the strengths and weaknesses of his prey, learning how they think, how they operate, and how best to run them to ground. In all manner of environments, from the spires of a crumbling hive city to an ancient orbital installation, there are few places, if any, his quarry can hide. It is in the nature of the Seeker to adapt and evolve to counter the obstacles in his path, and in this function he makes an excellent guide and scout, sensing the best means of crossing hazardous terrain or finding what the Acolytes seek in an alien environment. Often the Seeker will lead his warband through these darkened places, the lives of his peers resting on his instincts and sense of his surroundings.

The Seeker is always aware of his surroundings. He is often the first to find foes and foil ambushes, spotting danger where others see only their mundane surroundings, or making an intuitive leap about the nature of his prey and anticipating an attack. In the wild, this translates into the role of hunter, tracker, and guide, while in urban sprawls the Seeker becomes a detective, investigator, and questor. As the Inquisition deals with investigating possible threats and tracking down wanted enemies, a Seeker's thirst for the hunt and his knack for uncovering the truth makes him a valued part in any Inquisitor's work. Many an Inquisitor has grown in influence and power due to the efforts of his Seeker.

Seeker Special Rules

A Seeker character gains the following benefits:

Role Aptitudes

Fellowship, Intelligence, Perception, Social, Tech

Role Talent

Keen Intuition *or* Disarm

Role Bonus

Nothing Escapes My Sight: In addition to the normal uses of Fate points (see page 293), a Seeker character may spend a Fate point to automatically succeed at an Awareness or Inquiry skill test with a number of degrees of success equal to his Perception bonus.

It is this driving force that can be as much a boon as a curse for a Seeker, and the same obsession that propels him forward can be the same one which keeps him investigating areas he is unprepared to face. In the darkness of the galaxy, there are uncounted horrors lurking between the stars, in the depths of cold, desolate worlds, and among ancient, forgotten ruins. Many of these lonely domains are places man was never meant to tread, hiding things which have lingered in suspension from aeons long past and vanished from memory. Sensible citizens heed well the teachings of the Emperor and leave such places to the past, turning their minds from wondering what lies beyond the safety of their world. Not so for the Seeker. Once he has taken up a trail, he follows it to its conclusion, the dual nature of his gifts seeking out the truth but also leading him into danger. Those that survive such encounters can come to Inquisitorial notice, and join others with souls strong enough to face such threats.

Once part of such a warband, he can be brought to bear against heresies, xenos infestations, and other dangers, but his searches can drift from desired directions. No mystery is so simple as to end with a single resolution, and often the investigation of one heresy uncovers other threats to Mankind. Maintaining proper focus becomes essential, and his fellow Acolytes may have to restrain a Seeker from moving to a new mystery before their current operation is complete. Seekers rarely abide secrets, and as many Acolytes have unsavoury pasts, a Seeker can cause friction unless his natural tendencies are curbed.

Seeker Characters

Where there are criminals, there are those tasked with catching them and bringing them to justice. Whether a Seeker is a hive world hab-block Enforcer or the head huntsman on a feral world, he forms a key part of Imperial society. Highborn Seekers, though some in their social class might frown on their activities, can work their way into positions of power, where they can best use their talents and indulge in their obsessions. As overseers and overlords of hive levels or even entire worlds, they can direct the Enforcers under their command to root out enemies and maintain desired order. More baseborn Seekers on these developed planets take a more frontline position and walk the habways or conduct

investigations, moving among the people as Enforcers. In these instances and more, a Seeker who excels at his job may gain the personal interest of an Inquisitor. This could be by displaying a near-unnatural sense about an investigation where his peers have come up short, or because of a powerful knowledge and understanding of the criminal mind that no institution can teach.

Seekers on more sparsely-populated areas such as feral planets or void installations have fewer resources to call upon, and must make do with whatever their environment has to offer. This makes them hardy and resourceful, often calling on superior knowledge of hostile environments to entrap or bring down their prey. These kinds of Seekers are also often adept at survival, having to live for long periods away from any comforts while hunting prey along their world's fringes.

Others have acted as explorers, serving in Rogue Trader vessels or Mechanicum Explorator fleets, often barely escaping with their lives after uncovering secrets for which their masters were ill-prepared. Some acted as scouts in the Imperial Guard, or witch-trackers in the Adeptus Astra Telepathica. In all cases they act as Seekers, ceaselessly investigating, searching, and tracking their targets, never stopping until their prey is brought down.

Sample Seeker: Fari ge'na Tam

In a hive where oaths are sacrosanct, the harshest penalties in Desoleum are for those who abandon their debts and flee their obligations, or worse, attempt to alter their oath-cogs to lessen their service time. First, the oathless must be found, and specialist Bondhounds within the Sanctionaries like Fari track them down. Once assigned, she was relentless, tracking her quarry across the underhive darkness or out into the wastelands. Her work to disrupt a major oathcog falsification sect brought new allies who also sought its end, in order to keep an offworld cult from infiltrating the hive. Impressing their leader (who also paid off her oathdebt), she left Desoleum to track even more dangerous prey.



Seeker Sample Paths

Whether he began life as a feral world tracker, a destitute hunter in the depths of a hive city, a seeker of lost artefacts, or a dogged Adeptus Arbites tracer, this character's keen senses and unerring instincts are essential when seeking quarry. Such individuals are useful for an Inquisitor, for the marks of corruption can be as subtle as they are pernicious. Here, a player can create a Seeker who can meticulously turn an errant speck of blood and a trail of disturbed dust into an accurate record of events, for no detail escapes his watchful eyes.

Recommended Advances:

Characteristics: Agility, Ballistic Skill, Perception
Skills: Awareness, Dodge, Navigate (Surface), Stealth, Survival
Talents: Catfall, Constant Vigilance, Hard Target, Hip Shooting, Jaded, Keen Intuition, Marksman, Nowhere to Hide, Quick Draw, Resistance (Fear), Rapid Reload, Sprint

Were he not in a warband, this character would likely be wielding his uncanny insight to criminal ends or purposes darker still. Perhaps he did, once, but now he turns his skills to the highest and most crucial cause. Subtle social cues, facial twitches, and the pace of breathing, all lay bare to him. Here a player develops a Seeker who can read a person as easily as a data-slate, prying his prey's sins from guilty lips with nothing but clever words and an unwavering gaze.

Recommended Advances:

Characteristics: Fellowship, Intelligence, Perception
Skills: Awareness, Charm, Deceive, Inquiry, Linguistics (High Gothic), Scrutiny
Talents: Clues from the Crowd, Cover-Up, Contact Network, Face in a Crowd, Flash of Insight, Infused Knowledge, Jaded, Keen Intuition, Resistance (Psychic Powers)

Warrior

Hardened fighters and veterans skilled in all forms of combat; they are adept at both starting and ending conflicts, as well as the brutal application of violence to get the job done, no matter the cost.

"Enough talking. I'm getting the grenades."

–Jacindalee San, successfully negotiating the release of Lord Hallipha

The one constant of life in the 41st Millennium is war. Ravenous xenos and hostile powers besiege the Imperium on all sides, and every facet of industry is turned to supporting armed combat. A Warrior is the result of this constant conflict, either drawn from the frontlines or worlds racked with violence. One might be an Imperial Guardsman scarred by long years on a cursed alien battlefield, a brutal Arbitrator tempered by the mean streets of his home world, or a ganger eking out a living in the foul underhive. He has become inured to the sight of bloody wounds and the crack of lasgun fire. For a Warrior, life is conflict, and most solutions can be found through the direct and brutal application of force, usually at his own hands. In every case, he is a skilled fighter with an extensive understanding of the nature of battle. He is also a survivor, having lived long enough to learn a thing or two about getting out alive from even the most violent of situations. A Warrior has a talent for combat, and finds it his most effective means of resolving matters; chainsword and hand cannon are his most reliable forms of communication. He leaves a battle ragged but alive, his foes lying in pools of blood. As few targets of Inquisitorial investigation shy away from violent confrontation, a Warrior makes for an invaluable Acolyte, even though he can rarely guarantee anyone's survival but his own.

The Role of the Warrior

An Inquisitor is always in need of strong-arms and soldiers to enforce his judgements or protect his person, and any that offers up his gun in service never wants for work. A Warrior is the hard edge of any combat encounter, using his skill and expertise to put down his enemies in a hail of fire. A good Warrior also understands warfare and can direct others in battle, acting as a commander and providing tactical leadership. When hard calls must be made, the kinds that cost lives, it is the Warrior who can step up and make them. In this capacity, an Inquisitor might defer to his Warrior when dealing with these kinds of violent situations, trusting years of experience to deal with nuances of small unit tactics or battlefield dominance.

A Warrior is often a talented pilot, gunner, and driver, having trained with the Imperium's most deadly weapons and most powerful machines. Whether it is sub-orbital craft, hover-vehicles, or walkers, it is likely a Warrior knows how it functions and how best to push its limits. Even when driving an unfamiliar vehicle, he can probably find his way around, the same sharpened reflexes and natural assurance he uses in combat making him skilled behind the controls of all manner of machines. A veteran from the Imperial Guard especially might be able to operate many heavy weapons, drive battle tanks, or fire self-propelled artillery pieces. A hive ganger may be able to drive or modify industrial vehicles, and usually has experience with many small and improvised weapons as well as homemade explosives. A fighter on a feral world might only have access to primitive weapons, but the principles of violence are universal and he is just as lethal in combat.

Having faced many a foe eye to eye, a Warrior also can make for a keen judge of character and demeanour. He is the one who can detect subterfuge through shifting gazes or twitching trigger fingers, and determine whether an enemy is about to back down or stand resolute. A Warrior exists through force of arms, and can usually recognise others who deal in violence, despite disguise or guile. This judgement may appear superficial to others, but a Warrior lives or dies with only seconds between decision and action. What might appear to be snap appraisals are the result of many battles that have kept him alive.

He is also used to death. No one comes out of the Imperial Guard, the Adeptus Arbites, or brutal hive gangs without seeing scores of his companions fall along the way, and putting more than his fair share of bodies in the ground. Unlike for an Assassin, killing is not some great art or expression of devotion, nor is it something to be savoured and enjoyed. The taking of life is rather a necessary step in the preservation of his own, and when a Warrior sees his enemies fall in a spray of blood, the elation he feels is that he has triumphed again to live another day.

Warrior Special Rules

A Warrior character gains the following benefits:

Role Aptitudes

Ballistic Skill, Defence, Offence, Strength, Weapon Skill

Role Talent

Iron Jaw *or* Rapid Reload

Role Bonus

Expert at Violence: In addition to the normal uses of Fate points (see page 293), after making a successful attack test, but before determining hits, a Warrior character may spend a Fate point to substitute his Weapon Skill (for melee) or Ballistic Skill (for ranged) bonus for the degrees of success scored on the attack test.

Warrior Characters

Each world of the Imperium has its own unique kinds of conflict, from personal duels and gang skirmishes in otherwise-civilised planets to huge battles between massive armies. A Warrior is shaped as much by the environment in which he fights as by any personal talents or traits he possesses. When a Warrior joins an illustrious organisation like the Imperial Guard or the Adeptus Arbites, he brings with him these specialised skills. These colour his fighting styles and dictate much of his personal combat doctrine, staying with him no matter what additional training he later receives.

Feral worlders learn to fight on brutal and primitive worlds as savage tribesmen or nomadic marauders. Favouring melee weapons above all others for reliability and sometimes issues of honour, they respect physical strength and endurance in place of

cunning and guile, coming as they do from societies where the weak are crushed and the strong survive. Even when Warriors gain access to advanced technology such as powered weapons and modern armour, they usually retain some weapon of their home world, a blood-spattered axe or gore-stained club that always remains their preferred method of killing.

Hive world and forge world Warriors are by contrast masters of technology, and the former often excel at the close-quarters fighting that life in cramped hab tunnels can teach. Forge world Warriors are also prone to augment their bodies; following the teachings of the Machine God, they discard weak, fleshy limbs in favour of those of steel and gears. They may even sometimes replace an arm with a lasgun or bolter so that they always have ready access to their weapon.

Voidborn Warriors share an acceptance of technology with their hive and forge world counterparts, but also learn methods of fighting in space, becoming skilled in boarding actions and airless engagements. The effects of low or zero-gravity are lessened on the voidborn, such is their natural gift from living in uncertain and artificial gravities. Though they might seem more slight and wiry than a heavy fighter from the blasted wastelands of a feral world, like all Warriors they are defined through the violence they live by and inflict on others.

Sample Warrior: Karn Weslin

Karn managed to survive and even thrive in one of the horrid undercities beneath Vesuna Regis on Juno, forging a powerful warband of mutants and scum through his martial skills in the blood pits. His renown spread, and a rival warlord ambushed his settlement to remove the possible threat. Karn barely survived, and swore vengeance. In his search, he fell upon a group of offworld strangers and a deal was struck: his aid to their quest for a fabled tech-relic, and their aid in destroying his nemesis. Both tasks accomplished, Karn found little reason to remain, and followed his new warband into the sun against enemies far worse than any mere mutant.



Warrior Sample Paths

Bringing war to the terrors that walk in the dark and cutting down enemies in droves is not merely this character's sacred duty, but his privilege. This character finds his purpose when wielding steel and fire, and so he strengthens his arm and his soul to kill the things that others dare not even imagine. With this path, a player can build a Warrior who has taken the first steps to becoming a deadly melee combatant capable of standing toe-to-toe with powerful foes and casting them down in the Emperor's name.

Recommended Advances:

Characteristics: Weapon Skill, Strength, Willpower
Skills: Athletics, Dodge, Parry, Interrogation
Talents: Blademaster, Counter-Attack, Crushing Blow, Deny the Witch, Inescapable Attack, Iron Jaw, Sound Constitution, Swift Attack, True Grit, Weapon Training (Low Tech)

Virtually anything can be used as a weapon. In this character's eyes, those who find themselves unarmed are simply lacking in the brutal creativity at which he personally excels. Whether fixing a bayonet to a gun he rebuilt himself or cobbling together a crude explosive, this character wields his ingenuity as a blunt instrument of violence. For Warriors on this path, the question is never whether or not violence is the solution. Instead, it is how he can find or create the best tool to complete his savage task.

Recommended Advances:

Characteristics: Weapon Skill, Ballistic Skill, Intelligence
Skills: Dodge, Operate (Surface), Tech-Use, Trade (Armourer, Technomat)
Talents: Armour-Monger, Double-Team, Mighty Shot, Nowhere to Hide, Quick Draw, Technical Knock, Weapon-Tech, Weapon Training (Pick One Ranged)

Stage 4: Spend Experience Points, Equip Acolyte

"He let me keep the pistol, at least. Sometimes he would allow us items from his private armoury. Most of the time, we found ways to get what we needed after we landed."

–Gex Avrille, from the private memoirs *Recollections of Service*

A character's characteristics, home world, background, and role define the core of who that character is, but do not exemplify the unique abilities and proficiencies of the various people who are called to serve the Inquisition. To reflect everything a character has and will learn across his career, each Player Character earns experience points (xp) periodically throughout the game. He can use these to increase his characteristics and skills, purchase new talents, and gain access to character-altering elite advances.

When a character earns experience points, they are added to his total. The player can spend them at any point the GM allows, or he can save them to be used at a later time.

Starting Experience

Each Player Character starts with 1,000 experience points to spend at character creation. This experience represents everything the Acolyte has learned in his life before service to his Inquisitor, on top of what is granted from his other character creation options. If all players concur, this value can be adjusted upwards for more advanced play with higher-powered Acolytes, or lowered to represent less skilled Acolytes perhaps newly recruited by a novice Inquisitor.



Aptitudes

Those who serve an Inquisitor in the defence of Mankind come from a wide range of planets, organisations, and mental outlooks. This means each Acolyte typically can pick up some areas of expertise more easily than others, or might struggle to achieve what another Acolyte seems to intuitively understand.

Dark Heresy uses these various propensities as aptitudes during character creation. These represent tasks or abilities for which a character has a natural affinity, and can learn with greater ease than others. Characteristic, skill, and talent advances in the game have aptitudes linked to them, usually two (though especially rare abilities might have only one). Those advances sharing a character's aptitudes are easier for that character to learn, and thus cost fewer experience points to purchase. If a character shares one aptitude with an advance, he gains a small discount to purchasing it, and if he shares two aptitudes with the advance he gains a large discount. Players can still purchase advances for which they have no shared aptitudes, but these are typically very expensive.

Note that if during creation a character gains the same aptitude from different sources, he does not gain it twice. He instead chooses and gains a Characteristic-based aptitude that he does not already have.

General

Those skills and talents with the General aptitude represent advances that are simple to learn, regardless of the background or aptitude of the character gaining them. To represent this, all characters in Dark Heresy have the General aptitude.

Characteristic-based Aptitudes

There are nine aptitudes that share a name with nine characteristics each character possesses: Weapon Skill, Ballistic Skill, Strength, Toughness, Agility, Intelligence, Perception, Willpower, and Fellowship. These represent the character's ability to learn and improve the matching characteristic, as well as all the skills and talents related to it. Note that Influence is not a characteristic-based aptitude, as players cannot purchase advances in that characteristic.

Offence

Characters with the Offence aptitude are those who prefer an all-out assault of brute force over a more careful, strategic approach. These Acolytes often charge into melee in a blood-crazed frenzy, or favour unloading overwhelming amounts of firepower into their foes.

Finesse

While skills and talents with the Offence aptitude focus on sheer, brute force, those with the Finesse aptitude rely instead on precise skill and careful planning. Acolytes with the Finesse aptitude can become expert at effectively firing long-range weapons, or wielding exotic weapons with deadly results in personal combat.

Defence

Acolytes with this aptitude quickly learn how to keep themselves alive amongst the deadly chaos of combat that often surrounds them. Whether through skilful deterrence or dogged toughness, they weather the battlefields and violent underhives of the 41st Millennium while others fall around them.

Psyker

Only those with the rare ability to wield psychic powers gain the Psyker aptitude, representing their affinity with the terrible powers of the Warp. It also indicates abilities to sense the unnatural energies that signal Warp denizens or the use of psychic powers.

Tech

Very few dare tamper with the mysteries of the Dark Age of Technology, and fewer still excel at it. Those characters with the Tech aptitude might not understand the inner workings of machines, but they can easily learn to commune with the machine spirit, and seem to get results where others gain only frustration.

Knowledge

Amongst the countless worlds and labyrinthine organisations of the Imperium, there is more information than could be amassed in a million lifetimes. While the majority of citizens in the Imperium remain ignorant of the grand and mysterious workings of the Imperium, Acolytes with the Knowledge aptitude find it simple to acquire this information.

Leadership

There are untold billions of humans within the Imperium, but without guidance they are but bleating sheep or unruly children. Commanding them effectively is essential to defending Mankind, and Acolytes with this aptitude can turn cowering citizens into a vengeful force ready to storm a heretical shrine or defend against xenos raiders.

Fieldcraft

Staying alive in the inhospitable environments across the Imperium can be as difficult as surviving an actual battle. Acolytes with the Fieldcraft aptitude easily adjust to, and thrive on, myriad settings, from oppressive jungles to bleak deserts.

Social

Social situations can be just as deadly as any fire-fight to those unfamiliar or unskilled with verbal combat. Those with this aptitude easily learn how to best use honeyed words or harsh intimidation to get their way with self-important priests, well-connected Rogue Traders, and others requiring more subtle means of persuasion.

Table 2–2: Characteristic Advances

Matching Aptitudes	Simple	Intermediate	Trained	Proficient	Expert
Two	100 xp	250 xp	500 xp	750 xp	1250 xp
One	250 xp	500 xp	750 xp	1,000 xp	1,500 xp
Zero	500 xp	750 xp	1,000 xp	1,500 xp	2,500 xp

Characteristic Advances

A characteristic advance represents a natural improvement to a character's body or mind. When a player purchases an advance in a characteristic, he adds +5 to that characteristic permanently. Characteristic advances are divided into five progression levels:

- **Simple:** A small fulfilment of the character's potential.
- **Intermediate:** A significant and noticeable improvement of the character's capabilities.
- **Trained:** A measure of the character's improvement beyond most around him.
- **Proficient:** Active, focused effort upon improving the character's prowess.
- **Expert:** The limit of a character's natural abilities

As players set about increasing their characters' characteristics, they must progress through each of the progression levels in turn. This begins with Simple and ends at Expert, using the prices in **Table 2–2: Characteristic Advances** above.

As shown in **Table 2–2: Characteristic Advances**, if the character has one matching aptitude, then the first +5 to his characteristic costs 250 xp; the next +5 advancement (the Intermediate progression level) costs 500 xp, and so on. **Table 2–3: Characteristic Aptitudes** lists the nine characteristics that players can actively seek to improve through spending experience, and the aptitudes associated with each. Advancing Agility, for example, has the Agility and Finesse aptitudes linked with it.

The costs for characteristic advances are cumulative. For instance, a player could not simply pay 500 xp for a +10 increase for a characteristic he has one aptitude matched with. Instead, the player is required to buy the Simple advance for 250 xp first, and then pay the 500 xp for the Intermediate advance.

Table 2–3: Characteristic Aptitudes

Characteristic	Aptitude 1	Aptitude 2
Weapon Skill	Weapon Skill	Offence
Ballistic Skill	Ballistic Skill	Finesse
Strength	Strength	Offence
Toughness	Toughness	Defence
Agility	Agility	Finesse
Intelligence	Intelligence	Knowledge
Perception	Perception	Fieldcraft
Willpower	Willpower	Psyker
Fellowship	Fellowship	Social

Skill Advances

Player Characters learn new skills or improve existing skills by selecting skill advances. The xp cost of skill advances depends on how many aptitudes the character has in common with that skill. These advances are divided into four ranks of progression levels, which are as follows:

- **Known (rank 1):** The character can use the skill without the –20 penalty for untrained skills.
- **Trained (rank 2):** The character receives +10 on all skill tests when using this skill.
- **Experienced (rank 3):** The character receives a +20 bonus on all skill tests when using this skill. This bonus replaces the bonus for being Trained.
- **Veteran (rank 4):** The character receives a +30 bonus to all skill tests when using this skill. This bonus replaces the bonus for being Experienced in this skill.

When improving a skill, a character must progress through each of the levels in turn, starting with Known and ending with Veteran. So, for example, players cannot choose to pay for the Trained skill advance for their character without first purchasing the Known skill advance. Note that characters might have received the Known or Trained skill advance already through character creation. **Table 2–4: Skill Advances** below indicates the price of skill advances, based on both the progression level and number of matching aptitudes.

Table 2–5: Skill Aptitudes on page 81 lists the skills in Dark Heresy, along with the aptitudes linked to each. Refer to **Chapter III: Skills** for more information on selecting skills and skill descriptions.

Table 2–4: Skill Advances

Matching Aptitudes	Known	Trained	Experienced	Veteran
Two	100 xp	200 xp	300 xp	400 xp
One	200 xp	400 xp	600 xp	800 xp
Zero	300 xp	600 xp	900 xp	1,200 xp

Table 2-5: Skill Aptitudes

Skill	Aptitude 1	Aptitude 2	Page
Acrobatics	Agility	General	98
Athletics	Strength	General	99
Awareness	Perception	Fieldcraft	100
Charm	Fellowship	Social	100
Command	Fellowship	Leadership	101
Commerce	Intelligence	Knowledge	102
Common Lore†	Intelligence	Knowledge	102
Deceive	Fellowship	Social	103
Dodge	Agility	Defence	104
Forbidden Lore†	Intelligence	Knowledge	104
Inquiry	Fellowship	Social	105
Interrogation	Willpower	Social	105
Intimidate	Strength	Social	106
Linguistics†	Intelligence	General	106
Logic	Intelligence	Knowledge	107
Medicae	Intelligence	Fieldcraft	108
Navigate†	Intelligence	Fieldcraft	110
Operate†	Agility	Fieldcraft	110
Parry	Weapon Skill	Defence	112
Psyniscience	Perception	Psyker	112
Scholastic Lore†	Intelligence	Knowledge	113
Scrutiny	Perception	General	114
Security	Intelligence	Tech	115
Sleight of Hand	Agility	Knowledge	115
Stealth	Agility	Fieldcraft	115
Survival	Perception	Fieldcraft	116
Tech-Use	Intelligence	Tech	117
Trade†	Intelligence	General	118

†*Indicates Specialist skill*

Talent Purchases

Talents are enhancements that permit a character to use his natural abilities in new fashions. These can provide a situational bonus to the use of a skill or characteristic, or provide specific and unusual ways for a character to take advantage of his equipment. See **Chapter IV: Talents and Traits** for detailed descriptions of the many talents available in the Dark Heresy Core Rulebook.

As with characteristics and skills, talents have aptitudes associated with them (usually two, but some might have only one), and are discounted based on how many a character shares. Talents are also divided into three tiers, representing their relative power levels and the amount of xp needed to purchase them.

Talents also often have prerequisites that must be met before they can be purchased, no matter what tier they belong to. For this reason, players in Dark Heresy can find themselves needing to purchase lower tier talents before they can purchase the talent that they want. See **Table 2–6: Talent Advances** for information on the experience cost of talents.

Specialist Talents

Some talents are designated Specialist talents. These talents can be selected more than once, with a different speciality each time. Refer to page 120 for more information on Specialist talents.

Taking Talents Multiple Times

Some talents can be taken multiple times, which is noted in the talent's description. There are only a few of these talents; the most prominent is Sound Constitution, which increases a Player Character's wounds each time it is taken. When taking these talents multiple times, the player simply pays the experience cost each time. It should be noted, however, that some talents that can be taken multiple times have a hard limit, indicating the maximum number of times they can be purchased.

Elite Advances

Elite advances are specialised advances that set a character apart significantly. Many elite advances can only be acquired under special circumstances, and those that can be obtained through play represent large, fundamental changes to a character.

To obtain an elite advance, a character must have the permission of the GM, meet all of the prerequisites, and spend the specified amount of experience. For more information on this, see elite advances on page 86.

Equip Acolyte

Each character starts with certain items based on his background, but can also select additional weapons, equipment, and gear as part of his initial creation. These represent other accessories the Acolyte brought with him, and help define his favoured combat methods and idiosyncrasies. An Acolyte can make a number of selections up to his starting Influence bonus value from **Chapter V: Armoury**, each of which can have an Availability of Scarce (–10) or better. For example, a character with an Influence of 37 could make up to 3 acquisitions. Note that all weapons acquired during character creation (and in regular game play onwards) come with two clips of standard ammunition.

During regular game play, Acolytes use the normal Requisition system for acquiring additional weapons, gear, armour, and other items from the Armoury as per page 142.

Table 2–6: Talent Advances

Matching Aptitudes	Tier One	Tier Two	Tier Three
Two	200 xp	300 xp	400 xp
One	300 xp	450 xp	600 xp
Zero	600 xp	900 xp	1,200 xp

Stage 5: Give the Character Life

"He told us another truth right before we assaulted the Locust Palace, so we would know what we faced if we were too late. After that, I could never sleep soundly while travelling through the Warp again."

–Gex Avrille, from private memoirs *Recollections of Service*

Once all of the raw data of a character is determined, it is time to flesh out his history, personality, motivations, and everything else that makes him a complete character instead of just a collection of numbers.

Details

In Stages 1–3 of character creation, players decide what home world, background, and role fit with their character. These elements play into a character's origin and life up until this point, defining a great amount about who he is and what kind of person he will be. Beyond the archetypes of home worlds, backgrounds, and roles, all of these elements have unlimited possibility for storytelling potential. Each entry gives an example of how it can be used in the Askellon Sector, but players should not feel constrained to just the samples provided. There are countless stars in the sector, and players are encouraged to come up with unique stories to explain their character's home world, background, and role.

Gender, Appearance, and Personal Details

The war-torn worlds of the 41st Millennium are home to an unfathomable number of different types of people. Most Inquisitors are only interested in Acolytes who can perform their duty better than anyone else, and care little about their gender or appearance. A character can have any desired gender, unless the GM or a specific home world or background would preclude such an option otherwise. The same goes for appearance, which should follow any details made part of the character's creation, but otherwise be open to free construction.

As a player is creating the appearance of his Acolyte, he should keep in mind the descriptions given in the character creation options he has chosen, as those can often give ideas as to how those from that life might appear. For example, feral worlders are often large and muscular while the servants of the Adeptus Mechanics are usually covered in cybernetics and the red robes of their order. Many hive worlders are pale, having never seen their sun. An Acolyte from the Adeptus Astra Telepathica could

Table 2–7: Male Names

d100 Roll	Primitive	Low Gothic	High Gothic	Archaic	Informal
01–05	Arz	Aaz	Azararch	Alaric	Able
06–10	Barik	Canto	Baranoth	Barbosa	Bones
11–15	Carm	Darrial	Castess	Caradoc	Cutter
16–20	Farn	Enoch	Davrus	Draco	Dakka
21–25	Garak	Festus	Erioch	Eizen	Dokk
26–30	Horst	Gaius	Galliach	Ferris	Ergs
31–35	Imk	Harlon	Harthos	Grendal	Fanz
36–40	Jart	Irlven	Icharus	Harlocke	Flair
41–45	Kulem	Jaspar	Karpath	Jenquin	Garrit
46–50	Larl	Killian	Lothos	Karlos	Hons
51–55	Mok	Lazarus	Marius	Lemant	Ills
56–60	Narl	Mordicai	Noctine	Magnus	Jaq
61–65	Oort	Nicodemus	Octavius	Naveen	Lax
66–70	Pak	Quinten	Partheos	Oscarl	Meng
71–75	Ragaa	Rhaban	Quellus	Perrin	Nast
76–80	Salc	Silvanto	Ramalies	Romulus	Reddin
81–85	Tarl	Titus	Severan	Sabanth	Scab
86–90	Volc	Uriah	Tyruss	Urial	Shiv
91–95	Yarl	Xerxes	Ventium	Wolfe	Tranq
96–99	Zel	Zariel	Zarath	Zarkov	Wurm
100	Roll on Table 2–8: Female Names				

be uncomfortable in crowds, but an Outcast might welcome them as new sources of income. These are only suggestions, however, as there is no such thing as a typical character in Dark Heresy. There are commonalities within home worlds, backgrounds, and roles, and players should look to them to guide character creation, but fashioning Acolytes with their own unique details can be very rewarding and make for warbands that stand apart.

The Fantasy Flight Games website (www.fantasyflightgames.com) has additional support for players who prefer chance to guide their character's personalisation, with tables providing appearance details such as build and age, odd physical aspects, personality quirks, mementos from home worlds and backgrounds, and other features. Players can use results from these tables, or simply select things from them to assist in bringing their character to life.

Name

Just as the appearance and nature of people can vary infinitely across the countless worlds of the Imperium, so do names and what they mean. On one world, a certain name might indicate low birth or ignominy, while on another, the same might act as a mark of extreme power and fame. When deciding on a name for a character, players can roll randomly (or even multiple times to create compound names, surnames, or true names kept hidden from all) on Table 2–7: Male Names or Table 2–8: Female Names, or they can simply choose a name, mixing and matching options until they find something that they feel fits their character.

Types of Names

Despite the unlimited variability of names from world to world, there are a few general styles of name found throughout the Imperium that players can use as a jumping off point for naming their character:

Primitive: Filled with hard consonants and the occasional guttural noise, characters with primitive names typically hail from more barbaric parts of the Imperium.

Low Gothic: Debased forms of High Gothic names, Low Gothic names can be found amongst the many lowly citizens of the Imperium.

High Gothic: Drawn from the ancient High Gothic language, these names can be found amongst the shining spires of hive cities and members of the ruling classes.

Archaic: Dating from the ancient past, these names are auspicious, though many are so old they have lost their original meanings and sources.

Informal: These names are not unique to one type of world or society. Instead, they reflect nicknames given to characters, usually by peers from their background or their fellow Acolytes.

Table 2–8: Female Names

d100 Roll	Primitive	Low Gothic	High Gothic	Archaic	Informal
01–05	Arda	Acadi	Araleen	Aennisse	Alta
06–10	Cil	Balida	Castella	Bianca	Blue
11–15	Dara	Cassa	Elleantra	Drusilla	Echo
16–20	Elphet	Darial	Fausta	Eos	Fatal
21–25	Frakka	Frennine	Flavia	Florenza	Flame
26–30	Garma	Galatia	Heras	Genevieve	Gamma
31–35	Halli	Hannette	Irissa	Hannette	Grace
36–40	Ing	Jinzia	Jucinda	Jocasta	Jaine
41–45	Julla	Karroleen	Lucindia	Katarina	Lho
46–50	Kelle	Liri	Mycandra	Lethe	Mini
51–55	Merra	Magdala	Novianna	Miranda	Nerva
56–60	Nimm	Narcia	Nuella	Pollonia	Newt
61–65	Nulla	Pennette	Palanza	Rosalind	Pris
66–70	Paz	Quineel	Praenta	Severine	Red
71–75	Russa	Rhia	Regia	Tessera	Steel
76–80	Sulle	Sesselie	Scythia	Tzarelle	Starr
81–85	Thima	Thesse	Temetria	Urania	Tanda
86–90	Vas	Uri	Thallia	Verity	Trix
91–95	Yanne	Xandra	Venria	Wynnif	Xina
96–99	Zanna	Zadori	Yemmise	Yasta	Zedda
100	Roll on Table 2–7: Male Names				

Twist of Destiny

Beyond the choices that have led a character into service for his Inquisitor, that character's strange and twisted destiny has played a large part in his life. To represent the effects of this winding fate on the character's life, each character must roll 1d100 during character creation and compare the result to Table 2–9: Divinations below, immediately applying the listed affects.

Nature

Once a character's appearance has been determined, and the details of his life worked out, the player should have a good idea of the personality he would like the character to have. To help in generating a personality for the character, the player can consider the following questions:



What does the character desire?

The eternal fight never ends, but each Acolyte takes up the cause for his own reasons. Some Acolytes want only to stay alive, or fight to ensure their loved ones are saved. Others might be obsessed with power and riches, or the desire to see the sector cleansed of heresy or crime. Some might be devoted to Mankind's survival, caring little for individual lives so long as the species continues. A desire could be to gain the favour of a loved one, or even simply to relish a moment of quiet peace with a lho stick and a bowl of fine amasec.

What does the character hate?

Hatred can motivate many an Acolyte in powerful ways, burning his passions and keeping him fighting when all else is gone. An Acolyte who lost his world to a xenos invasion might be consumed with hate, and eagerly seek out aliens to kill no matter the species or their actual threat. Another might reserve his wrath for those who do not worship the Emperor in the correct manner, or for foul mutants who defy the holy form of Man. An Acolyte's hatred could also be within himself, for a moment of weakness on an otherwise-forgotten battlefield that only the Emperor witnessed.

Table 2–9: Divinations

d100 Roll	Prophecy	Effect
01	*Mutation without, corruption within.*	Roll once on Table 8–15: Malignancies (see page 290) and apply the result.
02–05	*Trust in your fear.*	Increase this character's Perception by 5. He also gains the Phobia Mental Disorder (see page 288).
06–09	*Humans must die so that humanity can endure.*	This character gains the Jaded talent. If he already possesses this talent, increase his Willpower characteristic by 2 instead.
10–13	*The pain of the bullet is ecstasy compared to damnation.*	Reduce this character's Agility characteristic by 3. The first time this character suffers Critical damage each session, roll 1d10. On a result of 10, he does not suffer any Critical Effects, though the damage still counts as Critical damage.
14–17	*Be a boon to your allies and the bane of your enemies.*	This character gains the Hatred (choose any one) talent. If he already possessed this talent, increase his Strength characteristic by 2 instead.
18–21	*The wise learn from the deaths of others.*	Increase this character's Agility *or* Intelligence Characteristic by 3. Reduce his Weapon Skill *or* Ballistic Skill characteristic by 3.
22–25	*Kill the alien before it can speak its lies.*	This character gains the Quick Draw talent. If he already possesses this talent, increase his Agility characteristic by 2 instead.
26–29	*Truth is subjective.*	Increase this character's Perception characteristic by 3. The first time he would gain 1 or more Corruption points each session, he gains that amount plus 1 instead.
30–33	*Thought begets Heresy.*	Reduce this character's Intelligence characteristic by 3. The first time he would gain 1 or more Corruption points each session, he reduces that amount by 1 (to a minimum of 0) instead.
34–38	*Heresy begets Retribution.*	Increase this character's Fellowship *or* Strength characteristic by 3. Reduce his Toughness *or* Willpower characteristic by 3.
39–43	*A mind without purpose wanders in dark places.*	When gaining Mental Disorders (see page 287), the character may choose to gain a new Disorder instead of increasing the severity of an existing Disorder.
44–49	*If a job is worth doing, it is worth dying for.*	Increase this character's Toughness *or* Willpower characteristic by 3. Reduce his Fellowship *or* Strength characteristic by 3.

What is the character willing to sacrifice?

For many Acolytes, death is the final sacrifice, and to think otherwise is to turn away from the Emperor. Some might hold their lives dearly, knowing what might await them when the Emperor makes His judgement, and willing to sacrifice anything or anyone to forestall that final day. Others might care little for death, but fear the day their own honour is lost in their pursuits. When combatting the Ruinous Powers, the loss of their very souls might be the supreme sacrifice to avert an apocalypse.

How did the character meet his Inquisitor?

The first meeting between Acolyte and Inquisitor is a pivotal moment, and players should work out a suitable backstory for this. The character might have fought alongside the Inquisitor against invading xenos, saving his life. Perhaps the Inquisitor saved his own life, and now the character feels he owes a life-debt to his new master. He could have successfully tracked a heretic, capturing his target as the Inquisitor arrived. In almost all situations, the character impresses the Inquisitor somehow or offers an invaluable skill set, making him someone the Inquisitor wants in his service.

What does the Inquisitor mean to the character?

Does he view him as someone he must follow without hesitation, or a leader whose decisions he can question? Does he respect him as a fellow fighter or scholar, or only as the person issuing the orders? For some, the Inquisitor is second only to the Emperor in their eyes, and to serve such an august personage is worth any death that may come. Another Acolyte could view his "leader" as someone who got the drop on him, has sufficient blackmail material that he cannot refuse his orders, or simply has threatened to have him killed unless he follows. He may be a clever manipulator but certainly no better a man than any other. How much value and meaning an Acolyte puts on his Inquisitor can often guide a great many details concerning how the Acolyte acts and performs his missions, or if he might even contemplate betrayal or assassination should his respect fall too low.



Table 2–9: Divinations (Continued)

d100 Roll	Prophecy	Effect
50–54	*Dark dreams lie upon the heart.*	Whenever this character would roll on Table 8–15: Malignancies (see page 290), he may instead select any one result and gain that Malignancy.
55–59	*Violence solves everything.*	Increase this character's Weapon Skill *or* Ballistic Skill characteristic by 3. Reduce his Agility *or* Intelligence characteristic by 3.
60–63	*Ignorance is a wisdom of its own.*	Reduce this character's Perception characteristic by 3. The first time he would gain 1 or more Insanity points each session, he reduces that amount by 1 (to a minimum of 0) instead.
64–67	*Only the insane have strength enough to prosper.*	Increase this character's Willpower characteristic by 3. The first time he would gain 1 or more Insanity points each session, he gains that amount plus 1 instead.
68–71	*A suspicious mind is a healthy mind.*	Increase this character's Perception characteristic by 2. Additionally, he may re-roll Awareness tests to avoid being Surprised.
72–75	*Suffering is an unrelenting instructor.*	Reduce this character's Toughness characteristic by 3. The first time that this character suffers any damage each session, he gains a +20 bonus to the next test he makes before the end of his next turn.
76–79	*The only true fear is dying without your duty done.*	This character gains the Resistance (Cold, Heat, *or* Fear) talent. If he already possesses this talent, increase his Toughness characteristic by 2 instead.
80–83	*Only in death does duty end.*	The first time this character would suffer Fatigue each session, he suffers that amount of Fatigue minus 1 (to a minimum of 0) instead.
84–87	*Innocence is an illusion.*	This character gains the Keen Intuition talent. If he already possesses this talent, increase his Intelligence characteristic by 2 instead.
88–91	*To war is human.*	This character gains the Dodge skill as a Known skill (rank 1). If he already possesses this skill, increase his Agility characteristic by 2 instead.
92–95	*There is no substitute for zeal.*	This character gains the Clues from the Crowds talent. If he already possesses this talent, increase his Fellowship characteristic by 2 instead.
96–99	*Even one who has nothing can still offer his life.*	When this character burns Fate threshold to survive a lethal injury, roll 1d10. On a result of 10, he survives whatever grievous wound would have killed him but does not reduce his Fate threshold.
100	*Do not ask why you serve. Only ask how.*	Increase this character's Fate threshold by 1.

Establishing the Warband and Inquisitor

Along with character creation, players should also create their warband, the grouping of their Acolytes that serves the Inquisitor. This is not strictly as necessary as character creation, but adds greater depth to games and is highly encouraged.

It is possible their first adventure is the very first time they have met each other, and this is a newly-forged warband ready to burn its light onto a darkened sector. They may all be new to service to their Inquisitor, or have worked for him in the past but never with each other, and it is the first time they have gathered to fight heresy together. For new players, especially those new to the *Warhammer 40,000* setting, this is a recommended approach.

Alternatively, this warband may have fought for some time prior to this adventure, and all know and trust each other (or trust each other as much as any Acolyte could trust anyone). If this is the case, the players should decide how long they have been together, perhaps creating a history of past deeds, valued comrades lost in earlier missions, and other details that can bind them together. Some of the Acolytes might be new to the warband, and must prove themselves to the rest, which can make for both friction and good roleplaying.

The players should also establish if their warband has a location they make home, or one where they recuperate between assignments. This might be a remote settlement outside a hive city, a familiar set of habs on a nondescript world, or even their Inquisitor's own voidship that also serves as their transportation. They may have no such luxuries, living only from mission to mission, knowing the only rest comes with death.

Unless one (or more) of the players is an Inquisitor, they should also create their Inquisitor, who functions as the GM's character. It is possible the GM already has an Inquisitor in mind, complete with personality, methods of contact, and expectations for the warband. If not, such decisions can be made as a group, or the GM can solicit details to aid in this creation. Unless the players are all experienced and agree to it, efforts should be made to match the characters to their newly-crafted Inquisitor to create a smooth gaming experience. Depending on player experience, an Inquisitor with his own unique personality and quirks can greatly enliven play. He might be overly haughty, contacting the Acolytes via dead drops and refusing any actual contact with his minions. He might be secretive, never offering reasons or explanations for his directives, or he may be trusting and gregarious to the point of suspicion as to his actual motives. He might even be forcing them into service, holding deadly blackmail or other threats to coerce their actions, and hoping once they see the real threats that exist they develop true loyalty. With work, the Inquisitor can become more than another NPC and become a full part of the group dynamic.

Elite Advances

"My eyes were closed, but suddenly the Emperor blessed me with Sight."

–Ollise Kwill, nascent psyker

Characters in Dark Heresy are not static: they change and grow over the course of their adventures, assuming they survive, of course. In the course of his lifetime, an Acolyte might evolve into someone his earlier self could not possibly imagine. Some changes radically alter a character, forever moving him onto a new path. These might be the result of unrevealed or manifested transformations, offering abilities no amount of training could produce. They can also come in the form of terrible new offices, granting him tremendous powers, but also burdens few mortals could comprehend. These life-altering changes are called elite advances, and characters blessed or cursed with one are never the same again. This section covers the rules for elite advances, including acquiring and using elite advances.

Using Elite Advances

Elite advances represent large, defining aspects of a character that separate him from his peers. Each elite advance is unique, and can represent various elements of a character's persona. An elite advance could be an aspect of a character that has been a part of him his entire life, or an ability that emerged due to some sort of external stimuli. It could be a special rank bestowed due to great deeds, or one of many other possibilities. Note that the player's role remains the same; a Warrior, for example, still views violence as the best solution to problems, no matter if he gains the Psyker elite advance. A role defines how a character views the galaxy around him and his position within it; elite advances can take him along different paths, but do not change how he walks upon them.

Not every character gains access to elite advances, and not every character needs to. Most represent a thematic difference in the characters that possess them, and rarely give a large bonus. Each comprises three components: narrative changes, instant advances, and unlocked advances. When a character gains the elite advance, each of these three components change him in different ways.

Narrative

The largest component to an elite advance is the effect it has on the nature of a character. An elite advance represents a significant difference that makes him unique from his peers. This could be anything from being promoted to the vaunted rank of Inquisitor, to gaining the power to channel the twisted energies of the Warp.

Each elite advance description offers information on its narrative component, and guidance on how the specific advance affects the character. In the end, however, it is up to the player to properly integrate the thematic components of the elite advance into his character concept. Just as each player decides the details of the different choices he makes during character creation, he also chooses how his character changes as he acquires elite advances.

Instant Changes

When a character acquires an elite advance, whether at character creation or during play, it can alter his characteristics, skills, and talents. Each elite advance entry outlines any instant changes that are applied to a character who acquires the advance. These can be in the form of positive or negative modifiers to characteristics or skills, talents that are gained or lost, or new, unique rules that are applied to the character. All of these changes are applied when the advance is acquired, and are permanent.

Unlocked Advances

In addition to immediately changing his nature, most elite advances give that character new avenues through which he can grow in experience. These avenues are in the form of new advances which the character can purchase. These advances can be anything from new talents to potent psychic powers, and are purchased using experience points in the same way as for regular advances.

Gaining Elite Advances

Characters can purchase elite advances by spending experience points. However, acquiring an elite advance is much trickier than simply purchasing a new talent or a rank in a skill. These represent large changes and, if purchased outside of character creation, can have a significant impact on the flow of a campaign. Because of this, a character must fulfil two conditions to be able to acquire an elite advance. First, the character must meet all the prerequisites listed in the advance's entry, and second, the player must have permission from the Game Master, working out the details for how the elite advance fits in with the character and the overall narrative of the campaign.

Prerequisites and Restrictions

Each elite advance requires the character to possess a certain natural ability or skill level before being able to acquire it. The character must meet or exceed the minimum requirements for indicated characteristic values, skill training, or other designated qualities in order to be able to acquire that elite advance.

Working with the GM

The most important concern for a player to consider when acquiring an elite advance is how it will affect his character, the warband, and the narrative of the campaign as a whole. Because of the impact these advances can have on a campaign, players must get permission from the Game Master before purchasing any elite advance for their characters.

Each elite advance offers guidance for players and Game Masters on when it is appropriate for a character to acquire the advance, as well as how to properly integrate it into a campaign. Each advance has a varying level of restriction outlined.

Free Elite Advances

Some character creation options grant characters elite advances for "free." In these cases, the character automatically gains the elite advance without having to spend the required experience, meet any of the prerequisites, or gain permission from the GM.

Elite Advance Descriptions

There are three elite advances that characters in Dark Heresy most commonly seek out, but also fear: Inquisitor, Psyker, and Untouchable. To become an Inquisitor might be the ultimate path for an Acolyte, but to actually serve in the Inquisition is to shoulder a burden no mortal should endure. Psykers wield terrible powers, but their connection to the Immaterium makes them forever a target of the Ruinous Powers, and suspect to even their closest allies. The soulless Untouchables are puissant weapons against the horrors of the Warp, but they are anathema to normal humans and evoke indefinably unpleasant reactions wherever they go.

To take a character along any of these paths can bring greater attention from the Imperium and its enemies alike, and is sure to take his adventures into areas undreamed of when he first started his service to the Emperor.



Inquisitor

To be an Inquisitor is to know tremendous power and responsibilities impossible to imagine. An Inquisitor acts not to save a world, or a sector, or even the institutions of the Imperium; his actions are in the defence of humanity as a whole. He can condemn a world to death lest it contaminate surrounding regions, or raze a hive to rubble to prevent a daemonic outbreak. He does these terrible deeds and more, for the only thing more dreadful than such actions are the repercussions should he shy away from the immense burdens of his position. Inquisitors are separate from Mankind, for they alone possess the strength to live with the awful truths of the 41st Millennium—that Mankind is beset on all sides by threats that may end its existence, that the Warp harbours soul-devouring Daemons, and that psykers may lead to the doom of humanity. Few minds can comprehend such horrible knowledge; even Acolytes might not be fully aware of them, told only what their master deems necessary. Inquisitors not only know these truths, but also act on them. They serve none but the Emperor of Mankind, and account for their actions to no one. Though an Inquisitor need not be individually powerful in arms, his authority is supreme. Each is unique and fights to defend Mankind in his own manner, and without them humanity would surely perish.

Becoming an Inquisitor

Just as each Inquisitor is unique, so are the means by which each gains his office. Few who know of the true burden such power carries would desire such ascension; Acolytes might serve their Inquisitor their entire lives and never even consider it. Many Inquisitors are drawn from the ranks of Acolytes, for they may have at least a glimpse of what dread responsibilities it carries. Others might come from outside, discovered during investigations or battles and through deeds and fortitude proved themselves worthy. There is no standard way a new Inquisitor is named or to decide when one is ready to become an Inquisitor. Some are created via a master/apprentice relationship, but others might happen in a joint decision from a group of Inquisitors, or acclamation of peers. There could be grand ceremonies in opulent palaces, or a simple clasping together of their arms before the new Inquisitor departs. The only constants are the truths they share, the power they wield, and the burdens they carry knowing that if they falter, Mankind is doomed.

Inquisitor Talents

The following talents are available only to characters with the Inquisitor elite advance, and are purchased in the same manner as other talents (see page 81).

Complete Control

The Inquisitor uses his experience in the subtle dance of politics, manoeuvring through social strata and working contacts established across the sector to alter the awareness others have of a group, the better to aid in his goals.

Tier: 2

Prerequisite: Perception 45

Aptitudes: Intelligence, Social

Effect: The character may spend a Fate point to increase or decrease his warband's Subtlety value by 1d10 + his Willpower bonus at any time.

Inquisitor Special Rules

The Inquisitor elite advance has the following rules:

Experience Cost

1,000 xp

Prerequisites

- **Influence:** 75
- **Emperor's Blessing:** A character elevates to this rank through the decree of an existing Inquisitor or some other suitably momentous occasion. Only an exceptional individual, who has performed mighty deeds and displayed sufficient courage, might be gifted such power and authority; it is not something that is offered lightly. See **Becoming an Inquisitor** on this page for more information on this unique event.
- **GM Guidance:** This advance should only be considered for a character not only of high Influence but who has also displayed through his actions that he is ready for the office. It not only changes the character, but also the group dynamic and the roleplaying experience as well. One or more characters playing an Inquisitor can have a range of effects on any campaign narrative, and the GM should carefully consider whether having an Inquisitor PC fits with the campaign he wants to run. Complete guidance on including an Inquisitor in a campaign can be found in **Chapter XI: The Game Master**.

Instant Changes

Gains the Peer (Inquisition) talent, the Forbidden Lore (Pick One) skill, and the Leadership Aptitude.

Unlocked Advances

An Inquisitor character gains access to a special set of talents. These talents are available only to an Inquisitor character, and are purchased with experience in the same manner as regular talents are purchased.

Fated

Knowing that failure means a horrible end for Mankind, Inquisitors strive with unmatched zeal and refusal to despair. They often appear greater than other mortals, defying death and inflicting wondrous devastation on their enemies.

Tier: 3

Prerequisites: Inspired Intuition, Shield of Contempt, Strength through Conviction

Aptitudes: Knowledge, Willpower

Effect: When this talent is acquired, the character immediately increases his Fate threshold by one.

Inspired Intuition

Having investigated all manner of heresies through the long years, the Inquisitor can gain insight into what might seem insolvable occurrences. Connections others might not consider suddenly leap to the fore, and heresies are laid bare.

Tier: 2
Prerequisite: Intelligence 50
Aptitudes: Perception, Social
Effect: The character may spend a Fate point to gain exceptional insight into his immediate status. This is represented by the player asking the GM a question about the current situation the character faces, which the GM should answer as helpfully as possible.

Jack of all Trades

Each investigation is unique, as each heresy is a different, foul abomination upon the soul of humanity. With each investigation and the approach taken to eradicate it, the Inquisitor sharpens his abilities in ways normal practice could not accomplish.
Tier: 2
Prerequisite: Intelligence 45
Aptitudes: Knowledge
Effect: When this talent is acquired, the character gains all unknown non-Specialist skills as Known skills (rank 1).

Master of all Trades

As the Inquisitor learns new abilities and hones his skills, with time he can master those to which he devotes his attention. His prowess in such areas might approach the finest specialists, greatly aiding in his struggle against Mankind's enemies.



Tier: 3
Prerequisites: Intelligence 55, Jack of all Trades
Aptitudes: Knowledge
Effect: When this talent is acquired, the character immediately advances all Known skills (rank 1) to Trained (rank 2).

Shared Destiny

Those who fight at the side of an Inquisitor know each battle can be their last, but a good Inquisitor watches over his own. With one eye on his Acolytes and another on their enemies, he ensures his people live to fight another day.
Tier: 1
Prerequisite: Willpower 40
Aptitudes: Fellowship, Leadership
Effect: The character may spend two Fate points as a Free Action to grant another character within 10 metres a Fate point. Likewise, any character in 10 metres may spend two Fate points as a Free Action to grant this character a Fate point. This does not allow characters to gain Fate points in excess of their Fate threshold.

Shield of Contempt

Mental disciplines and rites to protect the flesh are essential to resist the foul temptations of the Ruinous Powers. His mind and body prepared and strengthened, the Inquisitor stands ready to repel the taint of Chaos.
Tier: 2
Prerequisite: Willpower 50
Aptitudes: Defence, Toughness
Effect: Whenever this character would gain any amount of Corruption points, he may spend a Fate point to gain 0 instead

Strength through Conviction

An Inquisitor is privy to terrible truths, and has been witness to things that would drive others to madness and beyond. His will steeled to adamantium levels, he can ignore that which would bring others to their knees in gibbering hysteria.
Tier: 2
Prerequisite: Willpower 50
Aptitudes: Defence, Willpower
Effect: Whenever this character would gain any amount of Insanity points, he may spend a Fate point to gain 0 instead.

Will of the Inquisitor

Perhaps the single most defining mark of an Inquisitor is his strength of will. Often it seems he can bend probabilities or shrug off lethal blows through sheer concentration, without the aid of arcane powers or ancient devices. For those who cannot accept defeat, surely anything is possible.
Tier: 3
Prerequisites: Fated, Intelligence 50, Perception 50, Willpower 55
Aptitudes: Knowledge, Willpower
Effect: Before rolling the d100 when making a test, the character may spend one Fate point to count as having rolled a result of 01 on that roll.

Psyker

Psykers are humans able to access the terrible energies of the Warp and wield powers beyond those of other beings. Some claim them to be the next stage in humanity's evolution, a terrible curse that surely dooms it to damnation, or both. Without proper training, each might unknowingly rip apart reality in a fountain of rapacious Daemons or burn a world to bedrock, and they are rightly feared for the terrors they might unleash in a fit of weakness or insanity.

The Imperium realises both the dangers and usefulness that psykers represent, and demands each world scour its peoples for anyone showing signs of psychic abilities; those found are to be taken on the Black Ships of the Adeptus Astra Telepathica to Terra for sanctioning. The testing they undergo reveals their future. Immediate death comes for those judged too inferior or dangerous to exist. Many become soul-fodder to the Emperor if they have power but lack control. Countless more are trained to offer their power to the Astronomican, the shining light in the Warp that allows navigation across the stars, and thousands perish each day as their souls are drained away to power the beacon. Psykers can also serve as Astropaths, their powers strengthened through soul-binding to the Emperor in a process that steals their sight forever. The most powerful and exceptional psykers might go on to become Primaris Psykers serving on battlefields across the Imperium, or even join the Adeptus Astartes as mighty Space Marine Librarians.

Some escape this net, either carefully hiding themselves away or never actively displaying their powers. Many might live out their lives never realising they are psykers, feeling only they are lucky at gambling, or able to walk through fire and death unscathed, or cursed with foul weather no matter where they travel. Inquisitors are keen judges of exceptional individuals, and might seek such a one out knowing (or even themselves not knowing) psychic abilities are present.

Becoming a Psyker

Some psykers are born amidst clouds of eldritch energies, their inhuman pedigree apparent to all. Others might not manifest their powers until many years later when impossible stress triggers their mutation. Every world in the Imperium must scour its peoples for any sign of psychic activity as part of their tithes—with the Adeptus Arbites stationed there keeping careful watch for compliance—but what each world considers a sign greatly varies. Some might test for corpus buoyancy or resistance to flame, or list tales of odd occurrences in their vicinity, or any one of endless indications the world holds as certainty for psychic taint. That many die from these tests is of little concern, for a world might burn if they are lax in searching.

Learning of their own psychic abilities is enough to drive many mad, and without mental defences others quickly fall prey to the Ruinous Powers. Those who survive their sanctioning on Terra might gain protection and stability through a variety of means. Their training serves to strengthen their will, and many are also fitted with limiters or undergo psycho-surgery to help them control their abilities, lest a stray glance ignite a room or odd smell invoke a telekinetic storm. It does not make for an easy life, however, and no matter how or when it came about, a newly-emerged psyker has a lifetime of constant scrutiny and horrific threats ahead of him.

Psyker Special Rules

The Psyker elite advance has the following rules:

Experience Cost

300 xp

Prerequisites

- **Willpower:** 40
- **A Void in the Warp:** Characters with the Untouchable elite advance cannot gain the Psyker elite advance.
- **Rogue Psyker:** Characters without the Adeptus Astra Telepathica background who gain the Psyker elite advance are not sanctioned. They do not gain the Sanctioned trait (see page 138) and count as rogue psykers (see the sidebar on page 91).
- **GM Guidance:** Psykers are rare, but many serve the Inquisition due to their useful abilities. The GM should feel free to allow characters to take the Psyker elite advance if they want; 1–2 Psykers per group usually creates a good balance, although if other Player Characters abhor psykers, it can make for tense group dynamics. It is also possible for a character to become a psyker and strive to keep this hidden from his fellow Acolytes for a variety of reasons. This can lead to interesting roleplaying, and if desired a GM should work with the player to develop this narrative.

Instant Changes

- Gains the Psyker trait, the Psyker aptitude, and a psy rating of 1.
- Can no longer gain the Untouchable elite advance for any reason.
- If the character does not have the Sanctioned trait, he immediately gains 1d10+3 Corruption points (see page 289) as his mind abruptly opens to the Warp.

Unlocked Advances

The character can now purchase psychic powers by spending experience points; see **Chapter VI: Psychic Powers** for full rules on purchasing and using psychic powers.

A character with the Psyker elite advance can also purchase psy rating advances to increase his psy rating. When a character purchases an advance in his psy rating, he increases his psy rating by 1. To do this, the character spends an amount of experience equal to 200 multiplied by his new psy rating value. For example, to increase a character's psy rating from 2 to 3 would cost 600 xp (3 x 200).

Rogue Psykers

Human psykers are collected by the millions each day across the galaxy and brought to Terra on the dread Black Ships of the Adeptus Astra Telepathica, as part of the binding tithes each world owes to the Imperium. Here they are tested for power levels, control, strength of will, and other factors to decide their fate. Once this sanctioning process is over, a psyker goes on to serve the Imperium either in life or death. All psykers are viewed with suspicion at best, and outright hatred at worst, and even sanctioned psykers are always suspect. Those psykers who never underwent this testing and training to help ensure the safety of those around them are deemed rogue, fugitives from Imperial law should they be discovered.

These psykers can represent anyone from a heretical magus who delves far into the Warp in search of greater power, to a fringe world shaman casting bones to divine the future, to a once-good man driven to foul deeds merely to survive, to an Acolyte using his powers under the aegis of his Inquisitor's authority. A rogue might even be an Inquisitor himself who discovered his powers late in life and never submitted to the testing of the Adeptus Astra Telepathica. The only thing they share is that they were never taken aboard the Black Ships. Most end their short days atop a fiery pyre or as a Daemon's plaything, but some become mighty forces for damnation or salvation.

Untouchable

Untouchables are those soulless unfortunates who cast no shadow in the Warp, and represent an impossibly small fraction of humanity, far smaller even than the minuscule fraction with psychic abilities. They might subconsciously know they are different, noticing the way others treat them. Bereft of such an essential part of their humanity, they might look, think, and act as normal men, but few are comfortable in their presence. Those around them often sense a miasma of nausea or grating sound to their voices; nothing an auspex would detect, but something other humans subconsciously feel. Untouchables are anathema to psykers and others who call on the Warp for their powers. Those nearby might experience debilitating pain or worse, for such is an Untouchable's soul-void. Many Untouchables cancel a psyker's powers, either nullifying or negating all psychic abilities in a region. They are pariahs of humanity, shunned by their fellow men and living a wretched existence.

Becoming an Untouchable

Untouchables are born with their terrible curse though inherited genetics. Many live for years before discovering what they really are, though often their lives are very short given the disagreeable feelings they invoke in all around them. A person believed to be anti-social (but otherwise unremarkable) might actually be an Untouchable living out a miserable existence, divorced from his fellow men in ways no one can fully explain. Some are only found through the actions of planetary governors eager to cull anyone displaying the slightest hint of unusual behaviour as part of their tithes to the Black Ships. Inquisitors might discover them and use their abilities against powers from the Warp to repel the witch and counter the Daemon. Even though his life is now filled with mortal peril, an Untouchable so used might feel valued and destined for a purpose far greater than the shunned existence he once lead.

Untouchable Special Rules

The Untouchable elite advance has the following rules:

Experience Cost

300 xp

Prerequisites

- **A Beacon in the Warp:** Characters with the Psyker elite advance cannot gain the Untouchable elite advance.
- **GM Guidance:** Psychic Untouchables are incredibly rare, and often live lonely and short lives due to the effect they have on all living beings that get near them. This advance could be part of character creation, given that it is something the character is born with, or can be something added later once the effects of the genetic curse become impossible to ignore. It is recommended that each play group have no more than one character with the Untouchable elite advance. Additionally, groups with both an Untouchable and a Psyker can often cause many problems as the Untouchable interferes with the Psyker's ability. This can be a great opportunity for interesting player interaction, but Game Masters should be careful to not allow their players to create a hostile play environment.

Instant Changes

- Can no longer gain the Psyker trait for any reason.
- Gains the Resistance (Psychic Powers) talent.
- Fellowship characteristic always counts as one-half (rounding up) its value for tests or other game usage. When interacting with anyone who has a psy rating or the Psyniscience skill, the Fellowship characteristic counts as 1.
- Can never gain nor benefit from the positive effects of Psychic Powers or any other related unnatural talents, traits, or abilities that call on the Warp for power.
- Automatically ignores any effects resulting from Psychic Phenomena (see page 195), and gains a +30 bonus on any tests to resist effects from a Perils of the Warp result (see page 197).

Unlocked Advances

An Untouchable character gains access to a special set of talents. These talents available only to an Untouchable character, and are purchased with experience in the same way as regular talents are purchased.

Untouchable Talents

The following talents are available to characters with the Untouchable elite advance, and are purchased in the same manner as other talents (see page 81).

Bane of the Daemon

Those creations of the Ruinous Powers that rely on constant bloodshed or emotional damage to sustain their essences away from the Immaterium's embrace find themselves weakened when near the Untouchable. Only the strongest of these creatures can maintain themselves, lest they be hurled back to the Warp to face the wrath of their unholy masters.

Tier: 2
Prerequisite: Willpower 40
Aptitudes: Defence, Willpower
Effect: Creatures with the Warp Instability trait within WPB metres of the Untouchable suffer a penalty on their Willpower test to remain in realspace equal to five times the Untouchable's WPB.

Daemonic Anathema

The Untouchable's control over his soulless condition has grown to the extent that even the denizens of the Warp rightly fear his presence. Those Daemons who dare enter reality near him find themselves weakened and more easily banished back to the unnatural realm of the Immaterium.

Tier: 3
Prerequisites: Warp Anathema, Willpower 55
Aptitudes: Willpower
Effect: All creatures with the Daemonic trait within WPB metres of the character do not gain any benefits from that trait.

Null Field

Untouchables of greater power present a stronger aversion to the Immaterium, encompassing a wider area surrounding them. In this region, psykers see their powers fail and despair, knowing an Untouchable is nearby.

Tier: 3
Prerequisites: Psychic Null, Willpower 50
Aptitudes: Willpower
Effect: The effects of Psychic Null apply to all characters within WPB metres of the character.

Psychic Null

Psykers rightly fear an Untouchable, for their vaunted powers can fade away against the spiritual abyss that he reflects in the Warp. Even the mightiest arcane blasts can dissipate when they strike a soulless one.

Tier: 2
Prerequisite: Willpower 40
Aptitudes: Defence, Willpower
Effect: The character gains the Deny the Witch talent. He also gains a +20 bonus when making Evasion tests against psychic attacks and when making Opposed tests to resist psychic powers. This talent stacks with Resistance (Psychic Powers) and can be purchased multiple times; each time a character purchases it, increase the bonus it grants by +5.

Soulless Aura

Many feel the Untouchable's unnatural essence as a subconscious irritation. Those unused to this often find their emotional stability irritated to distraction from his mere presence.

Tier: 1
Prerequisite: Willpower 30
Aptitudes: Finesse, Willpower
Effect: Enemy characters within WPB metres of the Untouchable suffer a –10 penalty to all Charm and Deceive tests.

Warp Anathema

Some Untouchables darken the Immaterium so strongly that psykers reel from them in pain. Those who draw their powers from the Warp can even be reduced to normal mortals, cut off from access to the Sea of Souls by a being without a soul.



Tier: 3
Prerequisites: Warp Disruption, Willpower 55
Aptitudes: Intelligence, Willpower
Effect: Characters affected by Warp Disruption reduce their psy rating by 2, instead of the normal amount. This talent can be purchased multiple times; each time a character purchases it the reduction in psy rating increases by 1. If purchased 3 times, for example, the reduction would be 4.

Warp Bane

The abyss where the Untouchable's soul should be is unrelenting in its psychic haemorrhage, and increases the anathema he projects into larger areas. Psykers can suddenly find themselves diminished as an Untouchable charges forward, emanating a wavefront they find terrible to contemplate.

Tier: 3
Prerequisites: Warp Disruption, Willpower 55
Aptitudes: Willpower
Effect: The effects of Warp Disruption apply to all characters with a psy rating within two times WPB metres of the character, instead of the normal amount.

Warp Disruption

Often a Psyker can sense that an Untouchable is lurking nearby simply through the lessening of his own Warp-based powers. Feeling his psychic abilities drain away, he knows his own death is perhaps close as well.

Tier: 2
Prerequisite: Willpower 45
Aptitudes: Perception, Willpower
Effect: All characters with a psy rating within WPB metres of the character reduce their base psy rating by 1 while they remain within range. Characters reduced to a psy rating of 0 cannot use any psychic powers.

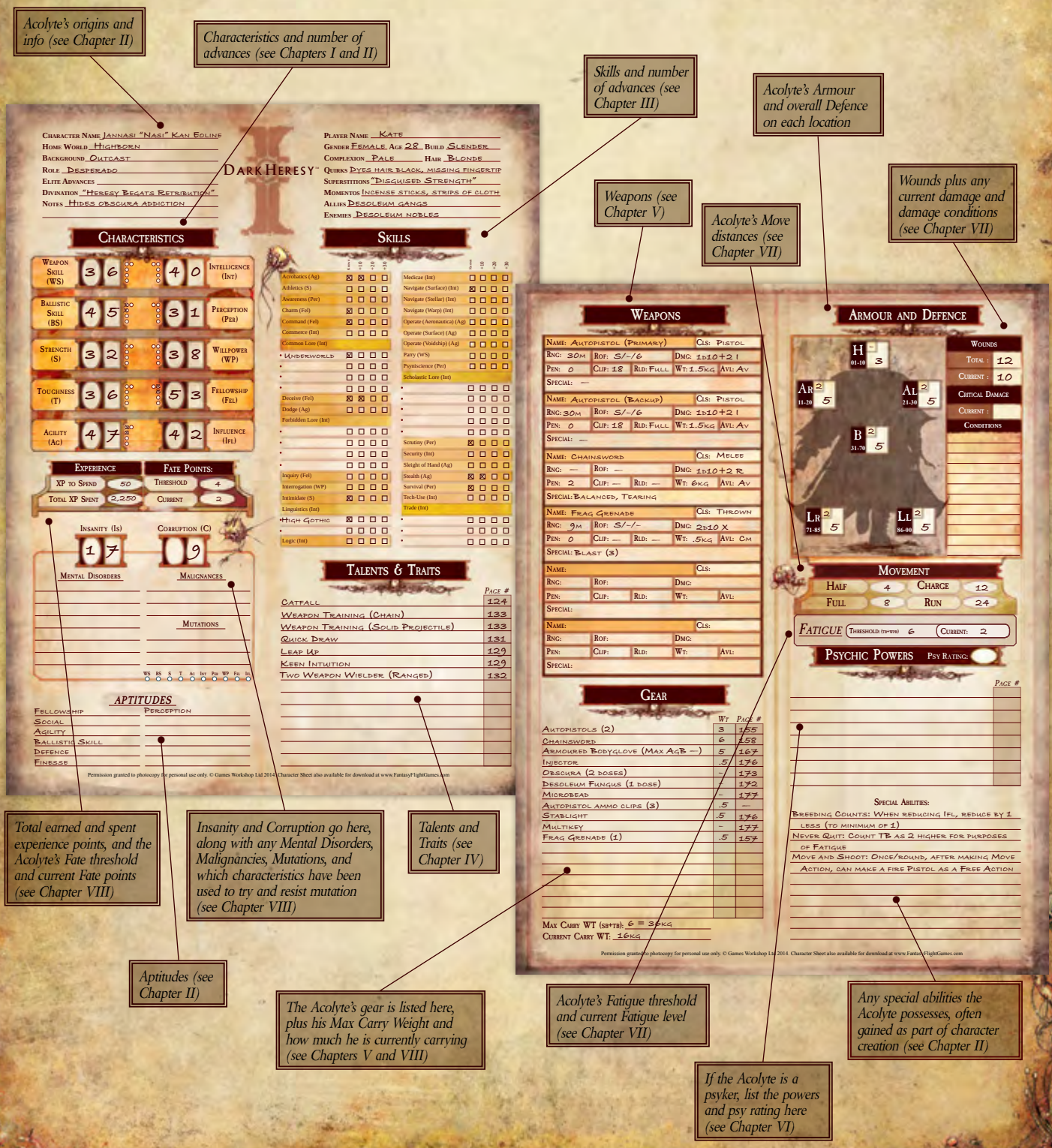
Example Character Sheet

The **Character Sheet** (see page 444) is a player's most important possession as it clearly details everything about his Acolyte. Players should strive to keep this up to date, as they will be using it often during games.

One side of the sheet details the Acolyte's personal information, Characteristics, Skills, Talents, and other information about the character including Insanity, Corruption, and their effects. The reverse is more combat oriented, and details any weapons, gear, psychic powers, and personal armour and defence. This side is useful for tracking damage and Fatigue.

Here are some tips for its upkeep:

- **Make a back-up:** Every few gaming sessions, make a photocopy of the character sheet, or copy the information onto a new sheet. The Fantasy Flight Games website (fantasyflightgames.com) has downloadable PDF versions which can be digitally edited as well.
- **Share with the Game Master:** Let the GM see the sheet from time to time, and ideally provide him a copy each time it is updated. He is tracking all of the Acolytes with his own GM Sheet, and using PC Sheet information during adventures.





Chapter III: Skills

Skills are the basis for an Acolyte's capabilities and the ways in which he can interact with the *Warhammer 40,000* universe. They form an integral part of all characters in measuring their ability and competence at tasks, and allowing them unique options during game play. More often than not, when the Game Master asks a player to complete a task or overcome a challenge, the player's character will need to pass a skill test to determine the outcome.

Skills indicate abilities that an Acolyte has learned either through his education or through the more practical applications that are part of service to the Inquisition. Characters in Dark Heresy automatically begin the game with a number of skills as part of their origin. Players can select additional skills during the latter stages of character creation when they spend experience. Over the course of their careers, characters are certain to hone those skills and improve upon them through selecting skill advances with earned experience. These elements represent the accumulation of knowledge and expertise.

For some characters, the skills they possess at the beginning of their careers are a strong indication of those they may use throughout their lives. In other instances, an Acolyte's path might diverge from his origin as he explores new fields of expertise. Characters can be effective pursuing either path, but both are dependent upon players identifying the most opportune ways and times to exploit the skills that their characters have developed.

Using Skills

"During your time here, you are fated to learn countless lessons that you may use in the service of the God-Emperor. Heed your teachers, or you may be forced to live outside of His light."

–Deacon Grigor van Dohring,
Proctor of Hive Desoleum Schola Progenium

Throughout the course of a game session, the Game Master frequently calls upon players to make skill tests for their characters. These should be conducted in any circumstance where success or failure might have a meaningful impact upon the scenario. Routine tasks attempted under normal conditions should never require a test. However, if there is a reasonable chance of failure due to environmental conditions or circumstance, even a routine test might be relevant.

When a character uses a skill to perform a task, he must succeed at a skill test. The procedure follows the test rules presented in **Chapter I: Playing the Game** (see page 21): the player rolls, compares the result to the characteristic best suited to the task and, if the result is equal to or less than the skill rating, the check succeeds. Modifiers are applied to take into account any environmental factors, as well as the character's rank with the applicable skill.

Untrained Skill Use

It is unlikely that a character will be trained in the use of every skill, instead focusing on the mastery of a few and a general knowledge of a handful of others. A character can, however, still use skills in which he has no training when needs must, such as attempting to hide from a slavering group of mutants or frantically deciphering the coded messages in an ancient tome. In these instances, the character makes a skill test as normal but suffers a –20 penalty in addition to any other modifiers.

The only exceptions to this rule are Specialist skills (see below) which require a level of ability that simply cannot be attempted by the untrained. These could include knowledge of ancient rites of the Adeptus Mechanicus, commanding a Mars Class Cruiser, or speaking fluently with an Eldar Corsair in its own xenos language. Specialist skills are indicated as such both in **Table 3–3: Skill List** on page 99 and the individual skill descriptions.

Special Uses

Several skill entries have subsections that detail a specific, focused use outside their usual employment. These sections spotlight particularly creative or interesting uses of the skill, allowing for greater variety of applications. Special uses and their effects can be found at the end of each relevant skill description.

Specialist Skills

Some skills are not just one skill but many, representing a specialisation within the skill itself. These are known as Specialist skills, and whenever a character learns a Specialist skill, he must choose a particular specialisation within it. Specialisations represent such things as specific knowledge of places, people, and events; the ability to control, drive, or pilot particular types of vehicles and equipment; the ability to read and understand maps, as well as the ability to plot a course across a world or the stars themselves; and the ability to speak, read, or understand one of the countless languages, codes, or glyphs used by the races of the 41st Millennium.

A character can take a Specialist skill more than once, taking a new speciality each time he takes the skill. If he takes a Specialist skill more than once (each with its own speciality), then these are treated as separate skills and must be advanced in rank individually.

A list of the individual specialities within each Specialist skill can be found within the individual skill descriptions

Time and Skill Tests

The amount of time required for a skill test may vary substantially based both upon the skill used and the particular instance of its use. A Tech-Use test to clear a weapon jam might take only a few moments, though one to perform a basic repair on a vehicle could take hours. Similarly, a Commerce test to negotiate the price of supplies for a journey might be resolved quickly, but a complex negotiation to establish a trade agreement between two powerful mercantile groups could take days. For more information on time within the context of conflict, refer to page 215.

Each skill entry includes guidance on the average amount of time that skill usually takes to perform. These values are either measured in actions (in the case of skills that can be performed during a round of structured time), or minutes/hours. Some skills are most commonly used in reaction to, or in combination with, another skill. In these instances, the amount of time required is identical to the skill it is used to oppose or assist. Keep in mind that these values serve as guidelines but are not always fixed. Game Masters must alter the time required for a skill use based upon the overall complexity of the task involved.

Trying Again

Many tasks can be attempted repeatedly with few consequences until a character finally succeeds. A character using Inquiry to research vital information might decide, for example, he will keep examining data until he finally finds the vital clue necessary to answer a crucial question. In such a situation the GM could determine how long this might take based on a single roll, with the character's only cost the narrative time and effort involved, rather than have the player make a series of rolls until he is successful.

Other tasks can have serious repercussions if failed. A character attempting to bypass an alarm system might trigger a response on a failed Security test, and further attempts might have to be made while avoiding a patrol sent to investigate the first failure.

Some tasks can only be attempted once, and there is no second chance. A character attempting to leap a chasm could face serious damage or even death on a failed Athletics test. If a character uses Operate to land an Arvus lighter and rolls poorly, the craft might crash into the docking bay, destroying the ship and its crew.

Where appropriate, a skill entry lists whether it can be attempted more than once, and gives suggestions for the consequences of failure. GMs must be familiar with these options, but can temper them given the particular circumstance of the attempt. A character who failed a test that normally only has a single opportunity might have an additional chance if there are mitigating circumstances. Similarly, a test that could normally be repeated indefinitely might have situational constraints that prevent further opportunities.

Skill Descriptors

Some skills fall into broad categories that use common rules. Skill descriptors allow players to quickly identify the appropriate rules section from **Chapter I: Playing the Game** for what kind of test is needed and how it is resolved. These categories include: Combat, Crafting, Interaction, Investigation, and Movement.

Combat Skills

Skills with this descriptor are used in the heat of battle. They are often made in reaction to an enemy's blows, with a basic skill test and the resulting degrees of success or failure determining how well the user acquitted himself in the attempt.

Crafting Skills

Skills with the Crafting descriptor allow Acolytes to fashion things from parts or raw materials. These can vary from exotic drugs and custom weapons to disturbing works of art and fiendish traps. The GM sets up an appropriate Extended test for the task, and its resolution follows the guidelines in the **Crafting** sidebar on page 97.



Interaction Skills

All skills with the Interaction descriptor involve interplay with others. The difficulty of these skill tests depends on the individual's disposition towards the character, as defined by the GM in accordance with the circumstances of the encounter. See page 277 of **Chapter VIII: Narrative Tools** for more information on NPC disposition.

Interaction Skills and Crowds

It is possible for a veteran commander or masterful orator to influence or control a number of people at the same time. When a character uses a skill with the Interaction descriptor, he can (if he chooses) affect a number of people up to ten times his Fellowship bonus, provided they can all clearly hear and understand him. If it is an Opposed test, then the character only makes one roll and compares the result to a roll for the group of people (or its leader) he is trying to affect to determine success.

Investigation Skills

Most of the skills with the Investigation descriptor allow characters to collect information from various sources, and also require Extended tests as Acolytes try to gather detailed intelligence on their suspects or their mission. The GM sets up the proper time period for the test, as it takes far longer to uncover the secret base of a rival cult than it does to spot the location of an armoured column.

Movement Skills

Skills with the Movement descriptor all relate to a character's mobility, anything from daring leaps across chasms to climbing up sheer cliffs. They involve the ability to move across, through, over, or between elements of a character's environment. Movement skills are all adversely affected by reductions to the character's mobility (such as crippling injuries to limbs) or environmental factors as detailed on page 229.

Gaining Skills

As characters survive adventures and develop during game play, they naturally become more competent, and the range of their abilities grows and strengthens. A Player Character learns new skills and improves existing ones, getting steadily better and gaining access to new options during play and new ways of overcoming challenges. Skills, like other kinds of advances, are gained during character creation or bought during play by spending experience points. The amount of experience points a skill costs depends upon its rank and which aptitudes a character has, as detailed in **Chapter II: Character Creation**.

Skill Ranks

Simply knowing a skill is very different from having mastered its use, and different characters can use different skills at varying levels. To represent this, all of a character's skills are ranked from 1–4, representing his level of ability. The benefits of having a skill at a higher rank are detailed above on **Table 3–1: Skill Ranks** below. Characters only use the highest bonus available to them; for example, an Acolyte with Rank 3 in Intimidate gets +20 on all tests with the skill, not +20 for Experienced and +10 for Trained.

Alternate Characteristics

Every skill has a base characteristic indicated in its description which is used to test against when making a skill test. Most of the time this is the one a character uses to determine success or failure. In many circumstances when setting a skill test, though, another characteristic could be more fitting. Some example situations could include the following:

- An Acolyte wishing to Intimidate a spire prince into allowing the warband passage across a treasured hive garden might use Willpower rather than Strength for the test.
- A faltering cogitator's delicate repair could call on Agility rather than Intelligence for the Tech-Use test attempt.
- Crafting an elaborate forgery designed to deceive a senior bureaucrat might take Intelligence rather than Fellowship in order for it to fool experts and back up the deception.

In such cases, the GM is highly encouraged to use the characteristic which best suits the situation; **Table 3–3: Skill List** includes possible alternative characteristics as suggestions. The decision to use them could substantially impact the character's chance of success, and must be made before the character attempts the test.

Table 3–1: Skill Ranks

Rank	Benefit
1 (Known)	Use the skill without the –20 penalty for being untrained
2 (Trained)	+10 on all tests with this skill†
3 (Experienced)	+20 on all tests with this skill†
4 (Veteran)	+30 on all tests with this skill†

†Characters only use the highest bonus

Crafting

It is possible—with the right skills and materials—for a character to create his own items: crafting basic gear and equipment like spears or storm-cloaks, brewing up herbal remedies and advanced drugs and medicines, or building advanced weapons and works of art. To create an item, a character needs three things: the right skill, materials, and time.

Crafting Skills

There are four different kinds of crafting skills, each one covering the creation of different kinds of items.

Medicae: This skill allows a character to create all manner of drugs and poisons as detailed on page 172 of **Chapter V: Armoury**. With the GM's permission, players can even create new drugs and poisons based on the venom of slain creatures or to mimic the effects of certain environments (note that here a character always needs at least a small sample of the original substance).

Survival: This skill allows a character to create any kind of basic device or basic item such as clothing or foodstuffs. Survival can be used to craft any item with the Primitive special quality or any Low-tech Weapon (see **Chapter V: Armoury**). With the GM's permission, players can also create any simple item with this skill, provided it can be fashioned from unprocessed materials and lacks any complex moving parts (i.e., clothing, a cart, a hovel, etc.).

Tech-Use: This skill allows a character to create complex or technical devices such as those commonly created within the forges of Imperial worlds. With the GM's permission, any weapon, armour, explosive, or piece of tech can be created using this skill. Unlike things made with Survival and Medicae, however, many items created using this skill are fiendishly complex, or their designs a closely guarded secret, and are only available to characters with the right knowledge and access to advanced workshops.

Trade: This skill allows a character to manufacture things, from inspiring sculpture to mighty starships. What can be created depends on the speciality (see page 118). Like items made with Tech-Use, these often require advanced workshops and specialised materials. Trade crafting often involves fashioning new, unique items of personal design, and thus do not always require detailed plans for the item. Major projects, such as vehicles or huge statuary, should require large amounts of time, with the GM altering the Time listings in **Table 3–2: Crafting Items** from hours to days or even months and longer.

Materials

When creating an item, a character must first have access to the right materials. Whether these materials are on hand is up to the GM, though common sense should play a part (i.e., a character on a feral world is going to have access to many basic materials good for the Survival skill, but might have trouble finding the parts needed to make an autogun). Once it has been determined whether the materials are on hand, the GM then decides if the character needs to expend any resources acquiring them. As a general rule, when creating items using the Tech-Use skill (or the Medicae skill when creating advanced drugs, such as those not occurring naturally), characters must always buy materials. Items crafted with Survival, on the other hand, can other be made from "found" materials, such as fashioning a bow when in a forest, or making a spear from scrap metal in an underhive.

When acquiring materials for crafting, determine the item's Availability and then decrease it by one level (i.e., Average items become Common, Common items become Plentiful, etc.). The character then makes a Requisition test to acquire the materials just as if he were acquiring an item. Once he has the materials, he can then try to create the item.

Table 3–2: Crafting Items

Type of Item	Time	Extended Test Successes
Medicae Items		
Natural Drugs and Poisons	1d5 hours	4
Synthetic Drugs and Poisons	2d10 hours	8
Survival Items		
Weapons	1d5 hours	5
Armour	1d10 hours	6
Gear	1d5 hours	3
Tech-Use Items†		
Weapons	1d5 hours	8
Armour	1d10 hours	12
Gear	1d5 hours	8
Trade Items		
Small Art, Minor Projects	1d5 hours	4
Large Art, Major Projects	1d10 hours	12

†Note in the case of Tech-Use, characters cannot create items they do not have access to designs for.

Time

Creating an item takes time and is always an Extended test set by the GM. The length of the test and the time it takes depends on the complexity of the item. While both these factors are up to the GM, he can use **Table 3–2: Crafting Items** as a guideline.

The Game Master can also modify Crafting tests depending on factors such as the presence of assistants, the workshop or lab available, the levels of funding or materials available, and the quality of each.

Skill Descriptions

"That's indeed a very pretty sword. Let's see how well you can use it."

–Vornas Crimson, Leader of the Red Walk

The following section provides in-depth descriptions of the skills in Dark Heresy, their uses, and other information such as how they are opposed (or used to oppose other skills), nominal skill use durations, special skill uses, and test modifiers based on example situations.

Acrobatics (Agility)

Aptitudes: Agility, General
Skill Use: Full Action unless otherwise noted.
Acrobatics covers feats of agile movement, graceful motion, and mastery of balance and form. With this skill, characters can leap nimbly across gaping chasms, maintain their balance on a pitching ship deck, or fall gracefully to the ground without snapping their limbs. In combat, an accomplished acrobat can somersault, flip, or cartwheel away from foes, twisting his body out of reach of his enemy or slipping past foes in a blur of motion.

Often, characters develop a knack for Acrobatics as part of their training in another field. A courier or thief might learn these knacks as part of travel through densely populated areas. Gladiators, survivalists, and dancers need to be able to perform acrobatic motions as part of their daily routines. Even a Tech-Adept accustomed to working in particularly confined quarters devotes his daily flesh-exhortations to improving flexibility, so that he might more effectively work within narrow ductwork.

The GM can call on a player to use the Acrobatics skill when:

- He must keep his balance or avoid falling in unstable ground.
- He wishes to jump down from a height and land well.
- He wants to move over or around a foe or obstacle in his path without breaking his stride.

Acrobatics Example Modifiers

+30: *Moving in an open environment with Earth-like gravity or completely unarmoured.*
+20: *Moving through an open forest or tall grass field, or with hands free of weapons or other objects.*
+10: *Moving in a low gravity environment, wearing armour only on torso.*
+0: *Moving across rubble or debris, or in loose and shifting sand.*
–10: *Moving in obstructed terrain or in heavy armour.*
–20: *Moving in zero gravity or with both hands tied behind one's back.*
–30: *Moving in an environment with gravity three times Terran standard.*

Special Uses for Acrobatics

The following are special uses for the Acrobatics skill:

Contortionist

A character can use his Acrobatics skill to escape from bonds or the grip of a foe by twisting and turning his body. As a Full Action, a character may make an Acrobatics skill test to free himself from bonds, such as rope, manacles, or the like. This test can only be attempted once to escape restraints; if the character fails to free himself the first time, then he is simply too tightly bound and unable to contort his way free. The GM can modify this test depending on the quality of the bonds in this situation.

Characters may also use Acrobatics to escape from a grapple (see page 221) by using their Acrobatics skill instead of their Agility or Strength when grappling.

Manoeuvring

In combat, a character capable of acrobatics can more easily avoid foes or retreat from combat without harm. The character may make a Disengage action (see page 220) as a Half Action (rather than a Full Action) if he passes a Challenging (+0) Acrobatics skill test.

Jumping

A well-trained acrobat excels at jumping, leaping, and lessening the effect of falls by folding his body as he hits the ground. When jumping or leaping (see page 222), a character may use the Acrobatics skill in the place of Agility and Strength tests. When determining Falling damage, a character can make an Acrobatics skill test to reduce the effective distance fallen by a number of metres equal to his Agility bonus.

Special Uses for Athletics

The following are special uses for the Athletics skill:

Endurance

Trained athletes are extremely fit and can push themselves far beyond the ability of normal people. As a Free Action, a character with the Athletics skill can make a Difficult (–10) Athletics skill test whenever he suffers a level of Fatigue (see page 233) as a result of running, swimming, or climbing to ignore its effects. The character can continue to take tests and ignore Fatigue gained in this way indefinitely; however, as soon as he fails a test, he must rest for at least 4 hours and cannot use his Athletics skill again during that time.

Heft

Athletes are also known for their strength and can lift great weights for short periods of time. As a Free Action, a character can make a Challenging (+0) Athletics skill test to increase his carrying capability for a single encounter. For every degree of success the character achieves, his Strength is increased by 10 for the purposes of how much weight he can carry, lift, or drag (see page 248), to a maximum modified Strength of 100. Hefting can only be attempted once, and if the character fails the test, he cannot try again until the next encounter.

Table 3–3: Skill List

Name	Aptitude 1	Aptitude 2	Descriptors	Alternate Characteristics
Acrobatics	Agility	General	Movement	Strength
Athletics	Strength	General	Movement	Toughness
Awareness	Perception	Fieldcraft	—	Fellowship, Intelligence
Charm	Fellowship	Social	Interaction, Investigation	Influence
Command	Fellowship	Leadership	Interaction	Intelligence, Strength, Willpower
Commerce	Intelligence	Knowledge	Interaction, Investigation	Fellowship
Common Lore†	Intelligence	General	Interaction, Investigation	Fellowship
Deceive	Fellowship	Social	Interaction, Investigation	Intelligence, Tech-Use
Dodge	Agility	Defence	Combat, Movement	—
Forbidden Lore†	Intelligence	Knowledge	Interaction, Investigation	Fellowship
Inquiry	Fellowship	Social	Interaction, Investigation	Intelligence, Perception
Interrogation	Willpower	Social	Interaction, Investigation	Fellowship
Intimidate	Strength	Social	Interaction, Investigation	Willpower
Linguistics†	Intelligence	General	—	Fellowship
Logic	Intelligence	Knowledge	Investigation	Agility
Medicae	Intelligence	Fieldcraft	Crafting	Agility, Perception
Navigate†	Intelligence	Fieldcraft	—	Perception
Operate†	Agility	Fieldcraft	—	Intelligence
Parry	Weapon Skill	Defence	Combat	—
Psyniscience	Perception	Psyker	—	Willpower
Scholastic Lore†	Intelligence	Knowledge	Interaction, Investigation	Fellowship
Scrutiny	Perception	General	Interaction, Investigation	Fellowship
Security	Intelligence	Tech	—	Agility
Sleight of Hand	Agility	Knowledge	—	Intelligence
Stealth	Agility	Fieldcraft	Movement	Perception
Survival	Perception	Fieldcraft	Crafting, Movement	Agility, Intelligence
Tech-Use	Intelligence	Tech	Crafting, Investigation	Agility
Trade†	Intelligence	General	Crafting, Interaction	Agility, Fellowship

†*Specialist skill*

Athletics (Strength)

Aptitudes: Strength, General

Skill Use: Full Action unless otherwise noted.

Acolytes are often dependent upon their physical abilities, particularly when situations become violent. Athletics measures a character's ability to run long distances without tiring, climb sheer surfaces, and lift heavy loads. It also allows a character to push himself to greater levels of endurance and shrug off the effects of fatigue when running, swimming, or climbing.

A character's background might dispose him more towards certain types of athletics. A GM can keep this in mind when determining the difficulty of a test. For example, a character from a desert world or could be required to make more difficult Athletics tests to swim across a river than an Acolyte who grew up on an aquatic agri-world would.

The GM can call on a player to use the Athletics skill when:

- He must swim across a body of water or try to stay afloat.
- He wishes to push himself beyond his limits and keep going even when exhausted.
- He wants to climb a cliff or cross extremely rough ground.

Athletics Example Modifiers

+30: *Climbing a ladder in a hurry or staying afloat in very calm water.*
+20: *Climbing across a gantry or swimming in calm water.*
+10: *Climbing a hive or swimming with specialised aquatic gear.*
+0: *Climbing a rough rock wall, or swimming a long distance.*
–10: *Climbing a brick wall or swimming across a slow river.*
–20: *Climbing a ferrocrete wall without climbing aids or swimming against a current.*
–30: *Climbing up a slick plasteel bulkhead or swimming rough waters in a violent storm.*

Special Use for Awareness

The following is a special use for the Awareness skill:

Lip Reading

Lip reading allows an Acolyte to effectively understand a conversation even though he cannot hear it. The character must have a clear view of the speaker's mouth and understand the language used by the target. The difficulty of this test is modified –10 for every 10 metres of distance between the character and the speaker. The GM can assign other penalties for darkness, fog, or other factors affecting vision; magnoculars or other vision enhancing devices can help offset this penalty or provide a bonus. A successful Awareness skill test reveals the general gist of the conversation, such as talking about a drop point or the location of a cult gathering. Additional degrees of success reveal correspondingly more information. The character need not make a skill test every round, as one degree of success is enough to follow the conversation for the span of roughly one topic. The GM determines when a new test is necessary.

Awareness (Perception)

Aptitudes: Perception, Fieldcraft
Skill Use: Free Action made in reaction to something.
Awareness represents the character's general awareness of his surroundings and the ability to notice inconsistencies that others might dismiss. It encompasses a basic alertness to any changes that might be detected by the senses, including visual cues, sounds, odours, and even air pressure. A highly-trained observer is just as capable of noticing and identifying the presence of a new factor as they are the absence of a common one. Threats to the Mankind can lurk in the shadows of any location, and often the subtlest of cues can reveal far deeper meanings.

In general, Awareness is used when trying to spot items or individuals that are either hidden or not easy to notice. Scrutiny (see page 114) is used to interpret hidden emotions, motivations, or other undercurrents. So while spotting someone hidden would be Awareness, determining whether someone is lying or being deceitful would be Scrutiny.

When Awareness is used against an opponent (such as to spot an ambush) it is an Opposed test (see page 24). Awareness opposes and is opposed by Stealth.

The GM can call on a player to use the Awareness skill when:

- He is walking into an ambush or being spied upon by a hidden foe.
- He wants to search an area for clues or find a hidden item.
- He is trying to eavesdrop on a conversation or there is a chance of overhearing some pertinent information.

Awareness Example Modifiers

+30: *Detecting the approach of a rumbling tank or spotting a clearing containing a large heretical shrine from the air.*
+20: *Detecting a large creature's passage or noticing a vehicle behind a large pile of rubble.*
+10: *Detecting a small item in the open or spying a hidden outpost.*
+0: *Spotting someone in a tavern or searching a hab-room.*
–10: *Detecting a well-laid ambush or searching a building for a specific datafile.*
–20: *Finding a specific spent bolt round on a battlefield, or picking a heretic out of a crowded hive gathering.*
–30: *Noticing an assassin in a darkened room or searching through planetary-wide records for a small voidship's manifest.*

Charm (Fellowship)

Aptitudes: Fellowship, Social
Skill Use: 1 minute.
Charm is a measure of a character's knack for impressing people and swaying their reactions. The acting character's attitude is key in distinguishing between this and other types of Interaction skills. Charm requires the Acolyte to assume a non-hostile attitude and not make any explicit or implicit threats. Instead, the character's persuasive efforts are dependent upon perceived generosity and good intentions.

Such an approach may be completely foreign to some Acolytes, who find persuasion more appealing when matched with force or logic. Others, particularly those who come from luxury or who are masters of manipulation, might use this as their favoured approach to all problems. Often, bonuses or penalties can result from a character's appearance and style of dress. Refer to **Chapter VIII: Narrative Tools** for more information on social interaction.

When Charm is used against an opponent (such as to change his mood) it is an Opposed test (see page 24). Charm is opposed by Willpower.

The GM can call on a player to use the Charm skill when:

- He wants to make someone like him for whatever reason.
- He wishes to distract someone by drawing his focus away from others.
- He is gathering information from locals or strangers.

Charm Example Modifiers

+30: *Subject is already very friendly or loyal, or the character is obviously harmless.*
+20: *Subject is friendly or the character adds incentive such as a bribe.*
+10: *Subject is naturally talkative or the character is of a favoured gender or social class.*
+0: *Subject is ambivalent to the character, or has no prior reason to do what the character suggests.*
–10: *Subject does not want to be bothered or the character is clearly being rude or aggressive.*
–20: *Subject is suspicious of the character or the character is heavily and visibly armed.*
–30: *Subject is actively hostile or the character has previously wronged the subject.*

Special Uses for Command

The following are special uses for the Command skill:

Inspire

In some situations, it is not merely enough for an Acolyte to have allies working towards his cause. Instead, his allies must be convinced to give their all in order for success to be achieved. As a Full Action, the character can make a Challenging (+0) Command test to inspire one or more of his followers. Inspired followers receive a +10 on their next skill or characteristic test.

Terrify

An Acolyte can use the Command skill to terrify his followers into fearing him more than Daemons or other abominations As a Reaction, a character can try to counter the effects of Fear (see page 285) in his allies should they fail their Willpower test against a Fear-causing foe. The character makes a Command skill test opposed by the Willpower of the Fear-causing creature. Both the character and the creature add +10 to their rolls for each level of Fear they possess. If the character is successful, his allies ignore the effects of Fear from this creature for the remainder of the encounter.

Command (Fellowship)

Aptitudes: Fellowship, Leadership

Skill Use: Half Action for simple commands, Full Action for more involved direction.

Often, a single character is unable to adequately resolve a crisis. At times, even a warband of Acolytes are inadequate to the challenge. Under these circumstances, characters may need to rally a much larger group to assist. Coordinating their allies so that everyone can work together effectively relies upon the Command skill. It represents the ability to effectively motivate and organise others.

Characters with a noble background might have some training in this skill. Those with military service are of course practiced with it; even those who have only been given commands are very familiar with the practice and can issue them as well. Other characters might have learned it as a bureaucratic manager or a tribal leader. In contrast, characters accustomed to working independently could have little aptitude for commanding (or being commanded by) others.

The GM can call on a player to use the Command skill when:

- He wishes to send an NPC ally into an extremely dangerous situation or into open combat.
- He needs to rally his allied fighting forces or organise them in the face of a surprise attack.

Command Example Modifiers

+30: *Allies have high morale or commands are very simple to follow.*
+20: *Followers are performing well-known tasks or the commands issued to them can be accomplished quickly.*
+10: *Allies outnumber their foes or commands are familiar.*
+0: *Commands are complex or the followers have never worked with the character issuing the commands before.*
–10: *Allies are outnumbered by their enemies, or the enemies are markedly powerful.*
–20: *Followers are performing unfamiliar tasks, or the commands issued to them need to be interpreted.*
–30: *Allies have very low morale, are suffering many casualties, or the commands given to them are very complex or hazardous.*



Special Use for Commerce

The following is a special use for the Commerce skill:

Evaluate

A character can use the Commerce skill to determine the worth of an item or commodity. The GM should make this roll in secret, modifying the result depending on who the Acolyte is dealing with and the setting (see below for example modifiers). A success tells the character the Availability of the item he is evaluating, while a failure tells him nothing. If he fails by more than 3 degrees of failure, the GM should give him a false Availability.

Commerce (Intelligence)

Aptitudes: Intelligence, Knowledge
Skill Use: 1 minute, or more for complex deals.
The worlds of the Imperium are highly specialised and woven together in a huge, interconnected web to transport goods and services to ensure mutual survival. Few, if any, planets could hope to survive on their own for more than a few months without external support. Forge worlds need food and raw materials from other systems, agri-worlds can seldom produce the machinery required for their harvests, and hive worlds are often so densely occupied that their only local product is the world's population. The Commerce skill represents the understanding of trade, value, and exchange, which allows these worlds to continue to exist at a planetary level, and also more locally at a habway marketplace.

Many within the Imperium's vast bureaucracy, and even its military, learn this skill. All humans must practise it to a certain degree, as they acquire the basic necessities for life. Ultimately, thieves and merchants are the most adept, as they must know the value of any goods they plan to steal or sell.

When Commerce is used against an opponent (such as to gain a bonus on a Requisition test) it is always an Opposed test (see page 24). Commerce opposes, and is opposed by, either Commerce or Willpower.

The GM can call on a player to use the Commerce skill when:

- He wants to gain a bonus when attempting a Requisition test (see **"The Emperor Provides..."** on page 143).
- He wishes to track down a rare item in a hive market.
- He wants to know how much an item is worth.

Commerce Example Modifiers

+30: *Dealing with a highly-trusted trading partner.*
+20: *Dealing with a trusted market vendor.*
+10: *Dealing with a familiar and friendly merchant or one who owes the character a favour.*
+0: *Dealing with an unknown individual.*
–10: *Dealing with an trader who is suspicious of the character.*
–20: *Dealing with a merchant from a non-Imperial culture.*
–30: *Dealing with an openly hostile trader.*

Common Lore (Intelligence)

Aptitudes: Intelligence, General
Skill Use: Free Action.
All Common Lore skills represent the common knowledge an individual might know about the general information, procedures, divisions, traditions, famed individuals, and superstitions of a particular world, group, organisation, or race. Such information is deeper than mere knowledge of the subject's existence, and more reflects a degree of familiarity that indicates a measure of dedicated interest in the area. This skill differs from Scholastic Lore, which represents scholarly learning one might gain through study and research, and Forbidden Lore, which involves hidden or proscribed knowledge. Common Lore deals with basic information gained from prolonged exposure to a culture or area.

Unlike some other skills, Common Lore has multiple Specialisations (see page 95 for more information on how Specialisations work). The Specialisations for this skill are as follows:
Adepta Sororitas: Knowledge of the women of the Adepta Sororitas and their spiritual culture, as well as their highly specialised equipment.
Adeptus Arbites: Knowledge of its various arms and sub-sects, including details of rank structure, common procedures, and the basic tenets of Imperial Justice.
Adeptus Astartes: Information concerning the physiologically and psychologically modified Space Marines, the Imperium's most potent defenders. Few outside their ranks gain such knowledge, which can include the culture of a Chapter and its history, wargear, unusual physiology, and battle cants.
Adeptus Astra Telepathica: Knowledge of how psykers are gathered and sanctioned, including how Astropaths are used throughout the Imperium, and the basics of astro-telepathy.
Adeptus Mechanicus: A general understanding of the symbols and practices that the Cult of the Machine God commonly uses.
Administratum: Broad knowledge of the labyrinthine workings, rules, traditions, and dictates of the Adeptus Administratum.
Askellon Sector: Information concerning the basic layout and history of the sector, including Juno and the Grand Worlds, plus many of the Tributary Worlds.
Chartist Captains: Knowledge of the merchant vessels across Askellon, which complete centuries-long circuits through series of neighbouring worlds as the primary means of Imperial commerce.
Collegia Titanicus: Familiarity with those who control the Battle Titans of the Adeptus Mechanicus, some of the most potent planet-bound weapons known to the Imperium.
Ecclesiarchy: Understanding of the structure of the Adeptus Ministorum and its role in the worship of the Emperor.
Imperial Creed: Knowledge of the rites, practices, and personages of the Imperial Cult, the most common observances and festivals in honour of the Emperor.
Imperial Guard: Basic information about the ranking system, logistics, structure, and basic tactical and strategic practices of the Imperial Guard, as well as particularly famed regiments.
Imperial Navy: Basic information about the ranks, customs, uniforms, and particular traditions of the Imperial Navy, as well as famous admirals and ships.
Imperium: Knowledge of the segmenta, sectors, and best-known worlds of the Imperium.

Navigators: Information regarding these valued mutants who are essential for Warp travel and the Imperium's survival, including the various Navis Nobilite Houses operating within Askellon, their lineages, and methodologies.

Planetary Defence Forces: Information concerning a planet's standing force dedicated to defending itself as well as assisting any nearby Imperial systems. This includes composition, tactics, and equipment, which might vary substantially based on the culture and technological make-up of the world.

Rogue Traders: Information concerning the many Rogue Trader dynasties operating within the sector and beyond in search of profit and power.

Schola Progenium: A strong familiarity with the Schola Progenium, which trains and indoctrinates the many Imperial orphans and prepares them for lives of faithful service as elite troopers in the Militarum Tempestus, Commissars in the Officio Prefectus, or adepts in one of the Imperium's many other divisions.

Tech: An understanding of simple litanies and rituals to soothe and appease machine spirits.

Underworld: The Acolyte is familiar with basic criminal elements and groups, such as pickpockets, debt-carnivores, and the like.

War: Knowledge of great battles, notable commanders, heroes, and famous stratagems employed by those who fight in the endless battles for and against the Imperium.

The GM can call on a player to use a Common Lore skill when:

- The GM feels the Player Character might know something about a current situation, location, or individual.
- The Player Character wants to know a specific detail about a common subject.

Common Lore Example Modifiers

+30: *Remembering the name of a broad region.*
+20: *Remembering generally known facts about a region.*
+10: *Learning general information about a specific planet.*
+0: *Remembering specific information about a specific planet or well-known location on a planet.*
–10: *Learning information about a large city or hive.*
–20: *Learning information about a small settlement or hab.*
–30: *Remembering information learned about a specific individual relatively unknown to most people.*

Deceive (Fellowship)

Aptitudes: Fellowship, Social
Skill Use: 1 minute, or more for complex deceptions.

Acolytes often need to mislead those around them, as the Inquisition's cause involves secrets that could shatter the minds of unprepared innocents. Perpetrators are seldom cooperative, unless they believe that there might be some reward for their service. No matter the motive or the target, all of these untruths are spoken in the service of the Emperor.

Special Use for Deceive

The following is a special use for the Deceive skill:

Disguise

An Acolyte with the Deceive skill can create a disguise for himself, given time and raw materials. The time taken depends greatly on the complexity of the disguise; simply putting on an enemy's uniform or covering the one's face with filth may take minutes, while trying to disguise gender or mimic a specific individual may take hours, days, or longer. The GM decides how long formulating a disguise takes and if the character has the materials at hand. Once the disguise is donned, the GM then secretly tests for the player (using his Deceive skill and any appropriate modifiers) whenever the disguise comes under scrutiny (an Opposed test against the Scrutiny of whoever is trying to see through the disguise). If a disguise passes this first test, then the player need not test again unless something changes (suspicion is cast on the character, or a more observant NPC arrives).

Deceive measures a character's aptitude for fooling others into believing something that is not true. All who serve an Inquisitor must have some ability in this field, but some become far more specialised in their deceptions. Of course, a Deceive test is only required if the acting character believes he is lying. Relating inaccurate information that the Acolyte believes is true uses the appropriate skill for the situation.

When Deceive is used against an opponent (such as to convince someone of a lie or fool them with a disguise) it is always an Opposed test (see page 24). Deceive opposes, and is opposed by, Scrutiny.

The GM can call on a player to use the Deceive skill when:

- He wants to tell a convincing lie.
- He wishes to distract someone with rambling nonsense.
- He is trying to disguise himself.

Deceive Example Modifiers

+30: *Telling a lie that is supported by what a person can see, creating a simple disguise meant to fool a stranger.*
+20: *Telling a lie which is partially true or only very slightly false.*
+10: *Telling a lie to someone who wants to believe it.*
+0: *Telling a lie to someone unknown to the character or creating a complex disguise with the aid of props or kits.*
–10: *Telling a lie to someone who is already suspicious of the character.*
–20: *Telling a lie to someone who the character has deceived before.*
–30: *Telling a lie that contradicts what a person can see or disguising oneself as a close friend or loved one.*

Dodge (Agility)

Aptitudes: Agility, Defence
Skill Use: Reaction.
Dodge is the ability to avoid blows in melee, elude incoming fire, or leap out of the way of falling debris. It combines nimbleness of movement with trained reflexes and an awareness of all kinds of danger.

A character can use his Dodge skill to evade either melee attacks or ranged attacks. Dodging an attack is made as a Reaction to a foe's successful attack. A success indicates that the attack has been avoided and it does not hit the character. In the case of attacks which cause multiple hits (such as automatic fire) each degree of success a character achieves on his Dodge test cancels one hit from the attack. Any excess hits not cancelled by Dodging are then applied to the character as normal.

The GM can call on a player to use the Dodge skill when:

- He is attacked in melee.
- He is attacked with a ranged weapon.
- He needs to avoid hazards such as falling wreckage or leap from a collapsing bridge.

Dodge Example Modifiers

+30: *Character can easily detect the attack and has at least a round to avoid it.*
+20: *Character has obscuring cover between him and an attack.*
+10: *Character has only partial cover between him and an attack.*
+0: *Character is avoiding an attack in the open. This is the default modifier for Dodge in combat.*
–10: *Character is on loose ground or mud, or in knee-deep water.*
–20: *Character is in waist-deep water.*
–30: *Character is unable to see the source of the attack.*

Forbidden Lore (Intelligence)

Aptitudes: Intelligence, Knowledge
Skill Use: Free Action.
All Forbidden Lore skills represent information proscribed or hidden from the average Imperial citizen. In many cases, it is a heinous crime to even possess such data and can quickly draw Inquisitorial attention (even if the possessor himself is working for an Inquisitor).

Forbidden Lore has several different Specialisations (see page 95) as listed below. These include all Common Lore (page 102) and Scholastic Lore (page 113) Specialisations, as each area also has blasphemous and dangerous knowledge beyond what is generally known, or secrets the group obsessively keeps to itself:
Archaeotech: Knowledge of the great, lost tech devices of times past, and clues to their mysterious functions and purposes.
Chaos Space Marines: Information concerning those Adeptus Astartes who turned traitor, as well as the paths they embrace and the equipment they use.
Criminal Cartels and Smugglers: Information regarding organised groups that flout the Emperor's Law in Askellon, such as those engaging in the Faceless Trade of proscribed artefacts.

Special Use for Dodge

The following is a special use for the Dodge skill:

Dive for Cover

If there is cover with a number of metres equal to the character's Agility bonus and he is not prone, he can alternatively Dive for Cover as a Reaction against a ranged attack instead of trying to Evade the attack. He makes an Ordinary (+10) Dodge test; if he succeeds, he leaps behind that cover and gains the Prone condition. He is still hit by the attack, but benefits from the additional AP granted by the cover for that attack.

Daemonology: Terrible knowledge about some of the most infamous Warp entities and their twisted physical manifestations.
Heresy: Wisdom concerning acts and practices deemed anathema by the Imperium, plus the most contemptible heretics of history and their infamous and deplorable acts.
The Horus Heresy and the Long War: The origins and history of the 10,000 year long struggle between the forces of the Ruinous Powers and the Imperium of Man.
Inquisition: Though Acolytes exist to serve an Inquisitor, knowing too much about their masters can be dangerous. Those who chose to study the history and nature of the Inquisition's authority often are exposed to information that can forever ruin their minds.
Mutants: The study of stable and unstable mutations within humanity, their cancerous influence and mutagenic development over time, and some of the studies and tomes on the topic.



Officio Assassinorum: This highly secretive agency exists to eliminate powerful, often singular threats to the Imperium, such as renegade planetary governors or apostate preachers. Acolytes who dare study the organisation may become familiar with their techniques and wargear.
Pirates: Knowledge of the scourges of the Warp lanes throughout Askellon, their tactics, infamous vessels, and notorious captains.
Psykers: Skill in identifying psykers, the effects of their unnatural powers, their dangers, and the general extent of their capabilities.
The Warp: An understanding of the energy of the Immaterium, its interaction and interrelation with realspace, and how its tides and eddies affect travel between the stars.
Xenos: Knowledge of the minor and major alien species known to the Imperium, the threat they pose to Mankind, and their general appearance. The character should specify which xenos race in which he is specialising (for example, Xenos–Craftworld Eldar or Xenos–Orks) as each is a different Specialisation.

A successful Forbidden Lore test imparts information from the GM to the player. The GM may impart more information if the test scores additional degrees of success.

The GM can have a player make a Forbidden Lore test when:

- He seeks information about potential cult activity.
- He seeks to learn about the operations of the dreaded Eldar.
- He seeks the proper procedure to summon a Daemon.

Forbidden Lore Example Modifiers

+30: *Learning of the existence of common xenos races such as the Orks or Eldar.*
+20: *Learning of the Warp and what it is.*
+10: *Remembering the existence of a heretical text.*
+0: *Learning of the nature and events of the Horus Heresy.*
–10: *Remembering the heretical cults on a minor Low World.*
–20: *Understanding details of the nature and motives of Daemons and Warp entities.*
–30: *Learning a lesser Daemon's True Name.*

Inquiry (Fellowship)

Aptitudes: Fellowship, Social
Skill Use: One hour or more, depending on the nature of the inquiries, the size of the group targeted, and information sought.
Inquiry is used to gain information by asking questions, stimulating conversation, or simply eavesdropping—all essential for unravelling heresies and identifying those who would act against Mankind. Unlike Charm or Intimidate, which focus on changing a character's disposition or influencing specific individuals, Inquiry can focus on gaining information from both individuals and large groups, and may involve a great deal of time and effort. One or two degrees of success reveals basic information about an area, population group, or specific individuals, while additional degrees of success on a successful test allows the GM to impart more valuable or secretive information to his players.

The GM can call on a player to make an Inquiry test when:

- He is trying to track down a local crime lord in a hive.
- He attempts to learn the attitudes of the local populace towards their leaders.
- He seeks a specific type of location such as a shop or tavern.

Inquiry Example Modifiers

+30: *Subject is already very friendly or loyal, or answering the questions works towards the subject's best interests.*
+20: *Subject is friendly or the character adds incentive such as a bribe.*
+10: *Subject group is naturally talkative or the character is of a favoured gender or social class.*
+0: *Subject group is ambivalent to the character or has no prior reason to interact with the character.*
–10: *Subject doesn't want to be bothered by the inquiring character, or the character is rude or aggressive.*
–20: *Subject group is suspicious of the character or the character is inquiring about information the group wants secret.*
–30: *Subject is actively hostile or answering questions results in serious problems for the subject.*

Interrogation (Willpower)

Aptitudes: Willpower, Social
Skill Use: One hour or more, depending on the invasiveness of the interrogation and the subject.
Interrogation allows a character to extract information from an unwilling subject. The application differs from brutal torture, which involves more physical damage. Rather, it represents skilled application of psychology, various devices, serums, and other, usually less physically-damaging, techniques. The GM may modify the difficulty of the test according to the availability of tools, facilities and other conditions. This is always an Opposed test, pitting the character's Interrogation skill against an opponent's Willpower. If the character wins the Opposed test, he gets one answer for each degree of success. If his opponent wins the Opposed test, the interrogator gets nothing of worth. A roll with two or more degrees of failure inflicts 1d10 plus the interrogator's Willpower bonus in damage to the subject, and prevents any further interrogation for 1d5 days. If the interrogator suffers four or more degrees of failure, he deals the same damage and the subject gains a +30 bonus to Willpower tests made to resist Interrogation at the hands of the character or his allies. Each Interrogation test inflicts one level of Fatigue on the target, regardless of success.

The GM can have a player make an Interrogation test when:

- He attempts to force an Imperial Adept to reveal hidden information about his superiors.
- He is attempting to learn about battle plans from an Imperial Guard commander.
- He seeks to have a cultist reveal a hidden meeting place.

Interrogation Example Modifiers

+30: *Subject has no reason to resist and actively cooperates.*
+20: *Subject is terrified of interrogator.*
+10: *Subject is frightened of the interrogator.*
+0: *Subject has a good reason to resist or sees himself as the interrogator's equal.*
–10: *Subject feels he is the interrogator's better.*
–20: *Subject is confident in an impending rescue.*
–30: *Subject would suffer far worse from answering the questions than what the interrogator threatens.*



Intimidate (Strength)

Aptitudes: Strength, Social
Skill Use: Full Action.
The Imperium of Man is constantly at war. Seditious fools across its reach and xenos races from outside its boundaries all work to bring about the downfall of humanity. It is not enough to stop those who have already taken action; it is also vital to prevent others from following these fools or dabbling in matters far beyond their understanding. Fear often serves as the preferred tool for preventing insurrection and heresy.

The Intimidate skill is a measure of a character's knack for instilling fear. He may use this ability to make someone perform an action against his will, or extract information from an unwilling subject. It is distinguished from the Command skill largely by the authority that the acting character presents. Refer to page 277 for more information on social interaction.

When Intimidate is used against an opponent (such as to frighten him into doing the character's bidding), it is an Opposed test (see page 24). Intimidate is opposed by Willpower.

The GM can call on a player to use the Intimidate skill when:

- He wants someone to get out of his way.
- He wants to coerce someone into acting a certain way.
- He is trying to make an opponent back down from a fight.

Intimidate Example Modifiers

+30: *Opponent is obviously inferior to the character, perhaps a lowly dreg or unfortunate slave.*
+20: *Opponent is at a disadvantage to the character, such as being outnumbered or wounded.*
+10: *Opponent is weaker than the character (either in physical stature or social status).*
+0: *Opponent is the physical or social equal of the character.*
–10: *Opponent is stronger than the character (either in physical stature or social status).*
–20: *Opponent has an obvious advantage over the character, such as better weapons or more allies.*
–30: *Opponent is considerably more powerful than the character, such as a planetary ruler or warlord.*

Linguistics (Intelligence)

Aptitudes: Intelligence, General
Skill Use: Free Action.
Linguistics represents the ability to speak, read, and write specific languages, codes, and ciphers. Talents determine the languages a specific character knows, such as the Low Gothic of the masses, a feral world's regional dialect, or even a xenos tongue. When attempting to use a language the character knows, a Linguistics test is only required for a particularly difficult task, such as translating an ancient version of the language or attempting to understand a garbled vox-intercept. Unknown languages, however, always require a Linguistics test to understand on even a basic level. A character might need to speak with a human from a rediscovered world that was forgotten for millennia, or a researcher may need to comprehend a xenos prophecy that predates the Great Crusade. Communicating with those whose language is foreign depends upon a character's knowledge and aptitude in the Linguistics skill.

Two key factors play into determining the difficulty for a Linguistics test. The first is the complexity of the message; simple greetings or warnings are far easier to interpret than more complex philosophical or religious concepts. Such communications might not necessitate a test, even if the message is delivered in an entirely foreign tongue. The second difficulty factor is a measure of how foreign the language is to any the character knows. If the communication arrives in a pidgin or archaic dialect of the character's native tongue, then translation could be challenging, but feasible. Conversely, if the message is in a language that a xenos race developed in an entirely different part of the galaxy, deciphering it without additional context might be impossible.

Any character who has this a skill knows how to read and write in his primary language. For most of the Imperium, this is Low Gothic. Note that all Acolytes are capable of basic communication in Low Gothic that would not require a skill test, such as normal conversation or reading standard Munitorum manuals.

Linguistics is a Specialist skill (see page 95) and requires a player to choose a speciality when first taken. The Linguistics skill may be taken more than once, each time with a new speciality.

The GM can call on a player to use the Linguistics skill when:

- He must decipher an archaic version of his language.
- He wishes to compose a moving piece of prose.
- He is trying to convey a message using subtle subtext or a limited vocabulary.

Linguistics Example Modifiers

+30: *Deciphering a language with the aid of a lexicon.*
+20: *Deciphering a primitive tongue or basic code that is based on a known language.*
+10: *Deciphering a code in Low Gothic.*
+0: *Translating a text in High Gothic.*
–10: *Deciphering a code in a local language.*
–20: *Deciphering a forgotten or nearly dead language (i.e., ancient Terran) or understanding a language unknown to the character, but based on a known language.*
–30: *Deciphering a completely alien language or understanding a language both unknown to the character and without any relationship to known languages.*

Languages of the 41st Millennium

There are many different languages in the galaxy, and Linguistics does not automatically allow an Acolyte to know them all (although the skill can make them somewhat easier to understand). What languages an Acolyte knows is largely based on his background. All know Low Gothic, and some (especially highborn) might know High Gothic as well.

If a character does not know a certain language, Linguistic tests pertaining to that language should be much more difficult (or even impossible) than if he does know the language. However, Acolytes can use Linguistics to learn new languages. Doing this requires an Extended Linguistics test, with a difficulty based on the difficulty of the Language. The time required can be weeks or months, depending on the character's intelligence and diligence.

The following are some example languages Acolytes might encounter in the Askellon Sector:

Chapter Runes: Each Chapter of the Adeptus Astartes has its own form of ciphers used to communicate between its warriors. These are closely-guarded secrets that are almost never taught to those outside the Chapter or Legion, and as such form a reliable way for those within the Chapter or Legion to quickly identify each other.

Chaos Marks: There are countless symbols and signs that followers of the various Ruinous Powers use to share their dark secrets, each with its own subtle meaning or specific purpose.

Eldar: Though no human can hope to capture the subtle nuances and sub-tones of this extremely complex and ancient language, it is enough to make one's meaning clear.

High Gothic: The official language of the Imperium, used by Imperial officials, nobility, members of the Ecclesiarchy, and those involved in high-level negotiations.

Imperial Codes: Both the Imperial Navy and the Imperial Guard employ a battle language which comprises mostly numbers and acronyms. Incomprehensible to those who do not know its meaning, it allows them to quickly signal for reinforcements, identify enemies, and call down fire support or artillery barrages.

Low Gothic: The common tongue of the Imperium, used by the countless billions of ordinary citizens.

Mercenary Cant: Many mercenary companies operate across Askellon, and each has an abbreviated, clipped battle language for orders and commands. Though there are some commonalities, each is essentially unique.

Necrontyr: The ancient and mechanical tones that the arisen Necron lords use to communicate with each other and their underlings as part of their reconquest of the galaxy.

Ork: More grunts and physical violence than an actual language, it is possible for humans to speak and understand this brutal tongue, though it is doubtful they would be able to survive a conversation.

Techna-Lingua: The language of the Adeptus Mechanicus, this binary cant has been optimised for rapid and efficient communication of technical data and servitor commands.

Tau: The language of the Tau Empire, spoken by the Tau themselves and understood by their multitude of alien subjects.

Underworld: Crime lords have used ciphers for countless millennia, and their sophistication has only increased over time. Each organization, such as the Trade Sable, uses its own unique codes and glyphs to deter competition.

Xenos Markings: Many aliens make extensive use of symbolism and icons. Understanding these markings allows a broad understanding of their meaning such as where a race has marked its boundaries or areas marked as "dangerous."

Logic (Intelligence)

Aptitudes: Intelligence, Knowledge

Skill Use: 1 minute, or longer for particularly complex problems.

The Logic skill represents the ability to think rationally, solve puzzles, and dissect information clearly and quickly. It can be applied to analyse complex statistics, architectural anomalies, or even achieve some degree of understanding with regards to complex technologies. This skill encompasses the character's basic functional understanding of mathematics, physics, and engineering. Note that this does not include an understanding of complex theories or the terminology involved with them—that would fall more commonly under Scholastic Lore.



All characters have some inherent ability to exercise Logic, observing cause and effect and making inferences regarding likely outcomes. In many instances, a character's ability to comprehend logical phenomena might be impeded by his belief systems, including his faith in the Imperial Creed or the Omnissiah. Characters who frequently need to identify or resolve complex situations can hone this skill through frequent use.

The variables involved in any problem determine the inherent difficulty of a Logic test. If a character is provided with all of the necessary background information, a reasonably adept character should be able to successfully solve the problem. If there are too many unknown factors, the problem might only be solved after uncovering additional clues, or through prodigious luck.

Special Uses for Logic

The following are special uses for the Logic skill:

Gambling

A character can use Logic when participating in games of chance rather than simply relying on blind luck. In a typical game, each participant wagers an amount, though these are typically the same, and makes an Opposed test with the Logic skill. The character with the most degrees of success or fewest degrees of failure wins the pot.

However, this only covers gambling if the character is attempting to win by playing the game at its basic level—analysing the odds and playing intelligently. Gamblers often use bluffing, deception, and outright cheating in order to win. In this case, Deceive might be used to bluff or trick an opponent, while Sleight of Hand could be used to palm cards or alter results. These would be opposed by Scrutiny and Awareness, respectively.

Ciphers and Decoding

A character can use the Logic skill to unravel ciphers and codes. This usually takes a great deal of time (days or weeks of prolonged work) and the difficulty depends greatly on whether the character has a key or the number of examples of the cipher available. In general, these tests should be Difficult (–10) at the easiest, unless the cipher is already partially decoded or the character has a key available to aid his efforts.

The GM can call on a player to use the Logic skill when:

- He must solve a riddle or puzzle.
- He is looking for clues in a vast amount of seemingly unrelated information.
- He is trying to win at a game of chance.

Logic Example Modifiers

+30: *Puzzle or riddle is very basic with few possible solutions.*
+20: *Puzzle or riddle is already partially complete.*
+10: *Puzzle or riddle is similar to one the character has solved before.*
+0: *A straightforward but new puzzle.*
–10: *Puzzle or riddle is long or buried in meaningless information.*
–20: *Puzzle or riddle is incomplete and requires the character to fill in the blanks.*
–30: *Puzzle or riddle is of alien origin or created by a completely inhuman mind.*

Medicae (Intelligence)



Aptitudes: Intelligence, Fieldcraft
Skill Use: Full Action.

Medicae represents the ability to set broken bones, heal wounds, or even perform complicated surgeries such as attaching cybernetics. The techniques involved in treatment may vary substantially based upon the character's background. A character that learned basic survival skills on a death world might know substantially different treatment methods than one who dwelt within a forge world. Varied backgrounds often lead to changes in the expected outcomes for medical conditions and treatments. A terrible disease that is considered untreatable on a hive world might have a routinely available herbal remedy on a feral world, for example.

All characters who face frequent physical trauma achieve some degree of competence in Medicae. This may simply be enough to bind their own wounds in order to avoid an easily-followed trail of blood. Those who specialise in this field may be viewed as saviours by their patients. Alternatively, some may see the healers as blasphemers who have dabbled in treatments that might only be the province of the Emperor or the Omnissiah.

The Medicae skill often relies on certain tools (see **Chapter V: Armoury**) for more complex procedures; even a simple medi-kit can make a significant difference to the effects of this skill. The GM can call on a player to use the Medicae skill when:

- He wants to apply first aid to a wounded ally.
- He wishes to diagnose an affliction and work out a suitable treatment to treat a fellow member of his warband.
- He is trying to perform a surgical procedure such as the careful removal of a limb or organ, or replace the same with cybernetic devices.

Medicae Example Modifiers

+30: *Healing a critical wound in a fully-stocked Surginarium with the aid of medical servitors.*
+20: *Healing a critical wound in well-staffed med-lab.*
+10: *Healing a critical wound in a hab medicae station.*
+0: *Healing a non-critical injury in the field.*
–10: *Healing a critical wound without assistance.*
–20: *Healing a critical wound while exposed to the elements.*
–30: *Healing a critical wound while under fire in the midst of a combat or in a failing voidship.*

Special Uses for Medicae

These are some of the special uses of the Medicae skill:

First Aid

A character trained in Medicae can use this skill to perform first aid, treating minor injuries suffered in the field of operations by suturing lacerations, bandaging abrasions, and staunching punctured flesh.

To perform first aid, a character must make a Challenging (+0) Medicae test, with a –10 penalty if his patient is Heavily Damaged or a –10 penalty for every point of Critical damage if his patient is Critically Damaged. If he succeeds, he removes an amount of damage from his patient equal to his Intelligence bonus, plus one additional point of damage per degree of success he scores on the test (removing Critical damage before normal damage).

A given individual can only be treated with first aid once every 24 hours, and only so long as he is not also undergoing extended care.

Extended Care

The Medicae skill can be used to perform extended care, treating a number of patients equal to an Acolyte's Intelligence bonus, plus one patient per assistant (trained or untrained) the Acolyte has on hand. For each patient beyond this number, he suffers a –10 penalty on his Medicae tests for extended care. For each assistant trained in the Medicae skill assisting in the process, he gains a +10 bonus on these tests.

At the end of each 24-hour period of extended care, the primary healer must perform an Ordinary (+10) Medicae test. If he succeeds, his patients remove twice the normal amount of damage normally recovered by their natural rates of healing (removing Critical damage first). On top of this, each patient removes one point of damage per degree of success the healer scores on his test, and one additional point of damage per consecutive day of extended care they have received beyond the first 24-hour period.

If he fails, none of his patients improve beyond their natural rate of healing. Further, he must choose a number of patients under his care equal to his degrees of failure, starting with the most gravely injured (first from among those who are Critically Damaged, then those who are Heavily Damaged, and then finally those who are only Lightly Damaged). Each of these patients must make a Challenging (+0) Toughness test or suffer one point of damage per degree of failure, not reduced by Armour or Toughness. If this results in any Critical damage, the patient dies.

For additional information on Healing, see page 244 in **Chapter VII: Combat**.

Diagnose

An Acolyte can also use the Medicae skill to diagnose disease and other ailments, both on his fellow characters and also on large groups. On individuals, a successful skill test yields the name of the ailment and basic treatments. When used on groups, a successful skill test can prevent the spread of disease or mitigate the effects of malnutrition as determined by the Game Master and dependent on the nature (and virulence) of the disease.

Chem-Use

The Medicae skill can be used to cover a character's understanding of drugs, poisons, chemicals, and toxins. A skilled chymist can create and identify such compounds, as well as know how best to use them either for medicinal effects or in combat against their enemies. Chem-Use is also useful in diagnosing those suffering from toxins and poisons, or finding antidotes to treat them.

Applying Poisons and Chemicals: Particularly virulent or dangerous chemicals might require a Medicae test to administer them to a patient or apply them to a weapon. This test is usually Challenging (+0); failure by four or more degrees may indicate that something has gone seriously wrong with the dosage or application, and the applicant suffers the adverse effects of the chemical or poison.

Crafting: Medicae can be used to make all manner of drugs and poisons, from animal venom and healing unguents to complex drugs such as stimm or spook. The time, difficulty, and materials it takes to create these items are greatly dependent on their complexity, the kind of facility and equipment available, and access to formulae or assistance. See the **Crafting** sidebar on page 97 for the kinds of items that can be created using Medicae.

Antidotes: A chymist may manufacture an antidote if he can identify the poison or toxin and has the right materials on hand. To create an antidote, the character must have a sample of the poison in question or a sample of blood from the person he is trying to treat. The character must also have at least a basic medi-kit. He then makes an Extended test requiring a number of degrees of success set by the GM, depending on the strength of the poison; as a guideline this can be 4 for weak poisons, 7 for average poisons, and 10 for strong poisons. Creating an antidote takes 1d10 hours, and success nets 2d10 doses for that specific poison. The Game Master can modify these tests depending on the materials available (granting bonuses for facilities, equipment, and assistants).

Navigate (Intelligence)

Aptitudes: Intelligence, Fieldcraft
Skill Use: 1 minute for simple location; 1d5 hours for plotting courses or routes.

Acolytes charged with investigating threats against humanity must often travel to foreign locations in order to perform their holy duties. Heresy can lurk anywhere, hidden within a planet's depths or even in the dank corridors of a voidcraft. At times, characters might even need to travel among inhuman passages designed by xenos sensibilities. Navigate represents the ability to plot and follow a course from one point to another, either on the surface of a planet or across the stars. In order to use this skill, the character must have access to a map of the relevant region.

Alternatively, Navigate can also be used to generate a map or to provide directions to someone unfamiliar with a route. In these cases, the character often starts with only a rough map or a blank parchment and must first construct the guide. The usability of the product created is directly proportionate to the success on the test made to create it.

All characters have some basic aptitude with maps, though the subject matter and complexity is relative to their background. A feudal world character might recognise and understand the basics of topographic maps that are completely foreign to a character that came to maturity on a void station. Similarly, a character that is familiar only with travel inside an Imperial hive may be confounded when travelling without man-made landmarks, such as across a barren desert or a trackless sea.

Surface

Navigate (Surface) covers the ability to navigate across terrestrial environments from frozen tundra to sweltering jungles, as well as navigating man-made environments such as hive cities or subterranean complexes.

The Game Master can call on a player to use the Navigate (Surface) skill when:

- He wants to make a journey across unfamiliar terrain.
- He is lost and needs to get his bearings in a strange place.
- He wishes to create a map showing the quickest route from one point to another.

Navigate (Surface) Example Modifiers

+30: *Navigating familiar or well-travelled routes.*
+20: *Navigating with the aid of extensive charts or a guide.*
+10: *Navigating open terrain (i.e. lunar deserts or ash plains) with clear landmarks.*
+0: *Navigating in a forest during the day.*
–10: *Navigating at night or during bad weather.*
–20: *Navigating without the aid of any equipment or maps.*
–30: *Navigating a constantly-changing environment, such as shifting sand dunes.*

Stellar

Navigate (Stellar) is the ability to plot a course across real space using stars, planets, and other celestial phenomena. This ability is primarily used aboard voidships moving through star systems.

The Game Master can call on a player to use the Navigate (Stellar) skill when:

- He wants to make a journey within a star system.
- He finds his ship stranded in an unknown region of space.
- He wishes to find the quickest route from one location within a system (such as a planet) to another location in the system.

Navigate (Stellar) Example Modifiers

+30: *Navigating a well-travelled route within a familiar star system.*
+20: *Navigating to a planet with the aid of extensive charts.*
+10: *Navigating between two nearby planets within a star system.*
+0: *Navigating to a different planet without charts.*
–10: *Navigating around stellar anomalies such as a pulsar.*
–20: *Navigating through an asteroid field or cometary cloud.*
–30: *Navigating in a hazardous environment, such as a binary star system with a black hole and fractured planets.*

Warp

Navigate (Warp) is the rare ability to navigate not reality, but the shifting and ever-changing vista of the Warp. This is most commonly used by those who must guide voidships with a Warp engine through the Immaterium. This can range from Navigators using their mutant powers to plot courses using the Astronomican to normal humans navigating shorter passages with Warp charts on familiar, stable routes.

The Game Master can call on a player to use the Navigate (Warp) skill when:

- He must guide a starship through the Warp.
- He needs to convert a journey into a Warp route chart.

Navigate (Warp) Example Modifiers

+30: *Navigating familiar or well-travelled Warp routes.*
+20: *Navigating with the aid of extensive charts or where the Astronomican shines brightly.*
+10: *Navigating along established Warp routes.*
+0: *Navigating across the Warp between two nearby systems.*
–10: *Navigating along lesser or unfamiliar Warp routes.*
–20: *Navigating without the aid of charts, or where the Astronomican is diminished.*
–30: *Navigating in a Warp storm, or where the Astronomican is dark.*

Operate (Agility)

Aptitudes: Agility, Fieldcraft
Skill Use: Half Action.

The Operate skill represents a character's aptitude to control and direct all manner of vehicles and heavy equipment. Through the remarkable consistency of Standard Template Construction, the control systems used to operate dramatically different vehicles are extremely similar. In many instances, this may be due to an interaction between the vehicle's machine spirit and the controlled systems used to direct the craft. In other cases, this is due to a simplification or approximation of controls, intended to reduce the effort required to learn to operate the vehicle.

Specialisations

These are some of the vehicles that can be piloted by Operate (Surface):

Bike: Powered bikes such as those used by the Adeptus Astartes or the Adeptus Arbites as well as any two wheeled civilian vehicle such as a Desoleum Veloxic.

Hover/Skimmer: Landspeeders, suspensor platforms, and vehicles that are not true aircraft and hold themselves aloft with rockets, jets, or anti-grav engines.

Tracked: These range from the ubiquitous Chimera to the mighty Land Raider, and include most kinds of tanks the Imperium's military forces uses in battle.

Walker: Vehicles which use mechanical legs to move, such as Imperial Guard Sentinels and Eldar War Walkers.

Wheeled: The most common type of vehicle, using tyres for locomotion. These range from civilian groundcars like the Desoleum Hectin to huge land-crawlers that carry megatonnes between forges.

All characters who come from worlds with any degree of technology learn the basics of operation. Essentially, the need to control a craft of some sort is largely unavoidable. However, familiarity with a basic civilian autocarriage is scarcely adequate preparation for the nuanced art of flying an Imperial Valkyrie or firing a heavy macrobattery at an enemy voidship.

A character with the Operate skill is adept at piloting, driving, or operating a particular type of vehicle or machine. No test is normally required to pilot or drive a vehicle unless it is in a combat situation or other unusual circumstances such as extremely rough terrain or high speeds.

Surface

Operate (Surface) covers the ability to pilot any vehicle that primarily operates on the surface of a planet. Groundcars, walkers, treaded vehicles, boats, and skimmers (hovering or flying vehicles that must remain very low to the ground) can all be piloted using Operate (Surface).

The Game Master can call on a player to use the Operate (Surface) skill when:

- He is driving a vehicle in a combat situation.
- He wishes to push his vehicle beyond its normal limits.
- He is attempting to manoeuvre his bike through a crowded habway filled with civilians.

Operate (Surface) Example Modifiers

+30: *Driving a standard civilian autocarriage.*
+20: *Operating a surface vessel with the aid an on-board cogitator/machine spirit.*
+10: *Driving with the aid of natives familiar with terrain.*
+0: *Driving a groundcar across poorly maintained roadways.*
–10: *Manoeuvring a tank through enemy fortifications.*
–20: *Driving a vehicle in the midst of heavy enemy fire.*
–30: *Driving a limping walker across heavily mined areas whilst under constant enemy fire.*

Aeronautica



Operate (Aeronautica) covers the ability to pilot any vehicle that operates in three dimensions. This primarily covers atmospheric fliers such as the Imperial Navy Thunderbolt or Chaos Hellblade, but also includes small, manoeuvrable voidcraft such as landers, shuttles, starfighters, and bombers. Piloting jump packs that provide limited air mobility is also covered by this ability.

The GM can call on a player to use the Operate (Aeronautica) skill when:

- He is piloting a vehicle in a combat situation.
- He wishes to fly his vehicle beyond its normal safe altitude.
- He is trying to land an damaged Arvus Lighter in the midst of a meteor shower.

Operate (Aeronautica) Example Modifiers

+30: *Flying in calm air and outside of combat.*
+20: *Flying with the aid of a cogitator or machine spirit.*
+10: *Flying with the aid of a navigator or co-pilot.*
+0: *Flying in combat but in open skies.*
–10: *Flying at high speeds, or performing fast manoeuvres.*
–20: *Flying in hazardous weather such as storms or high winds.*
–30: *Flying a damaged aircraft while in combat, or performing violent manoeuvres while flying through a canyon.*

Specialisations

These are some of the vehicles that can be piloted by Operate (Aeronautica):

Flyers: Atmospheric aircraft such as Marauder bombers or Thunderbolt fighters, also including all manner of non-standard flyers whether they are driven by propellers, balloons, mechanical wings, or some other more esoteric method.

Jump Pack/Grav Chute: The use and operation of personal flight equipment such as jump pack and grav chutes—when to deploy them, how to take off and land with them, and how to fight while wearing them.

Spacecraft: Small ships such as fighters or shuttles, which are often also capable of entering a planet's atmosphere. This also includes boarding craft or man-guided attack torpedoes.

Voidship

Operate (Voidship) covers the ability to pilot large void-faring vessels that are often kilometres long and millennia old. Any space-going vessel that requires a captain and large crew, and cannot be conceivably piloted by a single individual, is operated with this skill.

The Game Master can call on a player to use the Operate (Voidship) skill when:

- He is manoeuvring a voidship.
- He is overseeing the use of a macrobattery, orbital laser, or some other massive ship's weapon.

Operate (Voidship) Example Modifiers

+30: *Piloting a voidship in clear space.*
+20: *Piloting a voidship in an open orbit around a moon.*
+10: *Piloting a voidship in a cluttered orbit of moons and void stations around a large planet.*
+0: *Piloting a ship in a formation with other vessels.*
–10: *Performing stressful combat manoeuvres.*
–20: *Piloting a voidship through an asteroid belt.*
–30: *Avoiding being caught in an abrupt Warp rift.*

What is a Voidship?

Voidships are large (often hundreds of metres or even several kilometres in length) vessels designed to travel in deep space. Some are capable of voyaging through the Warp, and even those that are not are still massive crafts. Piloting such vessels is less about personal agility and reflexes, and more about the intelligence to make correct course decisions and select proper manoeuvres.

Parry (Weapon Skill)

Aptitudes: Weapon skill, Defence
Skill Use: Reaction.

When engaged in combat, avoiding an opponent's assault is often every bit as crucial as striking the critical blow. Parry is the ability to block attacks in close combat, deflecting them using one's hands or weapons. An Acolyte targeted by melee attacks can turn aside these attacks using the Parry skill. This is a Reaction (and as such can usually only be attempted once each turn) and can only be used against close combat attacks from foes engaged with the character in melee. A success indicates that the attack has been parried and does not hit the character. In the case of attacks which cause multiple hits (such as those from a foe with the Lightning Attack talent) each degree of success a character achieves on his Parry test discounts one hit from the attack. Any excess hits not discounted by Parrying are then applied to the character as normal.

The GM can call on a player to use the Parry skill when:

- He is attacked in melee and wishes to deflect the blow.

Parry Example Modifiers

+30: *Character can easily detect the attack and has at least a round to avoid it.*
+20: *Character has a large obstruction between him and the attack, such as a dense hedge or barricade.*
+10: *Character has only partial cover between him and the attack.*
+0: *Character is avoiding an attack in the open. Note that this is the default modifier for Parry in combat.*
–10: *Character is on unstable ground, or shallow water.*
–20: *Character is in waist-deep water.*
–30: *Character is unable to see the source of the attack.*

Psyniscience (Perception)

Aptitudes: Perception, Psyker
Skill Use: Half Action.

Those with the Psyniscience skill sense the currents and eddies of the Warp and Immaterium. Characters can use the skill to detect the presence or absence of Daemons and the use of psychic powers. Psyniscience also allows detection of psychic phenomena, disturbances, voids, or other areas where the flow of the Immaterium has been unsettled or disrupted.

The difficulty for a Psyniscience test is based upon the potency of any nearby Warp activity. In general, the more powerful the activity, the easier it may be to sense. At the same time, by attempting to identify such a presence, a character must temporarily open his mind to its influence. Particularly potent threats may be able to seize this opportunity, and react aggressively to the probe. While subtler activity is far less dangerous to the acting character, it is also far more difficult to sense.

To purchase this skill, the character must have a special ability stating he has access to it (such as the Psyker trait), reflecting his attunement to the Warp. Unless otherwise noted, he can use the Psyniscience skill to detect entities, locales, and events up to a number of kilometres away equal to his Perception bonus. The GM can, though, alter this range depending on the situation. A character who is not a psyker can also use this skill, representing his ability to recognise the subtle phenomena, such as strange patterns of dust motes or odd sensory distortions, which often accompany psychic disturbances. The general results of Psyniscience tests are summarized on **Table 3–4: Psyniscience Results**.

The GM can call on a player to use the Psyniscience skill when:

- He is hunting for the location of a Daemon.
- He wishes to determine whether a psyker has used his powers recently in the area.
- He is trying to find a weak point between realspace and the Immaterium.

Psyniscience Example Modifiers

+30: *Detecting the presence of a nearby Greater Daemon.*
+20: *Detecting the presence of a major daemonic incursion.*
+10: *Detecting the taint of a minor daemonic incursion.*
+0: *Detecting the presence of a nearby Warp entity.*
–10: *Detecting a daemonic entity among a large group of psykers.*
–20: *Detecting the taint of a Daemon several kilometres away.*
–30: *Detecting a lesser Daemon somewhere within a hive city.*

Table 3-4: Psyniscience Results

Degrees of Success	Result
One	Awareness of Immaterium disruption or number of entities present.
Two	Approximate direction of the Warp phenomena or creatures.
Three	Rough location of the Warp creatures or beings affecting the Immaterium.
Four+	Exact position of the unnatural creatures or psykers present.

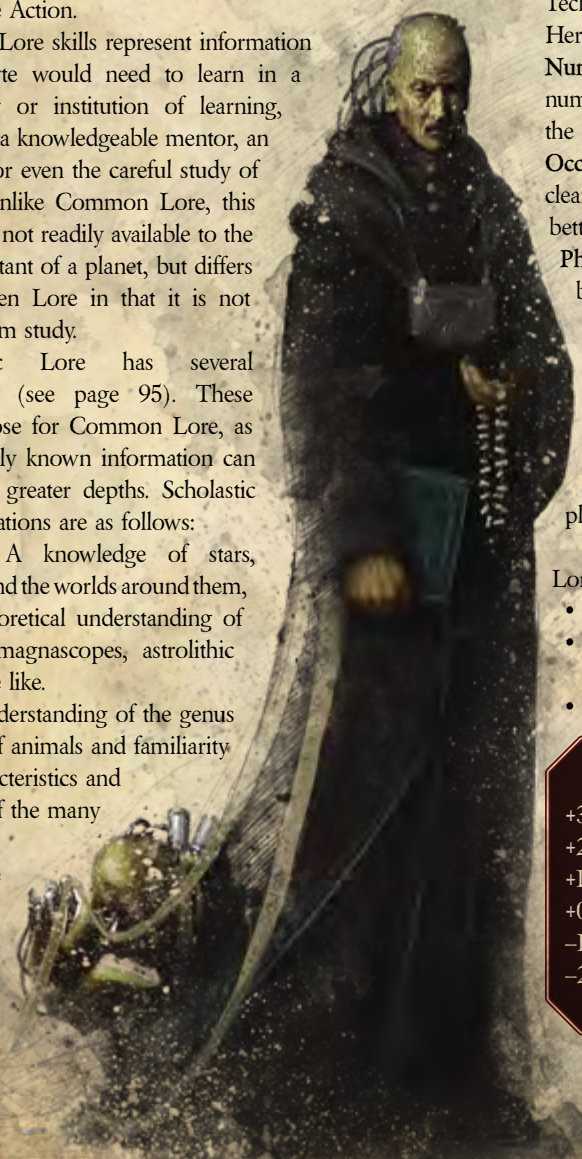
Scholastic Lore (Intelligence)

Aptitudes: Intelligence, Knowledge
Skill Use: Free Action.
All Scholastic Lore skills represent information that an Acolyte would need to learn in a formal setting or institution of learning, whether from a knowledgeable mentor, an organisation, or even the careful study of rare tomes. Unlike Common Lore, this information is not readily available to the average inhabitant of a planet, but differs from Forbidden Lore in that it is not proscribed from study.

Scholastic Lore has several Specialisations (see page 95). These include all those for Common Lore, as even commonly known information can be studied to greater depths. Scholastic Lore Specialisations are as follows:

Astromancy: A knowledge of stars, singularities, and the worlds around them, as well as theoretical understanding of how to use magnascopes, astrolithic charts, and the like.

Beasts: An understanding of the genus and families of animals and familiarity with the characteristics and appearances of the many semi-sentient creatures to be found across the sector.



Bureaucracy: A familiarity with the rules and regulations involved with Askellian governments, particularly the Adeptus Administratum, and their many and varied departments, bureaus, and polices.

Chymistry: A knowledge of chemicals, their alchemical applications in a number of uses, and their prevalence or scarcity throughout the Imperium.

Cryptology: An understanding of codes, ciphers, cryptographs, secret languages, and numerical keys. This may be used to either create or decipher encryptions.

Heraldry: A grasp of the principles and devices of heraldry, as well as a knowledge of the most common seals and heraldic devices used by the Askellon's noble houses and families.

Imperial Warrants: Information concerning the establishment, legal scope, and use of the warrants granted to Rogue Traders, as well as the best-known and dynastic warrants of the Imperium.

Judgement: Knowledge of the proper sentences for the multitude of crimes and heresies punishable by Imperial law.

Legend: Going beyond archaic knowledge, this encompasses momentous portions of mythic history, such as the Dark Age of Technology, the Age of Strife, the Great Crusade, and the Horus Heresy, retold in the form of epic, apocryphal fables.

Numerology: An understanding of the mysterious link between numbers and the physical universe, from low kharmic theory to the infamous Kappellax Correlation.

Occult: An understanding of obscure and hermetic (though not clearly heretical) rituals, theories, and superstitions, as well as the better-known mystical uses of occult items.

Philosophy: Knowledge concerning the theories of thought, belief, existence, and other intangibles. As it also includes logic and debate, it may be used for crafting arguments or creating philosophical tracts.

Tactica Imperialis: The codified military doctrines of the Imperial Guard and Imperial Navy, as well as other systems of troop deployment and battle techniques used by the Imperium. This knowledge may be used to devise a battle plan or deduce the likely flow of war fought by Imperial forces.

The Game Master can call on a player to use a Scholastic Lore skill when:

- He wishes to recount legends from humanity's past.
- He wishes to understand an obscure ruling made by a Judge of the Adeptus Arbites.
- He seeks to identify a rare beast.

Scholastic Lore Example Modifiers

+30: *Studying a broad, "approved" history of the Imperium.*
+20: *Conducting research in a well-stocked librarium.*
+10: *Learning the local particulars of the Imperial Creed.*
+0: *Researching a specific philosophical point.*
–10: *Studying the background for an occult ritual.*
–20: *Analysing a complex chymical formula.*
–30: *Compiling a complete history of the Askellon Sector.*

Scrutiny (Perception)

Aptitudes: Perception, General
Skill Use: Half Action.

The Scrutiny skill helps assess the people or objects an Acolyte encounters. A character can use this skill to determine an individual's truthfulness, his motives, and appraise his personality and temperament. It can also be used to analyse an object or display in detail, determining information that may be hidden or simply not readily apparent.

This test may also be used when methodically searching an area or object for clues or other inconsistencies. It is characteristic of a mental analysis of the person or object in question, to identify any inconsistencies between its appearance, signs of wear, and overall style. Any disparity can be a sign of other dangers; one sewer section lacking the foetid odour of the rest may be just as troubling as a suspicious bulge beneath a suspect's clothing.

In general, Scrutiny is used to interpret hidden emotions, motivations, or details unnoticeable unless subjected to a careful analysis. Awareness is used when trying to spot items or individuals. Thus, while spotting someone hidden would be Awareness (see page 100), and telling when someone is lying would be Scrutiny. Scrutiny is opposed by the Deceive skill.

The GM can call on a player to use the Scrutiny skill when:

- He wants to tell if someone is lying.
- He wants to collate information and conclusions from a complex report.
- He is interpreting augur or auspex readings and determining what these results mean.

Scrutiny Example Modifiers

+30: *Judging the mood of a close friend.*
+20: *Finding a recently fired flamer in a weapon locker.*
+10: *Judging the mood of someone previously encountered.*
+0: *Judging if a stranger is lying.*
–10: *Judging an alien's disposition.*
–20: *Telling if a Tech-Priest Magos is being deceptive.*
–30: *Noticing a false datum in a manufactorum's huge ledger.*



Special Use for Security

The following is a special use for the Security skill:

Traps

A character with the Security skill can fashion and set traps, given enough time and raw resources. Traps can range from hiding a live grenade under a corpse (set to explode when rolled over) to elaborate spiked pits, dead falls, or rigged shotguns. The time, resources, and damage caused by these kinds of traps depend on the GM's discretion and the materials involved (see **Chapter V: Armoury** and **Chapter VII: Combat** for guidelines on weapon damage and perils). The chance that a trap will go off as planned or avoid the detection by its victims depends on the character's Security skill. This is either a skill test (modified depending on circumstance or the complexity of the trap) made secretly by the Game Master to see if it works, or an Opposed test against the victim's Awareness to spot the trap before it goes off.

Security (Intelligence)

Aptitudes: Intelligence, Tech
Skill Use: 1 minute, reduced by 10 seconds for each degree of success.
The Security skill deals with mastery of locks and safeguards, including breaking into secure places or protecting them from intrusion. A character with the Security skill is trained to bypass locks or defeat codes, whether using cogitators and tech against machine spirits or simple mechanical devices against physical latches. Acolytes with Security are also able to safeguard systems and locales by making passive defences more secure, and even setting traps for unwary intruders and thieves.

The GM can call on a player to use the Security skill when:

- He wants to open a locked door.
- He wishes to break into a cogitator and discover its secrets.
- He is trying to lay traps for an ambush or to protect a camp.

Security Example Modifiers

+30: *Defeating a lock that is very crude or simple in design.*
+20: *Using a powerful machine spirit to confuse the simple cogitator overseeing a security system.*
+10: *Bypassing a poorly maintained locking system.*
+0: *Deactivating standard hab security with basic but useful tools.*
–10: *Defeating a well-made and maintained locking system.*
–20: *Bypassing a security system of a complex design with multiple sub-systems and cogitators.*
–30: *Opening a lock of clearly alien manufacture or one that is fiendishly complex.*

Sleight of Hand (Agility)

Aptitudes: Agility, Knowledge
Skill Use: Half Action, or can be performed as a Free Action with an additional –10 penalty.
Acolytes use the Sleight of Hand skill for any task requiring a combination of deception and dexterity. A charlatan or confidence man utilises very comparable skills to those of a pickpocket when committing his crimes. The test can substitute papers, remove jewellery, or obtain a target's oath-cog or ident-seal. Sleight of Hand also allows a character to conceal his actions when in plain sight, such as hiding weapons from someone searching his person. The difficulty of the test depends on the size of the object and the intensity of observation. This is always an Opposed test against the opponent's Awareness or Scrutiny.

The GM can call on a player to use Sleight of Hand when:

- He attempts to steal something from the target's pocket.
- He seeks to palm evidence at a crime scene.
- He tries to plant illegal narcotics into a suspect's robes.

Sleight of Hand Example Modifiers

+30: *Stealing from an inactive servitor.*
+20: *Picking an underhive dreg's pocket.*
+10: *Palming a hab key on a table during a raucous party.*
+0: *Picking a human's pocket in a crowd.*
–10: *Lifting a dataslate while speaking to someone.*
–20: *Stealing from a guarded Departmento Munitorum station.*
–30: *Lifting a prized knife from a hive ganger's belt.*

Stealth (Agility)

Aptitudes: Agility, Fieldcraft
Skill Use: Free Action as part of Movement.
Stealth is a measure of a character's ability to remain unnoticed while moving through the dense crowds of a hive, the open croplands of an agri-world, or the blast craters of a scarred battlefield. In some environments, this requires the character to remain unseen, but in others it is far more important for the character to be inconspicuous. A character that can blend in amongst the massed labourers of a manufactorum might be just as adept at infiltrating a complex as one who might scale the walls in the dead of night. An Acolyte with this skill can move silently or conceal himself from others, either to escape from his foes or take them by surprise.

The difficulty for a Stealth test is generally based upon the environment where it is attempted, as well as the character's outerwear, clothing, and armour. Some gear may assist a character in remaining unseen, though if this equipment is identified, it can often reveal the infiltrator's true nature. In some instances, defenders might use abilities and equipment that have the potential to offset the character's own equipment. In these cases, strategy and timing can be crucial to remaining undetected.

Special Use for Stealth

The following is a special use for the Stealth skill:

Shadowing

Stealth can be used to shadow others and follow them unseen, either on foot, in vehicles, or even in shuttles and starships. On foot it might involve using physical cover or the press of bodies coming off mid-shift labour; in a vehicle, techniques might include false turns or using cargo-haulers as cover; aboard ships, it can entail the use of asteroids or other stellar objects, or even busy void routes around major planets. Stealth skill tests for shadowing are always Opposed tests against the opponent's Awareness. A single Stealth skill test is sufficient to follow the opponent unseen for 5 minutes per degree of success.

When Stealth is used against an opponent (such as to hide from a foe or shadow a target) it is an Opposed test (see page 24). Stealth opposes and is opposed by Awareness.

The GM can call on a player to use the Stealth skill when:

- He wants to scout an enemy force without being detected.
- He wants to sneak up on a foe and kill him quietly.
- He wishes to follow someone without arousing suspicion.

Stealth Example Modifiers

+30: *Sneaking past a sleeping hab worker without waking him.*
+20: *Shadowing an unsuspecting hiver in a busy marketplace.*
+10: *Sneaking past a tired or distracted foe.*
+0: *Sneaking past a guard who has no reason to be overly alert.*
–10: *Sneaking up on an alert guard.*
–20: *Discreetly following someone along a deserted alleyway.*
–30: *Sneaking up on a suspicious foe with no cover in broad daylight.*

Survival (Perception)

Aptitudes: Perception, Fieldcraft
Skill Use: Full Action.

The Survival skill is a measure of a character's ability to subsist without the support of civilisation. It is absolutely vital for those who dwell in the untamed wilds, far from the protection of fortified encampments or cities. Those who live within the urban jungles of underhives or city ruins must also achieve some mastery of this field, as they cannot depend upon reliable sources of food and water. The knacks associated with this field often have applications even within structured society, especially for those with a more independent nature.

A character with the Survival skill can live off the land, ride beasts, and predict weather with only a minimum of equipment and without the need for resupply or support. It can be used to create primitive items such as bows or blades, as well as basic clothing. Survival is also used to track prey (human or otherwise) across all kinds of terrain by following the tell-tale signs they leave on the environment around them.

Special Uses for Survival

These are some of the special uses of the Survival skill:

Crafting

Survival can be used to make all kinds of primitive devices, from cloaks and stone buildings to spears and armour. The time, difficulty, and materials it takes to create these items are greatly dependent on their complexity, the kind of workshop the character has, and their access to designs or assistance. See the **Crafting** sidebar on page 97 for the kinds of items that an Acolyte can create using the Survival skill.

Tracking

A character can use the Survival skill to follow the signs left by his quarry, allowing him to hunt his targets down. Following obvious tracks does not require a skill test, and is considered part of a character's movement. In instances where the time or elements have eroded the signs or where the very environment makes seeing them difficult, such as darkness or fog, Survival skill tests are required. The modifiers for this test depend on the condition of the traces and the tracker's surroundings. A cunning or devious quarry might attempt to conceal or erase any tracks, for example, and in cases where an opponent has attempted to do this he should make an Opposed test against the prey's Stealth.

Wrangling

Characters can tame, train, and potentially ride animals they encounter in their travels, from wild grox to noble warhorse breeds. Both taming and training beasts are Extended tests, the duration of which is determined by the nature and temperament of the creature involved. Once an animal has been broken to its master's will—or at least formed a partnership, for particularly strong-willed beasts—directing it or issuing commands is a Half Action. Wild animals, or those trained for hostility and aggression, can have their Disposition improved by 10 for every two degrees of success (up to a maximum of three levels) by a Full Action use of this skill. GMs should impose modifiers for animals that have been particularly well-trained or those with strong Willpower and Intelligence. Wrangling is of no use against cyber or psy-bonded animals, nor against any creatures with true sentience. See page 250 for additional rules concerning riding living beasts.

The difficulty for a Survival test is associated with the environmental constraints where it is made. If a planet's atmosphere, fauna, and water are laced with deadly toxins, then finding the materials necessary for life could be nearly impossible. Use of the skill does not only indicate a knack for finding life's essentials; it can also indicate an aptitude for avoiding the deadliest of threats.

The GM can call on a player to use the Survival skill when:

- He wants to find food or water in a hostile environment.
- He wishes to start a fire with only handmade tools.
- He is trying to track a foe across the depths of an underhive.

Survival Example Modifiers

+30: *Finding water in a rain-soaked jungle.*
+20: *Tracking an unwary foe across soft dirt, ash, or mud.*
+10: *Hiding from lumbering beasts in a forest.*
+0: *Starting a fire with dry tinder and native flint rocks.*
–10: *Tracking a foe at a rapid pace.*
–20: *Taming an ornery creature not bred in captivity.*
–30: *Finding potable water in a windswept feral desert.*

Tech-Use (Intelligence)

Aptitudes: Intelligence, Tech
Skill Use: 1 minute, or more for more complex systems.
Tech-Use is a measure of an Acolyte's ability to use and interact with all manner of technological devices, from proper implementation of the Rites of Striking to the temperatures of holy lubricants a machine spirit finds most soothing. It can also be used to build basic or complex technical devices with the right amount of time and materials. Tech-Use is more an understanding of the Blessings of the Omnissiah and the rites of the Machine Cult than it is an actual knowledge of the science behind technology—in the 41st Millennium, however, this amounts to the same thing.

The difficulty for this skill use is related to the complexity of the device and its design nature. A simple tool of Eldar origin, for example, might be every bit as dangerous as a venting plasma gun to the uninitiated. Conversely, no amount of familiarity with the blessed design principles of a Warp engine can make it an easily understood device.

The GM can call on a player to use the Tech-Use skill when:

- He wants to repair a broken weapon or vehicle.
- He wishes to push a piece of technology beyond its normal capabilities or operating parameters.
- He is trying to determine how a piece of unknown or unfamiliar technology works.

Tech-Use Example Modifiers

+30: *Swapping out the standard barrel of a Munitorum lasgun*
+20: *Replacing a modular segment of carapace armour.*
+10: *Repairing a familiar device with the aid of a Tech-Adept.*
+0: *Performing work on complicated devices.*
–10: *Repairing a severely damaged dataslate.*
–20: *Repairing an unfamiliar device or fixing a device without all the proper replacement parts available.*
–30: *Repairing an alien device or a cogitator with a very angry machine spirit.*

Special Uses for Tech-Use

These are some of the special uses of the Tech-Use skill:

Crafting

Tech-Use can be used to make all kinds of technical devices, from simple clockwork and steam engines to advanced weaponry and armour. The time, difficulty, and materials it takes to create these items are greatly dependent on their complexity, the kind of workshop the character has, and his access to properly sanctified designs or Adeptus Mechanicus data-vaults. See the **Crafting** sidebar on page 97 for the kinds of things that can be created using Tech-Use.

Demolitions

Tech-Use can be used to determine the effectiveness of explosive devices, which is greatly dependent upon the skill with which they are placed. Success on a Tech-Use skill test indicates a character has successfully planted an explosive charge, and set it with the trigger of his choice. Possible triggers are only limited by a character's imagination, and can include trip wires, timers, proximity sensors, or remote activators.

Failure indicates that the explosives fail to go off when triggered, though the character does not know this until the time of activation. In some situations, the GM might desire withhold this information or even give false results based on the degrees of failure. Four or more degrees of failure indicate the character has set the device off prematurely and it explodes while being set! Some tasks, such as rigging a building for demolition or bringing down a massive suspension bridge, require an Extended test. The GM should set the difficulty and duration depending on the extent of the undertaking. When placing explosives, make sure to note the total degrees of success and the die roll, as it might be used in an Opposed test if someone attempts to defuse a character's hard work.

Defusing charges also falls under the Tech-Use skill, with an Opposed test against the Tech-Use skill test of the individual who set the explosives. Winning the test indicates that the bomb has been defused. Simple failure means that while the charge has not been disarmed, neither has it gone off. Four or more degrees of failure indicate the character has set off the device, suffering the consequences of the explosion. Defusing multiple charges or complex trigger mechanisms might require an Extended test, as determined by the GM.

Trade (Intelligence)

Aptitudes: Intelligence, General

Skill Use: Variable depending on task and complexity.

Trade skills allow Acolytes to practice a craft, from cooking a fine dinner to preserving a corpse. They can identify the work of particularly famous or infamous artisans, or recall information concerning items of their trade. See the **Crafting** sidebar on page 97 for the kinds of things that can be created using Trade.

Trade tests can represent the work of hours, weeks, or months depending on the complexity of the task at hand. However, tests that involve the examination of an item to recall information require a Full Action.



The following is a list of common Trade Specialities:

Agri: Used to grow, care for, and harvest crops and animals.

Archaeologist: Used to locate, examine, and analyse ancient ruins and artefacts.

Armourer: Used to design, upgrade, and forge weaponry, from personal arms to starship batteries.

Astrographer: Used to create two- and three-dimensional representations of stellar locations and Warp routes.

Chymist: Used to create poisons, drugs, and a wide variety of other compounds.

Cryptographer: Used to create or decode complicated ciphers, codes, and other puzzles.

Cook: Used to cook meals and determine if scavenged food is edible.

Explorator: Used in the exploration of unknown stellar regions.

Linguist: Used to learn or decipher new languages, both spoken and written, and even create new ones in some cases.

Loremancer: Used to recount events in a variety of ways, from dry recitations or texts to epic operas or statuary.

Morticator: Used to prepare, preserve, and often render down corpse remains into ingredients for a variety of preparations.

Performancer: Used to perform for audiences in a variety of entertaining art forms, often using dance, song, and poetry.

Prospector: Used to find and identify valuable minerals.

Scrimshawer: Used to inscribe patterns, text, and art onto a variety of materials.

Sculptor: Used to create inspiring works of art in stone, metal, and other materials, often as part of Imperial edifices.

Shipwright: Used to design, upgrade, and manufacture void-capable vessels.

Soothsayer: Used to "foretell" the future by a number of interpretative arts, though its effectiveness is suspect.

Technomat: Used to maintain and repair technological devices, but through rote memorization rather than true understanding or comprehension.

Voidfarer: Used in the day-to-day operation, logistics, and defence of starships.

The GM can call on a player to use the Trade skill when:

- He wants to prepare a sumptuous meal for a high-ranking planetary official.
- He wishes to carve his sigil on a favoured chainsword.
- He seeks to uncover the remains of a lost colony.

Trade Example Modifiers

+30: *Re-heating a basic mealpack, reciting a common legend.*
+20: *Carving a familiar scrimshawed design with good tools.*
+10: *Harvesting and storing hab-grown spices.*
+0: *Creating a flavourful and elaborate meal with basic foodstuffs.*
–10: *Decoding an unfamiliar but basic Imperial cipher.*
–20: *Detecting a small vein of promethium ore amidst barren rock.*
–30: *Performing an unfamiliar opera before a hostile and heavily-armed audience.*



Chapter IV: Talents and Traits

A Dark Heresy character's talents are a representation of natural aptitudes and inherent knacks. In many cases, these are abilities that a character has learnt through experience or training. In others, they are characteristic of near superhuman abilities. Examples include the mysterious abilities associated with a psyker or Tech-Priest, but also more mundane (but still impressive) abilities that go with particular fighting disciplines or practiced data excavation techniques.

Characters begin play with a set of talents identified during character creation. They can garner additional ones as they develop further through the expenditure of experience.

Talents

"All of thy abilities come through the grace of the Emperor, and know that their use reflects back upon Him. Do not disappoint the saviour of all humanity."

–Morticator Siobhan Reichmyn, training an assistant

Each talent imparts a unique ability to characters possessing it. Once an Acolyte possesses a talent, it is always in effect. In most cases, the ability confers a bonus to certain tasks, or allows him to perform special actions not available to other characters. Talents differ from skills in that a player usually does not need to use an action or test to utilise the ability. In essence, once a character has a talent, his actions always benefit from that talent, unless noted otherwise. Specific details for the new abilities that a talent grants are described under the respective talent's entry, and unless otherwise stated in the talent description, a character can only possess and benefit from each talent once.

Gaining Talents

Talents represent a plethora of special abilities for characters, reflecting their skill at arms, specific relationships and reputations they might have, or any number of other things that make them better than the average inhabitant of the 41st Millennium. Just as he does with skills, a character starts play with a number of talents, depending on his home world, background, and role (see **Chapter II: Character Creation**), and then acquires more as he improves during play by spending experience points (xp). The amount of experience points required to purchase a talent depends on its tier and which aptitudes a character possesses, as detailed on page 81 in **Chapter II: Character Creation.**

Table 4–1: Tier 1 Talents

Talent	Prerequisites	Aptitude 1	Aptitude 2	Benefit
Ambidextrous	Ag 30	Weapon Skill	Ballistic Skill	Reduce penalties for using two weapons.
Blind Fighting	Per 30	Perception	Fieldcraft	Eliminates melee combat penalties for obscured vision.
Catfall	Ag 30	Agility	Fieldcraft	Reduce falling damage.
Clues from the Crowds	Fel 30	General	Social	Can re-roll a test made to gather information from a group.
Die Hard	WP 40	Willpower	Defence	Test Willpower to avoid Fatigue from Blood Loss.
Disarm	Ag 30	Weapon Skill	Defence	Force opponent to drop weapon.
Double Team	—	General	Offence	Gain additional +10 for outnumbering opponent.
Enemy†	—	General	Social	An organization or group particularly despises the character.
Ferric Summons	Ferric Lure Implants, Mechanicus Implants	Willpower	Tech	Can summon larger metallic objects.
Frenzy	—	Strength	Offence	Enter psychotic rage to gain combat bonuses.
Iron Jaw	T 40	Toughness	Defence	Test Toughness to overcome Stunning.
Jaded	WP 40	Willpower	Defence	Ignore mundane horrors.
Keen Intuition	Int 35	Perception	Social	Can retry Awareness test once with –10 modifier.
Leap Up	Ag 30	Agility	General	Stand as a Free Action.
Nowhere to Hide	Per 30	Perception	Offence	Can add DoS from the attack to reduce armour value of cover.
Peer†	Fel 30	Fellowship	Social	Character has good reputation amongst chosen group.
Quick Draw	—	Agility	Finesse	Draw weapon as Free Action.
Rapid Reload	—	Agility	Fieldcraft	Reduce reload time.
Resistance†	—	Toughness	Defence	Gain +10 bonus to particular resistance test.
Sound Constitution	—	Toughness	General	Gain an additional wound.
Takedown	—	Weapon Skill	Offence	Make special attack to stun opponent.
Technical Knock	Int 30	Intelligence	Tech	Un-jam gun as Half Action.
Warp Sense	Psy Rating, Psyniscience, Per 30	Perception	Psyker	Allows Psyniscience test as Free Action.
Weapon-Tech	Tech Use +10, Int 40	Intelligence	Tech	Increase potency of advanced weaponry.
Weapon Training†	—	General	Finesse	Use Weapon Group without penalty.

†*Denotes Specialist talent.*

Talent Tiers and Categories

Not all talents are created equal, and some are unashamedly better than others. For this reason all talents are divided into three levels, or tiers, rated one to three, with one being the weakest and three being the most powerful. Tiers primarily exist to price talents, as higher tier talents have a greater cost. In addition, higher tier talents are more likely to have prerequisites than lower tier talents.

When selecting talents, a character can choose any talent from any tier. However, he should be mindful that some talents have prerequisites, and that a character must meet the prerequisites before he takes the talent.

Specialist Talents

Several talents are not one talent but many, and require a character to select a specific specialisation when taking the talent. Thus, when selecting the Peer talent, a character would also choose a specific group or organization from those listed within the description, such as Peer (Schola Progenium). Each time a character gains the talent, they are in effect taking a new talent, and must choose a different specialisation, so the next time a character selected Peer he might opt for Peer (Adeptus Mechanicus). In many cases, group listings are representative as opposed to all-inclusive, so even though groups like the Desoleum Sanctionaries are not specifically listed in the Peer specialisations, a character could still choose them with the approval of the GM.

Talent Prerequisites

Several talents require the Acolyte to possess a prerequisite before their selection. This represents a certain innate ability level required to employ specific talents, or a skill or other talent necessary to access more advanced capabilities. These prerequisites may take the form of skills, talents, aptitudes, characteristic scores, or even special abilities.

Table 4–2: Tier 2 Talents

Talent	Prerequisites	Aptitude 1	Aptitude 2	Benefit
Armour-Monger	Int 35, Tech-Use, Trade (Armourer)	Intelligence	Tech	Increase the efficacy of physical armour.
Battle Rage	Frenzy	Strength	Defence	Parry while frenzied.
Bulging Biceps	S 45	Strength	Offence	Remove bracing requirement from Heavy weapons.
Combat Master	WS 30	Weapon Skill	Defence	Opponents get no bonus for outnumbering the character.
Constant Vigilance†	Int 35 *or* Per 35, Awareness +10	Perception	Defence	Can use Per or Int instead of Ag for Initiative rolls, and rolls two dice (picking higher) for the result.
Contact Network	Cover-Up, Int 35	Fellowship	Leadership	Use Fellowship instead of Influence for Requisition tests.
Coordinated Interrogation	S 40 *or* WP 40, Clues from the Crowds	Intelligence	Social	+10 bonus to all Interrogate tests, additional +5 for others who also have Coordinated Interrogation.
Counter Attack	WS 40	Weapon Skill	Defence	May attack after successful Parry.
Cover-Up	Int 35	Intelligence	Knowledge	Can reduce Influence by 1 to gain 1d5 Subtlety.
Deny the Witch	WP 35	Willpower	Defence	Can use Willpower to Evade against psychic attacks.
Devastating Assault	WS 35	Weapon Skill	Offence	A successful All Out Attack grants a second attack.
Double Tap	Two-Weapon Wielder	Finesse	Offence	Successful first attack grants bonus to second attack.
Exotic Weapon Training†	—	Intelligence	Finesse	Gain proficiency with one exotic weapon type.
Face in a Crowd	Fel 35, Clues from the Crowds	Fellowship	Social	Can use Fellowship instead of Agility when Shadowing.
Hard Target	Ag 40	Agility	Defence	–20 to hit character when he Charges or Runs.
Hardy	T 40	Toughness	Defence	Character always heals as if Lightly Damaged.
Hatred†	—	Weapon Skill	Social	Gain +10 bonus to attack hated creatures.
Hip Shooting	BS 40, Ag 40	Ballistic Skill	Finesse	Characters may shoot when moving.
Independent Targeting	BS 40	Ballistic Skill	Finesse	Fire at multiple targets more than 10 metres apart.
Inescapable Attack†	BS 40 or WS 40, Per 35	Weapon Skill / Ballistic Skill	Finesse	Attacker imposes penalty on DoS from Evasion test equal to DoS his initial attack.
Killing Strike	WS 50	Weapon Skill	Offence	Spend Fate point to make melee attacks unavoidable.
Luminen Shock	Luminen Capacitors, Mechanicus Implants	Weapon Skill	Tech	Character can discharge energy in melee attack.
Maglev Transcendence	Maglev Coils, Mechanicus Implants	Intelligence	Tech	Character can hover for longer periods of time.
Marksman	BS 35	Ballistic Skill	Finesse	No penalties for firing at long or extreme range.
Mechadendrite Use†	Mechanicus Implants	Intelligence	Tech	Gain ability to use certain Mechadendrites.
Precision Killer†	BS 40 *or* WS 40	Ballistic Skill/ Weapon Skill	Finesse	No penalty to making Called Shot in either Ranged or Melee Combat.
Prosanguine	Autosanguine Implants, Mechanicus Implants	Toughness	Tech	Test to heal 1d5 damage.
Strong Minded	WP 30, Resistance (Psychic Powers)	Willpower	Defence	May reroll failed WP tests to resist psychic powers.
Swift Attack	WS 30	Weapon Skill	Finesse	May make multiple melee attacks.
Two-Weapon Wielder†	—	Weapon Skill/ Ballistic Skill	Finesse	May fight with two weapons.
Unarmed Specialist	Ambidextrous, Ag 35, WS 35	Strength	Offence	When fighting unarmed, attacks hit as Deadly Natural Weapons and user can re-roll damage.
Warp Conduit	Psy Rating, Strong Minded, WP 50	Willpower	Psyker	Spend Fate point to add 1d5 to psy rating.
Whirlwind of Death	WS 40	Weapon Skill	Finesse	Make one attack for each melee opponent.

†*Denotes Specialist talent.*

Table 4–3: Tier 3 Talents

Talent	Prerequisites	Aptitude 1	Aptitude 2	Benefit
Adamantium Faith	Jaded, Resistance (Fear), WP 45	Willpower	Defence	Reduces DoF from failed Pinning and Fear tests.
Assassin Strike	Ag 40, Acrobatics	Weapon Skill	Fieldcraft	After melee attack, test Acrobatics to move.
Bastion of Iron Will	Psy Rating, Strong Minded, WP 40	Willpower	Psyker	Gain bonus for Opposed tests against psychic powers.
Blademaster	WS 30, Weapon Training (any Melee)	Weapon Skill	Finesse	Reroll missed attack, once per round.
Crushing Blow	WS 40	Weapon Skill	Offence	Add half WS bonus to damage inflicted in melee.
Deathdealer†	BS 45 *or* WS 45	Perception	Finesse	Add Per bonus to damage inflicted in combat.
Delicate Interrogation	Fel 50, Coordinated Interrogation	Intelligence	Finesse	Reduce Subtlety loss by 1d5 when conducting an investigation.
Eye of Vengeance	BS 50	Ballistic Skill	Offence	Spend 1 Fate point to increase damage and penetration.
Favoured by the Warp	WP 35	Willpower	Psyker	Roll twice for Psychic Phenomena and choose result.
Flash of Insight	Int 40, Contact Network, Coordinated Interrogation	Perception	Knowledge	Spend 1 Fate point to reveal a clue.
Halo of Command	Fel 40, WP 40	Fellowship	Leadership	Affect NPCs within 100xFelB metres with Social skills.
Hammer Blow	Crushing Blow	Strength	Offence	Make a thunderous strike with a melee weapon.
Infused Knowledge	Int 40, Lore (any one)	Intelligence	Knowledge	Know a little bit about everything.
Lightning Attack	Swift Attack	Weapon Skill	Finesse	Character may make many melee attacks with single roll.
Luminen Blast	Luminen Shock, Luminen Capacitors, Mechanicus Implants	Ballistic Skill	Tech	May discharge stored energy as a ranged attack.
Mastery†	Rank 4 in selected skill	Intelligence	Knowledge	May spend Fate point to succeed on test.
Mighty Shot	BS 40	Ballistic Skill	Offence	Add half BS bonus to ranged damage rolls.
Never Die	WP 50, T 50	Toughness	Defence	Ignore penalties from Critical damage by spending Fate point.
Preternatural Speed	WS 40, Ag 50	Agility	Offence	Double speed when charging.
Sprint	—	Agility	Fieldcraft	Move more quickly in combat.
Step Aside	Agility 40, Dodge *or* Parry	Agility	Defence	Can make additional Dodge or Parry attempt.
Superior Chirurgeon	Rank 2 in Medicae skill	Intelligence	Fieldcraft	Gain +20 to Medicae tests, bonuses to first aid tests.
Target Selection	BS 50	Ballistic Skill	Finesse	May shoot into melee without penalty.
Thunder Charge	S 50	Strength	Offence	Break enemies with armoured charge.
True Grit	T 40	Toughness	Defence	Reduce Critical damage taken.
Two-Weapon Master	Ag 45, Ambidextrous, BS 40 *or* WS 40, Two-Weapon Wielder (Melee, Ranged)	Finesse	Offence	No penalties when fighting with two single-handed weapons.
Warp Lock	Psy Rating, Strong Minded, WP 50	Willpower	Psyker	Ignore Psychic Phenomenon once per session.

†*Denotes Specialist talent.*

Talent Descriptions

This section presents each talent, including its associated aptitudes, any prerequisites it might have, and a full description of its effects.

Adamantium Faith

Tier: 3
Prerequisites: Jaded, Resistance (Fear), Willpower 45
Aptitudes: Willpower, Defence
The Acolyte has become inured to horrors that would cripple lesser men. This might come from years of facing incoming fire, staring down the terrors of the Warp, or simply his absolute faith in the Emperor. He can subtract his Willpower bonus from his degrees of failure on a failed Fear or Pinning test. If this reduces the result to zero or less, he counts as having passed the Fear test with 1 degree of success.

Ambidextrous

Tier: 1
Prerequisite: Agility 30
Aptitudes: Weapon Skill, Ballistic Skill
This talent does not represent true ambidexterity so much as sufficient training with both hands to make the distinction moot. When combined with Two-Weapon Wielder talent, the penalty for making attacks with both weapons in the same turn drops to –10.

Armour-Monger

Tier: 2
Prerequisites: Intelligence 35, Tech-Use, Trade (Armourer)
Aptitudes: Intelligence, Tech
The Acolyte is a skilled armourer, and constantly tinkers and improves his armour, or keeps it in pristine shape by repairing the slightest damage it sustains. With years of training, he has even learned to enhance the protection afforded by his armour and how to use it to its optimum. The character gains an extra amount of Armour points equal to his Intelligence bonus, which he can distribute to any locations that his armour would normally cover, as long as he has at least an hour each day to clean and repair it or make minor modifications. This bonus applies only to armour when the Acolyte is wearing it, as it combines his training with his skill at armoury.

Assassin Strike

Tier: 3
Prerequisites: Acrobatics, Agility 40
Aptitudes: Weapon Skill, Fieldcraft
The character's natural agility and graceful martial form turn him into a dervish of death in combat. After making a melee attack, a successful Challenging (+0) Acrobatics skill test allows the Acolyte to move at half rate as a Free Action. He may only make this move once per round, and the character's opponent does not receive a free attack resulting from this move.

Bastion of Iron Will

Tier: 3
Prerequisites: Psy rating, Strong Minded, Willpower 40
Aptitudes: Willpower, Psyker
The Acolyte's sheer willpower and psychic focus have become one and the same, over years of practice and training, such that their combined use is second nature. He adds 5 x his psy rating to any Opposed test he makes when defending against psychic powers.

Battle Rage

Tier: 2
Prerequisite: Frenzy
Aptitudes: Strength, Defence
Long experience and indomitable will have allowed the character to master the beast within, directing its rage while keeping his head, despite the howling bloodlust in his mind. The Acolyte can Parry while Frenzied, and can re-roll a failed test to snap out of Frenzy or resist entering Frenzy if he so chooses.

Blademaster

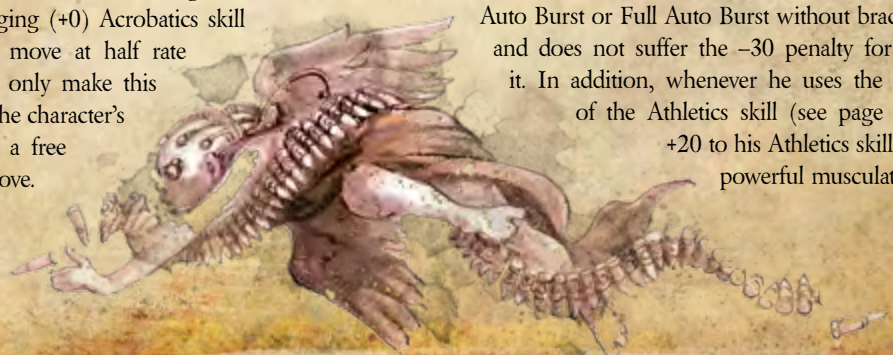
Tier: 3
Prerequisites: Weapon Skill 30, Weapon Training (any melee)
Aptitudes: Weapon Skill, Finesse
The Acolyte's mastery of bladed weapons and their martial disciplines has no peer. When attacking with any bladed weapon, including chainswords, axes, and power swords, he can re-roll one missed attack per round.

Blind Fighting

Tier: 1
Prerequisite: Perception 30
Aptitudes: Perception, Fieldcraft
Years of practice and development of his other senses allows the Acolyte to fight in close combat without the benefit of sight. He ignores all penalties for fighting with a melee weapon while suffering from obscured vision, permitting him to fight in fog, smoke, or darkness more effectively. See page 229 for a full list of normal penalties based on lighting and vision. Note this talent only improves his chances to hit with melee weapons, and has no effect on ranged weapon attacks.

Bulging Biceps

Tier: 2
Prerequisite: Strength 45
Aptitudes: Strength, Offence
Whereas a weaker man might be sent flying by the recoil of a heavy weapon, this Acolyte's strong physique allows him to remain standing. He can fire a heavy weapon using Semi-Auto Burst or Full Auto Burst without bracing the weapon, and does not suffer the –30 penalty for failing to brace it. In addition, whenever he uses the Heft special use of the Athletics skill (see page 98) he can add +20 to his Athletics skill test to reflect his powerful musculature.



Catfall

Tier: 1
Prerequisite: Agility 30
Aptitudes: Agility, Fieldcraft
Gymnastic ability and natural balance enables the Acolyte to fall great distances without harm. He automatically reduces the effective distance of all falls by a number of metres equal to his Agility bonus, ignoring this distance as if it did not exist. He also adds +20 to his Acrobatics skill tests when using the Jump special skill use, as it pertains to reducing damage from falling.

Clues from the Crowds

Tier: 1
Prerequisite: Fellowship 30
Aptitudes: General, Social
It is often difficult to extract information from groups such as hive gangs or Administratum scribes, as often numbers can bolster recalcitrance to questioning. A veteran Acolyte knows that such groups can hold critical information to complete an investigation, and can throw more effective nets when interrogating groups and reveal valued clues. Once per day, he can re-roll a test made to gather information from a group of people.

Combat Master

Tier: 2
Prerequisite: Weapon Skill 30
Aptitudes: Weapon Skill, Defence
The Acolyte's weapon seems to be everywhere at once, keeping many more opponents at bay in close combat than would seem possible. Opponents fighting him in hand-to-hand combat gain no bonuses for Ganging Up (see page 229).

Constant Vigilance

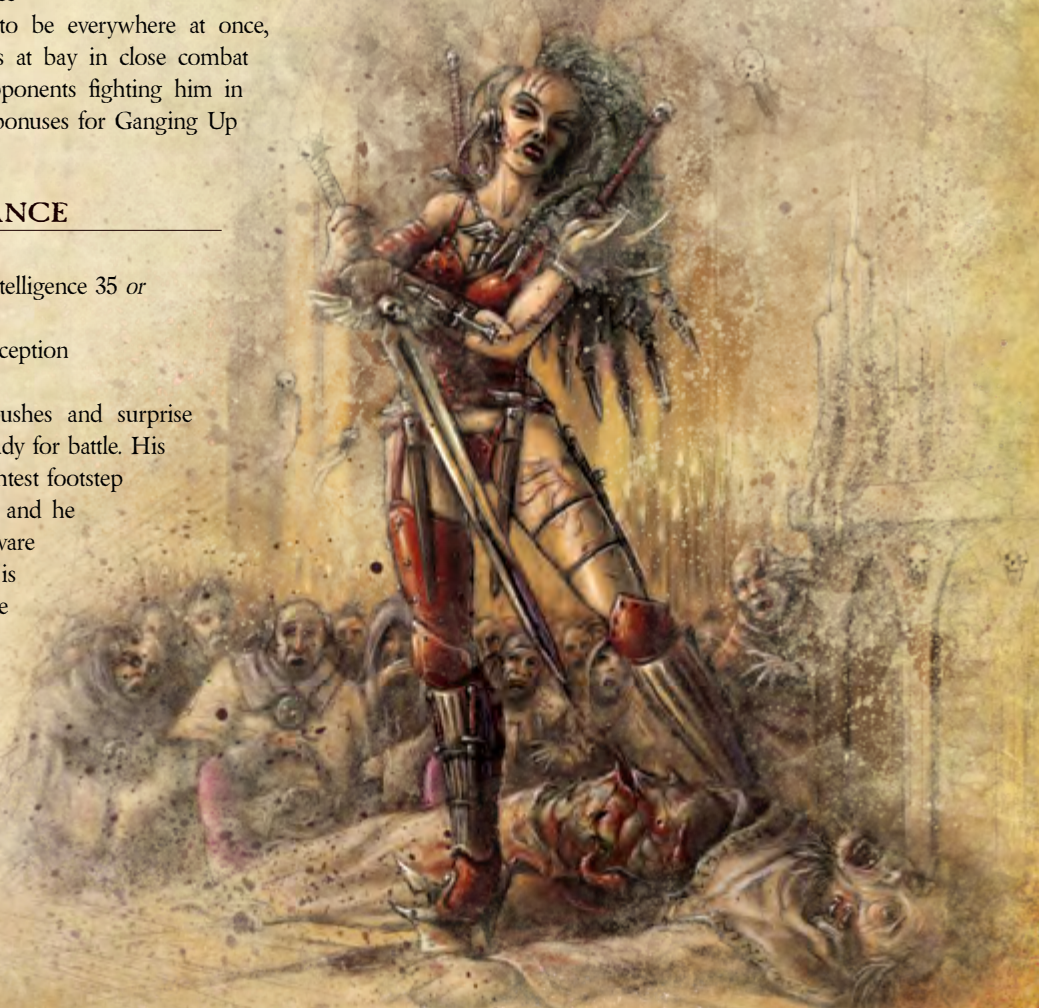
Tier: 2
Prerequisites: Awareness +10, Intelligence 35 *or* Perception 35
Specialisations: Intelligence, Perception
Aptitudes: Perception, Defence
From years of surviving ambushes and surprise attacks, the Acolyte is always ready for battle. His subconscious is alert to the slightest footstep or activation of a lasgun pack, and he acts often before he is fully aware of the threat. When this talent is taken, the character selects the Specialisation that matches the prerequisite (Perception or Intelligence) used in purchase. He can use the characteristic that matches that Specialisation when rolling for Initiative instead of his Agility value, and rolls two dice for the roll (picking the highest of the two for his score).

Contact Network

Tier: 2
Prerequisites: Cover-Up, Intelligence 35
Aptitudes: Fellowship, Leadership
Acolytes rely on a web of relationships, favours, debts, and obligations that can range from within a hab-block to spanning an entire system. Developing and exploiting this network properly allows them to gain access to weapons, travel berths, personnel, and other resources when needed; those who maximise their connections can ensure they are well-armed and well-prepared as they face a new heresy. An Acolyte with this talent can use his Fellowship characteristic in place of his Influence when making Requisition tests (see page 142).

Coordinated Interrogation

Tier: 2
Prerequisites: Clues from the Crowds, Strength 40 *or* Willpower 40
Aptitudes: Intelligence, Social
A trained Acolyte, especially when working in conjunction with fellow veteran Acolytes, can induce cooperation from even the most hardened of suspects and captured heretics. He gains a +10 bonus to all Interrogation tests, and gains an additional +5 for each other character participating in the interrogation who also has Coordinated Interrogation. This counts as test assistance, and thus also gains the standard assistance bonuses as per page 25.



Counter Attack

Tier: 2
Prerequisite: Weapon Skill 40
Aptitudes: Weapon Skill, Defence
The Acolyte's lightning ripostes are things of deadly beauty; swift and invisible as the wind. Once per turn, after successfully Parrying an opponent's attack, this character may immediately make a Standard Attack action as a Free Action against that opponent using the weapon with which he Parried. The character suffers a –20 penalty on the Weapon Skill test for this attack.

Cover-Up

Tier: 2
Prerequisite: Intelligence 35
Aptitudes: Intelligence, Knowledge
Even the slightest whisper of the Inquisition's presence can be enough to scatter suspected heretics and drive cults into hiding. To prevent the growth and spread of rumours, Acolytes use combinations of well-placed bribes, dire threats, and other means to keep their activities as secretive as possible. At the GM's discretion, the character can reduce his Influence to increase his group's Subtlety. For every point of Influence lost in this way, the Acolyte increases his warband's Subtlety by 1d5.

Crushing Blow

Tier: 3
Prerequisite: Weapon Skill 40
Aptitudes: Weapon Skill, Offence
The Acolyte has the ability to focus his entire body into close combat attacks. He adds half his Weapon Skill bonus (rounding up) to damage he inflicts with melee attacks.

Deathdealer

Tier: 3
Prerequisites: Ballistic Skill 45 *or* Weapon Skill 45
Specialisations: Ranged, Melee
Aptitudes: Perception, Finesse
The Acolyte can place his hits where they inflict maximum harm, such as gaps or joints in armour. When this talent is taken, the character selects the Specialisation that matches the prerequisite used in purchase (Melee with Weapon Skill, Ranged with Ballistic Skill). When the character's attack in that combat type inflicts Critical damage, he adds his Perception bonus to the damage result.

Delicate Interrogation

Tier: 3
Prerequisites: Coordinated Interrogation, Fellowship 50
Aptitudes: Intelligence, Finesse
Questioning suspects and witnesses is always a necessary part of any investigation. Such sessions must remain secretive or obscured, however, lest others learn of the Inquisition's interest, and a variety of subterfuges, deceptions, and outright threats come into play to aid this effort. Whenever the Acolyte would decrease his warband's Subtlety due to an interrogation, the amount of Subtlety lost is reduced by 1d5. If this results in a negative number, the Acolyte's skilled efforts increase the warband's Subtlety by 1.

Deny the Witch

Tier: 2
Prerequisite: Willpower 35
Aptitudes: Willpower, Defence
The Acolyte draws on his faith and mental fortitude to act as his shield against those tainted by the Warp. The character may use his Willpower characteristic when making an Evasion Reaction against ranged or melee attacks against him made with psychic powers. When successfully evading an attack with an area of effect, the character does not move but instead is simply unaffected by the psychic power.

Devastating Assault

Tier: 2
Prerequisite: Weapon Skill 35
Aptitudes: Weapon Skill, Offence
The Acolyte launches a furious attack on his foe, the rage of the Emperor powering his assault. Once per turn, after resolving an All Out Attack action that successfully hits, the character may make a second All Out Attack action against the same target as a Free Action, with the same bonuses and penalties as the first.

Die Hard

Tier: 1
Prerequisite: Willpower 40
Aptitudes: Willpower, Defence
Through either mental resolve or sheer stubbornness, the Acolyte refuses to fall. When this character would suffer a level of Fatigue due to the Blood Loss condition, he makes a Challenging (+0) Willpower test; if he succeeds, he does not suffer a level of Fatigue.

Disarm

Tier: 1
Prerequisite: Agility 30
Aptitudes: Weapon Skill, Defence
The Acolyte can wrest weapons from his opponents' hands through practised technique or brute force. As a Full Action, the character may make an Opposed Weapon Skill test against one target with whom he is engaged. If the Acolyte wins the test, the enemy drops his weapon to the ground. Should the Acolyte score three or more degrees of success, he can take the enemy's weapon from him.

Double Tap

Tier: 2
Prerequisite: Two-Weapon Wielder
Aptitudes: Finesse, Offence
The Acolyte is practiced in making dual attacks, and can almost subconsciously tell when his hits strike to best effect. When making a second ranged attack action in the same turn against the same target, he gains a +20 bonus to the attack test if his first attack scored one or more successful hits.

The Powers of Askellon

The Imperium is a vast machine made up of many divisions and sub-divisions of authority, power, and responsibility. In addition to the many layers of organisation within the Imperium, there are countless more that exist outside the official architecture of power. Within Askellon, multitudes of such groups compete for power across the sector and beyond, into the unexplored reaches of space surrounding it. Official Imperial representatives, local agencies and rulers, unofficial cliques, heretical sects, and even xenos forces vie for power, and often an Acolyte's survival lies with who he knows, who he can turn to for support, and who is actively seeking his death.

Below is a list of the most commonly known power factions with the Askellon Sector. Note that it is not complete, for there are many other organisations that might operate only in a single sub-sector or planet, or could rise due to changing circumstances.

Administratum: The vast bureaucracy of the Imperium that administers its domains.
Adeptus Arbites: The keepers of Imperial law and enforcers of loyalty to the Golden Throne.
Adeptus Astartes: The genetically enhanced, power-armoured angels of death.
Adeptus Astra Telepathica: The organisation that trains and sanctions Imperial psykers.
Adeptus Mechanicus: The disciples of the Omnissiah, who are the preservers and fabricators of technology.
Adepta Sororitas: The female holy orders, including the militant Sisters of Battle.
Astropaths: The telepaths who unite the Imperium through mental communication.
Chartist Captains: The masters of spacecraft who voyage the charted realms of the Imperium.
Collegia Titanicus: The Titan Legions whose vast war machines shake planets when they walk.
Criminal Cartels: The many organisations that operate outside the bounds of the Askellian legal authorities.
The Deathwatch: Mysterious and powerful Space Marines from multiple Chapters, banded together against xenos and other threats.
Ecclesiarchy: The keepers of faith in the Emperor's divinity.
Heretical Cults: The many apostate and unholy groups operating throughout the sector and its fringes.
Imperial Guard: The Imperium's immeasurable armies, fighting endless battles across the galaxy.
Imperial Navy: The forces of warships that defend the worlds of the Imperium.
Inquisition: The secretive protectors of Mankind.
Navigators: The mutants whose abilities allow starships to pass through the warp.
Officio Assassinorum: The secret bringers of death to any who would dare act against the Emperor's Will.
Planetary Defence Forces: The military forces raised on planets to defend against invaders.
Rogue Traders: One of those who voyage to the uncharted realms within and without the Imperium.
Schola Progenium: The schools that teach orphans of Imperial officials.
Scholastica Psykana: The organisation that trains and sanctions Imperial Psykers.
Traitor Legions: Fallen brothers of the Adeptus Astartes, filled with hate and dark purpose.
Warlords: Leaders who have fallen from the light of the Imperium, ranging from planetary masters to petty chieftains.

Double Team

Tier: 1
Prerequisite: None
Aptitudes: General, Offence

The Acolyte has experience of fighting in paired teams that work together to take down their enemies. When Ganging Up on an opponent, he gains an additional +10 bonus to Weapon Skill tests. If both the characters that outnumber the enemy have this talent, then both gain an additional +10 bonus, for a total of +20. This bonus is in addition to the normal bonus gained from Ganging Up on an opponent (see page 229).

Enemy

Tier: 1
Prerequisite: None
Specialisations: Any listed in the sidebar **The Powers of Askellon** above, and others at GM's discretion
Aptitudes: General, Social

The opposite of Peer (see page 130); the Acolyte is particularly despised and possibly hunted by a specific social group or organisation, heretical cult, or xenos race. He suffers an additional –10 penalty to Fellowship and Influence tests when dealing with this group, and the GM can use them to complicate his life from time to time.

Unlike other talents, Enemy does not cost any xp to purchase and cannot be taken as an advance. Instead the GM and player can agree to award it when appropriate to the adventure or campaign. It can be removed with the approval of the GM, if the character has redeemed himself with the group in question.

The Enemy talent can be awarded multiple times for the same group, in which case it should be listed as Enemy (X), with X equalling the number of times the talent has been awarded. This can be used to represent groups who particularly hate the Acolyte and want to see him dead. In game terms, the penalty to Fellowship tests increases to –10 times X.

Exotic Weapon Training

Tier: 2
Prerequisite: None
Specialisations: Each different exotic weapon
Aptitudes: Intelligence, Finesse
The Acolyte is trained to use a particularly obscure type of weapon, such as a graviton gun or needle pistol. Weapons requiring this unique talent are noted in their armoury descriptions. Unlike other kinds of weapons training, this talent applies only to a single weapon type and not a class of weapons. Note that an Exotic weapon with the Heavy class would also require the Weapon Training (Heavy) talent as well as Exotic Weapon Training in that specific weapon.

Eye of Vengeance

Tier: 3
Prerequisite: Ballistic Skill 50
Aptitudes: Ballistic Skill, Offence
The Acolyte can focus his intent on where it is likely to do most damage to his enemy and then strike his foe down with a single shot. Before making a ranged Standard Attack action, he can spend a Fate point. If he does so, he adds the number of degrees of success scored on the attack test to both his damage and penetration for the hit.

Face in a Crowd

Tier: 2
Prerequisites: Clues from the Crowds, Fellowship 35
Aptitudes: Fellowship, Social
A successful investigation often involves trailing suspects without their knowledge, the better to follow them to hidden dens of heretical worship or criminal activity. With training, the Acolyte can ensure none notice his presence, through careful replication of a crowd's mannerisms or even joining gatherings while still keeping a careful eye on his quarry. When employing the Shadowing special use of the Stealth skill, he can use his Fellowship characteristic instead of his Agility.

Favoured by the Warp

Tier: 3
Prerequisite: Willpower 35
Aptitudes: Willpower, Psyker
Whenever this character rolls on **Table 6–2: Psychic Phenomena** (see page 196), so long as he does not receive the Perils of the Warp result, he may roll a second time and choose which result he receives.

Ferric Summons

Tier: 1
Prerequisites: Ferric Lure Implants, Mechanicus Implants
Aptitudes: Willpower, Tech
The Acolyte has trained himself in better use of his Ferric Lure Implants (see page 182). He can summon to his hand an unsecured metal object weighing up to 2 kilograms per point of his Willpower bonus, and can summon such objects up to 40 metres distant.

Flash of Insight

Tier: 3
Prerequisites: Contact Network, Coordinated Interrogation, Intelligence 40
Aptitudes: Perception, Knowledge
Despite steady application of logic and careful analysis, some conundrums remain insoluble, but inspiration could come from outside sources, such as reading patterns from wisps of lho smoke or even making direct appeals to the Emperor for guidance. An Acolyte who has trained his mind to process such lateral data can leap to conclusions that direct thinking cannot provide, and thus quash even the most hidden of heresies. When stuck in an investigation, he can spend one Fate point to reveal a single clue or lead to aid in the progression of his efforts.

Frenzy

Tier: 1
Prerequisite: None
Aptitudes: Strength, Offence
The Acolyte's temper and passion boil just below the surface of his psyche, mostly held in check by his rational mind, but easily released when needed. If he spends one full round fuelling his anger—by flagellation, drugs, or other means—on the next round, he goes into an uncontrolled rage, gaining a +10 bonus to Weapon Skill, Strength, Toughness, and Willpower, but suffering a –20 penalty to Ballistic Skill, Intelligence, and Fellowship. Note that characteristic penalties are different from characteristic damage (see page 188), and cannot reduce a characteristic below 1. While Frenzied, the character must attack the nearest enemy in melee combat if possible. If he is not engaged with the nearest enemy, he must move towards that enemy and engage it if possible. He will not take obviously suicidal actions such as leaping off a building in order to engage someone on the ground, but he will take any actions that offer a reasonable opportunity to engage in melee with the nearest enemy.

While Frenzied, he is immune to Fear, Pinning, Stunning effects, and the effects of Fatigue; he cannot Parry, retreat, or flee. He remains Frenzied for the duration of the combat, and cannot use psychic powers while Frenzied. After combat ends, or if there are no more eligible enemy targets for the character to attack, he can make a Willpower test to snap out of his Frenzy. If he fails, he must continue to attack, favouring NPCs over PCs. Each successive round, however, he can make another Willpower test, with a cumulative +10 bonus to return to a stable state of mind and come out of Frenzy. After Frenzying, he cannot Frenzy again for at least an hour, as he recovers his mental and physical strength.

Halo of Command

Tier: 3
Prerequisites: Fellowship 40, Willpower 40
Aptitudes: Fellowship, Leadership
The Acolyte has trained himself to better to lead and sway others, either motivating or terrifying those around him to greater levels. When targeting friendly NPCs through skills that have either the Social or Leadership Aptitudes (such as Charm, Command, and Intimidate), he can affect those within 100 times his Fellowship bonus in metres rather than 10 times that number.

Hammer Blow

Tier: 3
Prerequisite: Crushing Blow
Aptitudes: Strength, Offence
The Acolyte strikes a single blow with such focus and force that it breaks armour and pulps flesh as it strikes. When he uses an All Out Attack action to make a single melee attack, he can add half his Strength bonus (rounded up) to the weapon's penetration. The attack also counts as having the Concussive (2) weapon quality, to represent the shocking force of the blow's impact.

Hard Target

Tier: 2
Prerequisite: Agility 40
Aptitudes: Agility, Defence
Light on his feet, the Acolyte dodges and weaves as he moves, skills learned from long years in the line of fire. When he performs a Charge or Run action, opponents suffer a –20 penalty to Ballistic Skill tests made to hit him with ranged attacks. This penalty continues until the start of his next turn.

Hardy

Tier: 2
Prerequisite: Toughness 40
Aptitudes: Toughness, Defence
The Acolyte's constitution allows him to rebound quickly from shock or injury. When undergoing medical treatment or healing from injuries, he always recovers damage as if Lightly Damaged, regardless of the level of damage he sustained.

Hatred

Tier: 2
Prerequisite: None
Specialisations: Chaos Space Marines, Daemons, Mutants, Psykers, Xenos (specific), others including groups from the sidebar **The Powers of Askellon** on page 94.
Aptitudes: Weapon Skill, Social
A group, organisation, or race has wronged the character in the past, fuelling this animosity. When fighting opponents of that group in close combat, the Acolyte gains a +10 bonus to all Weapon Skill tests made against them. He also finds it difficult to back down from a fight with his hated foe, and must make a Challenging (+0) Willpower test to retreat or surrender when fighting them, unless suicidally outnumbered or outclassed.

Hip Shooting

Tier: 2
Prerequisites: Agility 40, Ballistic Skill 40
Aptitudes: Ballistic Skill, Finesse
The Acolyte's prowess with ranged weapons is such that he can still fire accurately without his eye behind the sights. As a Full Action, he can both move up to his Full Move rate and make a single attack with a ranged weapon. This attack can only be a single shot, and so cannot be a semi- or full-automatic ranged attack for example. Characters with the Two-Weapon Fighting talent can use this talent with Hip Shooting to make two single shots, if they are armed with a ranged weapon in each hand.

Independent Targeting

Tier: 2
Prerequisite: Ballistic Skill 40
Aptitudes: Ballistic Skill, Finesse
The Acolyte has developed his situational awareness to a point where he can fire in two directions within a split second. When firing two weapons as part of a single action (using the Two-Weapon Fighting talent, for example), the character does not need his targets to be within 10 metres of each other.

Inescapable Attack

Tier: 2
Prerequisites: Ballistic Skill 40 *or* Weapon Skill 40, Perception 35
Specialisations: Ranged, Melee
Aptitudes: Ballistic Skill *or* Weapon Skill, Finesse
The Acolyte can anticipate his opponent's reactions, and ensures his hits strike no matter how a foe tries to avoid them. This talent applies to Melee or Ranged attacks, depending on the Speciality chosen. After making a successful attack test of the appropriate type as part of an All Out Attack, Called Shot, Charge, Standard Attack, or Stun action, the character imposes a penalty on all evasion attempts (Dodge or Parry tests) made against this attack equal to 10 times the total degrees of success scored on the attack test.

Infused Knowledge

Tier: 3
Prerequisites: Intelligence 40, Lore (any one)
Aptitudes: Intelligence, Knowledge
The Acolyte has been imbued with a great breadth of lore, either through punishing noetic techniques or by arcane methods kept secret by the guardians of technology and learning. He counts as having all Common Lore and Scholastic Lore skills at rank 1 (Known)—basically, he knows something about everything. If he wishes to later improve his Lore skills, these advances must be bought using experience points (from rank 1) as normal. He also adds one degree of success to any successful Common or Scholastic Lore tests, due to his ingrained training.

Iron Jaw

Tier: 1
Prerequisite: Toughness 40
Aptitudes: Toughness, Defence
The Acolyte has taken blows from Orks and given back as good as he got, bouncing back from most strikes without ill effects. Whenever this character becomes Stunned, he may make a Challenging (+0) Toughness test as a Free Action to ignore the effects.

Jaded

Tier: 1
Prerequisite: Willpower 40
Aptitudes: Willpower, Defence
The Acolyte's wide travels have shown him both wonders and horrors beyond the ken of most. The galaxy has thrown its worst at him and he has yet to flinch. Mundane events, from death's horrific visage to xenos abominations, do not force him to gain Insanity points or make Fear tests. Daemons, Warp manifestations, and other unnatural effects still affect him normally.

Keen Intuition

Tier: 1
Prerequisite: Intelligence 35
Aptitudes: Perception, Social
The Acolyte has trained extensively to notice objects that seem out of place or hidden. This can bring the smallest irregularity to prominence, revealing the heresy festering beneath the surface. After failing an Awareness skill test, the character can re-roll the test with a –10 modifier.

Killing Strike

Tier: 2
Prerequisite: Weapon Skill 50
Aptitudes: Weapon Skill, Offence
With expert precision, the Acolyte can land blows which defy his opponent's ability to counter, slicing through defences as surely as a powerblade cuts flesh. At the beginning of each of his turns, the character may spend a Fate point to make his melee attacks unavoidable with the Dodge and Parry skills until the end of the round. Other means of avoiding or stopping attacks (such as displacer fields or alien protective devices) are unaffected.

Leap Up

Tier: 1
Prerequisite: Agility 30
Aptitudes: Agility, General
A combination of athletic ability and speed allows the Acolyte to spring to his feet in virtually any circumstance. He can stand up as a Free Action.

Lightning Attack

Tier: 3
Prerequisite: Swift Attack
Aptitudes: Weapon Skill, Finesse
The Acolyte's speed with weapons is unmatched, allowing him to launch flurries of attacks in melee. He can make the Lightning Attack action (see page 222).

Luminen Blast

Tier: 3
Prerequisites: Luminen Shock, Luminen Capacitors, Mechanicus Implants
Aptitudes: Ballistic Skill, Tech
The energies charged in the Acolyte's Luminen Capacitors can be expelled in a ranged attack. The character always counts as being equipped with a Pistol weapon with a 10m range. This can only be used in single shot mode, and deals 1d10 plus twice his Willpower bonus in Energy damage, with Pen 0 and the Shocking quality. The character always counts as having Weapon Training for this weapon and after making an attack with it, he must pass a Toughness test or suffer 1 level of Fatigue.

Luminen Shock

Tier: 2
Prerequisites: Luminen Capacitors, Mechanicus Implants
Aptitudes: Weapon Skill, Tech
The energies charged in the Acolyte's Luminen Capacitors can be expelled by touching a foe. The character always counts as being equipped with a melee weapon that inflicts 1d10 plus his WPB in Energy damage, with Pen 0 and the Shocking quality. He always counts as having Weapon Training for it and after making this attack, he must pass a Toughness test or suffer 1 level of Fatigue.

Maglev Transcendence

Tier: 2
Prerequisites: Maglev Coils, Mechanicus Implants
Aptitudes: Intelligence, Tech
The Acolyte has learned how to better use his implanted maglev coils, and can hover for a number of minutes equal to 1d10 plus twice his Toughness bonus. He can move his Run speed when making a Half Move action and suffers no damage from falling if the coils are active. Each use drains half the power stored in the coils (therefore he can use the coils twice before recharging them).



Marksman

Tier: 2
Prerequisite: Ballistic Skill 35
Aptitudes: Ballistic Skill, Finesse
The Acolyte's steady hand and eagle eye allow him to keep crosshairs steady on any target, regardless of range. Distance is no protection against the character's marksmanship, and he suffers no penalties for making Ballistic Skill tests at Long or Extreme range.

Mastery

Tier: 3
Prerequisite: Rank 4 in selected skill
Specialisations: Any skill
Aptitudes: Intelligence, Knowledge
The Acolyte has mastered a single skill. He can spend a Fate point to automatically pass a skill test with his chosen skill, provided the final modifier to his skill test is Challenging (+0) or better. He scores a number of degrees of success equal to the characteristic bonus of the skill's associated characteristic. This talent may be taken more than once, each time for a different skill.

Mechadendrite Use

Tier: 2
Prerequisite: Mechanicus Implants
Specialisations: Weapon, Utility
Aptitudes: Intelligence, Tech
The Acolyte is trained in the use of a particular kind of mechadendrite (see page 183) in much the same way as Weapon Training allows the use of weapons. Though there are many different types of mechadendrites, this talent divides them into two broad categories:

- **Weapon**: Mechadendrites of this type end in either ranged or close combat weapons, and have the supplemental power supplies and mechanical support necessary for combat.
- **Utility**: Including such varied types as Manipulator, Medicae, Utility, Optical, and countless others, these generally require less hardy mountings, but all function in a similar manner.

Mighty Shot

Tier: 3
Prerequisite: Ballistic Skill 40
Aptitudes: Ballistic Skill, Offence
The Acolyte knows the weak points in every type of armour and material, and has the skill to ensure that his shots land exactly where they can do the most damage. He adds half his Ballistic Skill bonus (rounded up) to damage he inflicts with ranged weapons.

Never Die

Tier: 3
Prerequisites: Willpower 50, Toughness 50
Aptitudes: Toughness, Defence
The Acolyte's will or devotion to the Emperor can sustain him when his mortal body fails. He may spend one Fate point to ignore the effects of injury (such as those from Critical damage), Fatigue, and Stunning for a single combat, so long as they would not kill him immediately. This talent does not prevent the damage, but allows him to temporarily ignore its effects for the duration of the combat. Once the encounter ends, the effects trigger as normal.

Nowhere to Hide

Tier: 1
Prerequisite: Perception 30
Aptitudes: Perception, Offence
The Acolyte's keen eye ensures he can spot soft points even in the most impregnable of protective cover. When he damages cover (see page 229), the character adds his degrees of success from the attack to the reduction of the cover's Armour value. If using a weapon that does not require a skill test, he adds 1 instead.

Peer

Tier: 1
Prerequisite: Fellowship 30
Specialisations: Any listed in the sidebar **The Powers of Askellon** (see page 126), others at GM's discretion
Aptitudes: Fellowship, Social
The Acolyte knows how to deal with a particular social group or organisation, or even xenos race. He gains a +10 bonus to all Fellowship and Influence tests when interacting with this chosen group, and at the GM's discretion can sometimes call upon them for favours. The GM and player may agree to award this talent when appropriate to the adventure or campaign, though the character must still pay the experience cost for the Talent as normal.

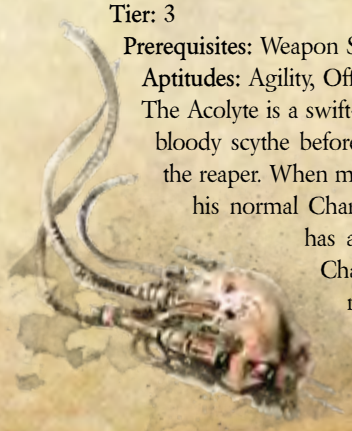
This talent can be awarded multiple times for the same group, in which case it should be listed as Peer (X), with X equalling the number of times the talent has been awarded. This can be used to represent groups who particularly like the character and may even be staunch allies. In game terms, the bonus to Fellowship tests increases to +10 times X. Additionally, when the character acquires this talent, he increases his Influence by 1.

Precision Killer

Tier: 2
Prerequisites: Ballistic Skill 40 *or* Weapon Skill 40
Specialisations: Ranged, Melee
Aptitudes: Ballistic Skill *or* Weapon Skill, Finesse
The Acolyte's eye, hand, and weapon act seamlessly together, placing his attacks exactly where he intends. When this talent is taken, the character selects the Specialisation that matches the Characteristic and Aptitude pair (Ballistic Skill or Weapon Skill) used in purchase. When making a Called Shot (see page 219) with a melee or ranged attack (depending on the Specialisation), he does not suffer the usual –20 penalty.

Preternatural Speed

Tier: 3
Prerequisites: Weapon Skill 40, Agility 50
Aptitudes: Agility, Offence
The Acolyte is a swift-moving bringer of death, a living, bloody scythe before whom foes die like corn before the reaper. When making a Charge action, he doubles his normal Charge movement (for instance, if he has an Agility bonus of 3 and thus a Charge movement of 9 metres, his movement is then doubled to 18 metres with this talent).



Prosanguine

Tier: 2
Prerequisites: Autosanguine Implants, Mechanicus Implants
Aptitudes: Toughness, Tech
Through the Acolyte's iron will, he is able to speed the function of his Autosanguinator. He must spend 10 minutes in meditation and make a Tech-Use test. If he succeeds, he removes 1d5 points of damage. If he rolls a 96 or higher, he loses the ability to use his Autosanguinator for one week.

Quick Draw

Tier: 1
Prerequisite: None
Aptitudes: Agility, Finesse
The Acolyte has practised so frequently with his weapons that they practically leap into his hands in response to a simple thought. As a Free Action, the character may draw and ready a Pistol or Basic weapon, or a one-handed Melee weapon.

Rapid Reload

Tier: 1
Prerequisite: None
Aptitudes: Agility, Fieldcraft
The firing ranges and weapon drill chambers are the Acolyte's constant abode. Hours of reloading countless magazines or power cells means that he can replace them without looking and without thinking, even in the middle of combat. He halves all reload times, rounding down. Thus, a Half Action reload becomes a Free Action, a Full Action reload becomes a Half Action, and so on.

Resistance

Tier: 1
Prerequisite: None
Specialisations: Cold, Fear, Heat, Poisons, Psychic Powers, Radiation, Vacuum, Other
Aptitudes: Toughness, Defence
The Acolyte's background, experience, training, exposure, or plain stubbornness has developed a resistance within him. Each time he selects this talent, choose one area of resistance. He gains a +10 bonus when making tests to resist effects of this type. The GM can require approval for certain choices, or justification based on the Acolyte's past.

Sound Constitution

Tier: 1
Prerequisites: None
Aptitudes: Toughness, General
The Acolyte gains an additional wound. He can purchase this talent additional times up to twice his Toughness bonus. When he gains this talent multiple times, note the number of times it has been taken after the talent, such as Sound Constitution (3).

Sprint

Tier: 3
Prerequisite: None
Aptitudes: Agility, Fieldcraft
The Acolyte moves at great speeds, and when taking a Full Move action can move an extra number of metres equal to his Agility bonus. Additionally, whenever he takes a Run action, he may move double the normal distance. If he did so in the previous round, however, he suffers 1 level of Fatigue.

Step Aside

Tier: 3
Prerequisites: Agility 40, Dodge *or* Parry
Aptitudes: Agility, Defence
Swaying his body out of the path of an attack, the Acolyte causes the shot to pass through thin air, or turns his blade mid-swing to deflect a blow. He can make an additional Evasion attempt (either a Dodge or a Parry) once per round. In effect, this gives him a second Reaction that can only be used for Dodge or Parry attempts, allowing two Dodges, two Parries, or a Dodge and a Parry in each turn. However, he can still only attempt a single Dodge or Parry against each individual attack.

Strong Minded

Tier: 2
Prerequisites: Resistance (Psychic Powers), Willpower 30
Aptitudes: Willpower, Defence
The Acolyte's mind acts as a fortress against psychic attacks. He can re-roll failed Willpower tests to resist any psychic powers that affect his mind. This talent does not affect psychic powers that have a physical effect, such as Smite or Assail.

Superior Chirurgeon

Tier: 3
Prerequisite: Rank 2 in the Medicae skill
Aptitudes: Intelligence, Fieldcraft
The Acolyte's advanced medical training enables him to knit flesh with deft mastery, essential for treating combat casualties. His exceptional education in use of the Narthecium, Med-Slate, and supplemental drugs give his patients an enormous advantage. He gains a +20 bonus on all Medicae skill tests. When providing first aid, he ignores the penalties for Heavily Damaged patients and only suffers a –10 penalty for those suffering Critical damage.

Swift Attack

Tier: 2
Prerequisites: Weapon Skill 30
Aptitudes: Weapon Skill, Finesse
The Acolyte's ability with weapons is legendary, allowing him to attack with amazing speed in melee. He can make the Swift Attack action (see page 225).

Takedown

Tier: 1
Prerequisite: None
Aptitudes: Weapon Skill, Offence
When making a Standard Attack or Charge action, the Acolyte can declare that he is attempting a takedown his target. He then rolls to hit (using his Weapon Skill) as normal, applying all the regular modifiers for the attack action. If the character hits and would have done at least 1 point of damage (after reduction for Armour and Toughness), no wounds are caused. Instead, the opponent must make a Challenging (+0) Toughness test or be Stunned for 1 Round and knocked Prone. In addition, when performing a Stun Action, the character does not suffer the normal –20 penalty to his Weapon Skill.

Target Selection

Tier: 3
Prerequisite: Ballistic Skill 50
Aptitudes: Ballistic Skill, Finesse
The Acolyte's dread gaze marks out his chosen victim, and not even the riotous confusion of close combat interferes. He can shoot into melee with no penalty. If he also makes an Aim action beforehand, he prevents any chance of hitting friendly targets as well.

Technical Knock

Tier: 1
Prerequisite: Intelligence 30
Aptitudes: Intelligence, Tech
Either through the ease of long practice, or the proper ritual to appease a weapon's machine spirit, the Acolyte can clear stoppages with a simple knock or solid smack of his hand to a weapon. Once per round, he may attempt to unjam a gun (see page 224) as a Half Action rather than a Full Action. He must touch the weapon to make use of this talent.

Thunder Charge

Tier: 3
Prerequisite: Strength 50
Aptitudes: Strength, Offence
The Acolyte charges into combat using his body as an additional weapon. Driven by his rage and momentum, the impact of such a charge can knock foes flying or bring them to their knees. When he makes a Charge action, he can barrel through enemies to get to his target. The character makes an Opposed Strength test against each foe in his way (those who his movement would take him past or through). Each foe that loses the Opposed test is knocked Prone. After resolving these Opposed tests, the character's Charge action resolves against his original target as normal.

True Grit

Tier: 3
Prerequisite: Toughness 40
Aptitudes: Toughness, Defence
The Acolyte is able to shrug off wounds that would fell lesser men. Whenever he suffers Critical damage (after reduction for Armour and Toughness), reduce the amount by his Toughness bonus (to a minimum of 1 damage).

Two-Weapon Master

Tier: 3
Prerequisites: Agility 45, Ambidextrous, Ballistic Skill 40 *or* Weapon Skill 40, Two-Weapon Wielder (Melee, Ranged)
Aptitudes: Finesse, Offence
The Acolyte has mastered the difficult ability of wielding a weapon in each hand, making him deadly both in personal and short-ranged attacks. When armed with two single-handed weapons (such as a pistol or sword in either hand), he ignores the –20 penalty for Two-Weapon Fighting (see page 228).

Two-Weapon Wielder

Tier: 2
Prerequisites: None
Specialisations: Melee, Ranged
Aptitudes: Weapon Skill *or* Ballistic Skill, Finesse
Intensive training allows the Acolyte to use a weapon in each hand when needed. When armed with two one-handed weapons (ether melee or ranged weapons), after making a Half Action attack (this can be a Single Attack, a Swift Attack, or a Lightning Attack with a melee weapon, or it can be a single shot, semi-auto burst, or full auto burst with a ranged weapon), he can make a single additional Half Action attack following the same restrictions with the other weapon as a Free Action. In effect, this allows him to attack twice in a round, once from each of his weapons. Both of these attacks count as being part of the same Half Action, and both tests made to attack with the weapons suffer a –20 penalty.

This talent can be taken twice, each time with a different specialisation (melee or ranged). If he possesses both talents, then he can fight with one melee and one ranged weapon. When this talent is taken with the melee focus it counts as having the Weapon Skill and Finesse aptitudes, and when it is taken with the ranged focus it counts as having the Ballistic Skill and Finesse aptitudes.

Unarmed Specialist

Tier: 2
Prerequisites: Agility 35, Ambidextrous, Weapon Skill 35
Aptitudes: Strength, Offence
After extensive training, the Acolyte has made his body as dangerous as any Munitorum-issued weapon. He gains the Deadly Natural Weapon trait (see page 135), and counts as armed even when facing weapon-wielding opponents while barehanded. While fighting barehanded, he can also re-roll the damage he inflicts.

Warp Conduit

Tier: 2
Prerequisites: Psy rating, Strong Minded, Willpower 50
Aptitudes: Willpower, Psyker
The sheer power of the Acolyte's mind allows him to channel vast amounts of Warp energy when he chooses. When Pushing (see page 194), before rolling his Focus Power test the character may spend one Fate Point to add an additional 1d5 to the effective psy rating of the power. Channelling such vast amounts of power is dangerous, however, and so he adds +30 to rolls on **Table 6–2: Psychic Phenomena** when he makes as a result of this talent.

Warp Lock

Tier: 3
Prerequisites: Psy rating, Strong Minded, Willpower 50
Aptitudes: Willpower, Psyker
The Acolyte has learned to swiftly cut himself off from the Warp to protect himself from harm. Once per game session, he may ignore the Psychic Phenomena he has rolled (including the Perils of the Warp result on **Table 6–2: Psychic Phenomena**, see page 196), completely negating its effects. Such rapid dislocation from the Warp, though, is stressful and traumatic to his mind. He suffers 1d5 Energy damage to the Head location (not reduced by Armour or Toughness) as a result, and cannot make any Focus Power tests or sustain other psychic powers until the beginning of his next turn.

Warp Sense

Tier: 1
Prerequisites: Perception 30, Psy rating, Psyniscience
Aptitudes: Perception, Psyker
The Acolyte's senses have evolved to perceive the Warp in parallel with the physical world. The character can use the Psyniscience Skill as a Free Action instead of as a Half Action. He can also passively detect psychic effects and entities without the need to actively seek them out. Whenever the character could detect such a Warp signature or a creature, the GM can allow him to make a Psyniscience skill test to detect it, in the same way he could use Awareness to spot an ambush without knowing it is there.



Weapon-Tech

Tier: 1
Prerequisites: Intelligence 40, Tech Use +10
Aptitudes: Intelligence, Tech
The Acolyte calls upon the blessings of the Omnissiah, channelling his faith into his weapon and performing armament rituals to more readily smite his foes. Once per combat encounter, as a Free Action, this character may enhance any Melta, Plasma, Power, or Exotic weapon he is personally wielding. This increases the weapon's damage and penetration by an amount equal to the character's Intelligence bonus until the end of the round.

Weapon Training

Tier: 1
Prerequisite: None
Specialisations: Bolt, Chain, Flame, Heavy, Las, Launcher, Melta, Plasma, Power, Low-Tech, Shock, and Solid Projectile
Aptitudes: General, Finesse
The Acolyte can use all weapons with Class: Pistol, Basic, Melee, Throwing, and Vehicle within the group he has selected with this talent. When a character attempts to use a weapon he does not have the correct Weapon Training talent for, he suffers a –20 penalty to any relevant Weapon Skill or Ballistic Skill test.

The character can only use weapons with Class: Heavy without suffering the –20 penalty if he has both Weapon Training in the appropriate group and Weapon Training (Heavy). This talent can be taken more than once, each time with a different Specialisation. Note that a character without the Weapon Training (Low-Tech) talent operating a weapon that functions as a Low-Tech weapon in certain circumstances does not suffer this penalty, so long as he has the applicable Weapon Training talent for the weapon (Power for a power sword, for example).

Whirlwind of Death

Tier: 2
Prerequisite: Weapon Skill 40
Aptitudes: Weapon Skill, Finesse
When facing massed opponents in close quarters, the Acolyte becomes a streak of blows, moving, hacking, gutting, and beheading his enemies with ceaseless fury. As a Half Action, the character may make one Standard Attack action (see page 224) with a melee weapon against a foe, plus one additional Standard Attack action with the same weapon targeting each other foe also engaged in melee combat with the character beyond the first (to a maximum number of attacks up to his Weapon Skill bonus).

Traits

"Ye firesticks are impressively red, verily enough. But nay impressive enough to darkly venture the forestways."

—Elder Two-Claws, explaining the local wildlife to visitors

Life exists in many forms across the galaxy. The Imperium views all of these entities through the lens of the holy form of man; any outside this blessed norm are greeted with suspicion and hostility, especially if they dare claim sentience or superiority to Mankind. Many of these beings have integral abilities that are completely foreign to man, or even natural life as the Magi Biologis of the Adeptus Mechanicus classifies it. For the purposes of Dark Heresy, these abilities are quantified as traits.

While a person can learn an additional skill or talent through training and experience, traits cannot be learned. They are instead a consequence of one's existence. In some cases they might be an inherent feature of an improbable anatomy, the curse of foul mutation, a naturally occurring result of native evolution, or even the product of a Warp-tainted existence.

Acquiring Traits

Traits cannot be purchased through spending experience points and are primarily an aspect that NPCs possess. In some instances, a character may use a piece of equipment or undergo a bodily transformation—including a particularly grievous wound—that might grant the effects of a trait either temporarily or permanently. In rare cases, the GM might decide that an individual character has earned a trait and bless (or inflict) it upon him. Under either circumstance, there is no experience cost for this acquisition. Traits indicate a significant change for the character; they can substantially alter short-term motivations and even life goals.

Trait Descriptions

The rules for each trait can be found in the following descriptions. In some cases, a trait can have a variable level, or a special condition. In these instances, the trait has a "(X)" after its name, and the trait's description outlines how the variable X affects the talent.

Amorphous

Not every entity is constrained by a rigid skeleton; some organisms possess a malleable shape, or are made of a host of smaller beings, and can alter their forms as desired or due to changing environmental conditions. A creature with this trait may increase or decrease its Size trait value by 1 as a Free Action (though doing so does not change its movement values). A creature with this trait also has the Crawler trait.

Amphibious

The creature can breathe water as well as air and can stay underwater indefinitely without the need to surface. If this trait is taken by a creature with the ability to breathe another substance other than air (i.e., water, ammonia, carbon-dioxide, etc.) then it can breathe air as well as its native atmosphere.

Auto-stabilised

For exceptionally large creatures, even the most unstable of heavy weapons mean little compared to their huge limbs, gripping talons, or sheer bulk. These beings always count as braced when firing heavy weapons and therefore may fire a weapon on full or semi-automatic without taking the Brace action first, and not suffer any penalties to hit.

Baneful Presence (X)

The creature's very existence is anathema to nearby mortals, and permeates its surroundings with the taint of the unnatural. All characters suffer a –10 penalty to Willpower tests taken while within X metres of the creature.

Bestial

A creature with this trait is animalistic, tending to behave instinctively rather than rationally. No matter how high its Intelligence score is, it is still bestial. A creature with this trait never needs to make a Survival test whilst in its natural habitat. Unless starving or desperate, a Bestial creature must make a Challenging (+0) Willpower test when frightened, startled, or injured. If it fails, the creature flees.

Blind

Blind creatures automatically fail all tests based on vision, and automatically fail all Ballistic Skill tests. Such creatures take a –30 penalty to Weapon Skill tests and most other tests that ordinarily involve or are benefited by vision. Note that this trait indicates not only that the creature cannot see but that it also has no other senses which would provide the same benefit as eyes (such as Unnatural Senses). The Blind Fighting talent reduces the penalty to Weapon Skill tests as normal for Blind creatures, from –30 to –15.

Brutal Charge (X)

A creature with this trait is often massive and powerful, nearly unstoppable in combat. When Charging, the creature deals an extra (X) points of damage on each hit it inflicts that turn.

Burrower (X)

A creature with this trait can move through solid objects by burrowing through them. The number in parentheses (X) indicates its speed when burrowing. Such creatures can burrow through soil, rock, sand, and so on, though some (expressed in the creature entry) can even burrow through metal. When a creature burrows, it leaves behind a tunnel. Characters with a Size trait value lower than the burrower can enter these areas without impediment. At the end of each round after the burrower passes, roll 1d10; on a result of 5 or lower, the tunnel collapses behind the creature.

Crawler

Worms, serpents, and similar creatures crawl and slither along the surface rather than walk upright. The base move for a creature with this trait is half its normal movement rate (round up) as determined by its Agility bonus, but it does not take penalties for moving over difficult terrain.

Table 4–4: Traits

Trait	Description
Amorphous	Creature is a formless blob, and slow.
Amphibious	Creature can breathe underwater.
Auto-stabilised	Always counts as braced.
Baneful Presence	Creature inflicts Willpower penalty to nearby characters.
Bestial	Automatically passes Survival skill tests, test Willpower to avoid flight.
Blind	Cannot see.
Brutal Charge	Deals additional damage on a Charge.
Burrower	Move by digging.
Crawler	No penalties for moving over difficult terrain.
Daemonic	Bonus TB against normal weapons, immune to disease and poison.
Dark-sight	Can see in darkness.
Deadly Natural Weapons	Natural weapons are no longer primitive.
Fear	Forces others to make Fear tests to avoid Shock and Madness.
Flyer	Fly and enter any altitude.
From Beyond	Immune to Fear, Pinning, Insanity points, and mind-affecting powers.
Hoverer	Fly and enter the hover altitude.
Incorporeal	Insubstantial and weightless, cannot be affected by mundane weaponry.
Machine	Creature gains immunities and resistances.
Mechanicus Implants	Character has mechanical augmentations.
Mind Lock	If not properly controlled, character can become Stunned.
Multiple Arms	Creature gains extra attacks.
Natural Armour	Gain additional Armour points to all locations.
Natural Weapons	Unarmed attacks deal 1d10+SB damage.
Phase	Switch between incorporeal and corporeal as a Half Action.
Psyker	Creature has a psy rating of 1 or more.
Quadruped	Movement equals AB×2.
Regeneration	Test Toughness to remove 1 or more damage.
Sanctioned	Avoid Corruption from Psyker elite advance; start at psy rating 2.
Size	Determines creature size and benefits.
Sonar Sense	Perceive surroundings flawlessly within 30 metres.
Soul Bound	Bound to a particular group or creatures in exchange for certain benefits.
Stampede	Failed Willpower test causes creature to flee, trampling anything in its path.
Stuff of Nightmares	Become immune to most conditions that would harm normal creatures.
Sturdy	+20 bonus to resist grapple, Knock Down, and Takedown.
Touched by the Fates	NPC has Fate points.
Toxic	Gain poisonous attack.
Undying	The creature is immune to many environmental and natural dangers.
Unnatural Characteristic	Increases one characteristic bonus.
Unnatural Senses	Perceive surroundings by uncanny means.
Warp Instability	Creature must deal damage if damaged, or be cast back into the Warp.
Warp Weapons	Creature's attacks ignore armour.

Daemonic (X)

Daemonic creatures are denizens of the Warp, but can manifest in real space either through sheer strength of will, hunger, or occult rituals. Creatures with this trait increase their Toughness bonus against all damage by the number indicated in the parentheses (X), in the same manner as an Unnatural Characteristic (see page 139), and stack if the latter also increases Toughness. This increase is negated by damage inflicted from force weapons, psychic powers, holy attacks, or other creatures with this trait. Daemonic creatures also have the Undying trait, and gain benefits when using psychic powers as detailed in **Chapter VI: Psychic Powers**.

Dark-sight

Some species are sensitive to different wavelengths of light than man, and can detect sights otherwise invisible. A creature with this trait sees normally even in areas of total darkness, and never takes a penalty for fighting in areas of dim or no lighting.

Deadly Natural Weapons

This creature's natural attacks are powerful enough to crush plasteel or punch through armour. The creature gains all the benefits of the Natural Weapons trait (see page 137), except that its attacks no longer have the Primitive weapon quality.

Fear (X)

A creature with this trait has an unnerving appearance. Some prey upon humanity's visceral terrors, while others depend on the inherent corruptive power of the Warp. The Fear trait always has an associated rating (1–4) to reflect how awful the creature is to behold; this is indicated by the number in parentheses (X). The higher the Fear rating, the harder it is for others to resist going insane from the encounter, as shown on **Table 4–5: Fear Rating**. When a character encounters a creature with this trait, the character must make a Willpower test with a penalty based on the creature's Fear rating. If he succeeds, the character suffers no ill effects; if he fails, he must roll on **Table 8-11: Shock** (see page 287), adding +10 to the roll for every degree of failure on the test.

Flyer (X)

A creature with this trait has the natural ability to fly, whether with broad leathery wings, strange warp energies, or inflatable gas sacs. The number in parentheses (X) indicates its speed when flying. This number replaces the creature's Agility bonus for movement actions while airborne. For more details on flying, see page 249 of **Chapter VII: Combat**.



Table 4–5: Fear Rating

Fear Rating	Penalty
Disturbing (1)	+0
Frightening (2)	–10
Horrifying (3)	–20
Terrifying (4)	–30

From Beyond

Some creatures are free from the limitations of normal physiology, having emerged from the impossible realm of the Warp or perhaps using bodies forged from cold metal and circuitry. Their minds are beyond the petty frailties and precarious sanity of a mortal mind. Such a creature is immune to Fear, Pinning, Insanity points, and psychic powers used to cloud, control, or delude its mind.

Hoverer (X)

Creatures with this trait have a limited capability for flight, flying no higher than two metres. The number in parentheses (X) indicates its speed when hovering; this number replaces its Agility bonus for purposes of calculating Movement while airborne. For more details on flying, see page 249 of **Chapter VII: Combat**.

Incorporeal

This creature is insubstantial and weightless, able to pass through solid objects such as walls and weapons. Incorporeal creatures gain the Hoverer (6) trait and a +30 bonus on Stealth tests due to their ability to merge with objects and nearly silent movement.

An Incorporeal creature is also immune to normal weapons, which simply pass ineffectually through its body. Daemons, psychic powers, Warp creatures, other Incorporeal creatures, and opponents armed with force weapons can all injure an Incorporeal creature normally. An Incorporeal creature cannot usually affect the mortal world, and thus cannot damage normal opponents unless it has a suitable special ability or talent. Certain devices can keep these creatures at bay, though, most notably a Void Shield or a spaceship's Gellar Field, which acts as an impenetrable barrier to them.

Machine (X)

A creature with this trait is fashioned from inorganic materials and is generally more rigorous then fleshy beings. Machines do not breathe, are immune to vacuum, extremes of cold, and mind-influencing psychic effects. Machines have a certain number of Armour points (indicated by the number in parentheses). This armour stacks with worn armour, but not with the Natural Armour trait, and can damage from Fire (see page 243).

Mind Lock

Many flesh-constructs or mindless creatures are implanted with control mechanisms, complete with programmed behavioural instructions. This helps ensure the creature acts properly within its designed parameters, but also can lead to stalled actions when it faces circumstances for which it has no guidance. If faced with a situation outside of its programming and with no recognised master to issue orders, the creature must pass a Routine (+20) Intelligence test or be Stunned for 1 round. Due to its essentially mindless nature, at the GM's discretion it is immune to all Opposed Social tests.

Multiple Arms (X)

This creature has more than one pair of arms. The exact number of arms is indicated in parentheses (X), so a Genestealer with Multiple Arms (4) has four arms total. It gains a +10 bonus on Athletics tests involving climbing and swimming. In addition, for each full pair of arms it has (the Multiple Arms value divided by 2) it can make an additional attack as if wielding multiple melee weapons. In this case, the creature must either have natural weapons or actual melee weapons to wield for this to take effect. Note that a creature still requires the Two-Weapon Wielder (Melee or Ranged) talent to make multiple attacks in the same turn.

Natural Armour (X)

This creature has a naturally tough hide or an exoskeleton, affording it some protection against attacks. The number in parentheses (X) indicates how many Armour points the creature gains to all locations. Natural Armour stacks with worn armour, but not with the Machine trait.

Natural Weapons

This creature has sharp claws, teeth, spines or some other natural weapon with which it can tear apart its foes. It counts as being armed even when not wielding weapons, with attacks that deal 1d10 points of damage plus its Strength bonus. The creature can make attacks with its Natural Weapons using its Weapon Skill, though it cannot Parry with its natural weapons, nor can it be disarmed unless, of course, its limbs are hacked off. In general, creatures with Natural Weapons are immune to the Power Field quality, as it is assumed they have enough teeth, claws, or spines to ignore a few being removed. Natural weapons have the Primitive (7) weapon quality unless stated otherwise in the profile.

Phase

A creature with this trait can transform its body into an insubstantial state, passing ghost-like through solid objects or barriers of any sort. As a Half Action, the creature may gain or remove the Incorporeal trait, becoming insubstantial or solid.

Psyker

Whether due to unnatural influences, the study of forbidden lore, or simply sheer force of will, this individual is a psyker. Though this trait has no benefits on its own, it allows characters to purchase the Psyniscience skill and psychic powers. All psykers have a psy rating (or PR; see page 193) which is listed out for each NPC.

Trait: Mechanicus Implants

The character is a servant of the Machine-God, and has been entrusted with a suite of specialised implants:

Cranial Circuitry

Cranial circuitry is a series of linked processors, implants, and cortical circuits that enhances mental capacities. Most sit within a housing bolted onto the skull, whilst others nestle within the brain itself.

Cyber-mantle

The Cyber-mantle is a framework of metal, wires, and impulse transmitters bolted onto the spine and lower ribcage. As the initiate gains further cybernetics such as mechadendrites, the mantle acts as a sub-dermal anchorage point. Many in the Mechanicum often refer to it as "the true flesh."

Electro-graft

This small device is grafted into the nervous system, allowing the adept to better commune with the many holy mechanisms that are now part of his life. It comes in many forms, such as skull shunts, finger probes, or spine jacks, depending on the forge world.

Electoo Inductors

Electoo Inductors are palm-sized metal skin grafts that appear much like tattoos to the uninitiated. They are wired into the nervous system, where they derive power from the bio-electrical emanations of the flesh and the sacred mysteries of the Potentia Coil. With training, they can be used to emit or siphon power in many ways.

Potentia Coil

Cradled within the cyber-mantle is a power unit known as the Potentia Coil. This mass can store energy and produce various types of fields. Coils come in many types, from small crystal stack affairs to bulky electrical galvinators, and a trained user can manipulate the stored energy into a variety of attacks and unique effects.

Quadruped

Quadrupeds are much quicker over a distance than their bipedal counterparts, and their movement is double that normally indicated by their Agility bonus (see page 245). This trait is intended to cover creatures that travel on their hind legs and forepaws, rapidly crossing surface terrain or tall foliage. Creatures with more than four legs may gain this trait as well, increasing their movement as indicated above but adding an additional 2 (after doubling) to their final movement rate for each set of legs beyond the first two pairs (i.e., +2 for 6 legs, +4 for 8 legs, etc.).

Regeneration (X)

Physiological enhancements, mutations, xenos physiology, and even Warp-corruption can all result in organisms that heal from injury at an inconceivable pace. Each round, at the start of its turn, the creature can make a Toughness test to remove an amount of damage indicated in the parentheses after the trait.

Sanctioned

As part of the tithes every world owes the Imperium, each must collect all who show any sign of psychic abilities for the Black Ships to carry to Terra. There, the Adeptus Astra Telepathica conduct fearsome testing known as sanctioning for power levels, mental strength, and other factors that decide each psyker's fate. To survive is to have passed these tests, and gone on to serve the Emperor as a Sanctioned Psyker. If a Sanctioned character gains the Psyker elite advance, he does not gain the Corruption normally inflicted with that advance and starts at psy rating of 2 instead of 1.

Size (X)

Creatures come in one of ten different size categories, as shown on **Table 4–6: Size**. Size affects movement, how well the creature can hide and move undetected, and how easy or hard it is to strike in combat. When calculating movement, apply the size modifier first, and then other modifiers from other traits or talents (such as Quadruped). Note that a creature's movement cannot be reduced to less than 1.

Sonar Sense

A creature with this trait perceives its surroundings by emitting uniquely toned pulses, allowing the creature to locate the position of any solid object within 30 metres. Other creatures within this 30 metre range that succeed on a Difficult (–10) Awareness skill can detect the oddly-pitched sounds echoing around them.

Soul Bound

The soul of this creature is bound to a higher power or being, in return for a measure of protection. When this trait is first gained, the entity to which the soul is bound must be decided. Many Imperial psykers, especially Astropaths, are soul bound to the Emperor, for example, whereas Chaos Sorcerers may be bound to one of the Ruinous Powers. A soul bound psyker rolls an extra die when forced to roll on **Table 6–3: Perils of the Warp** (see page 197), then replaces either the ones die or the tens die with the extra die he rolled to determine the final result.

Upon becoming soul-bound, the psyker must choose one of the following effects: 3d10 Insanity points, the permanent loss of his sight, permanent loss of 1d10 points from one characteristic, or a random mutation. In addition, a soul bound character is permanently indebted to the entity, which undoubtedly entails all manner of other duties and consequences.

Stampede

Whenever a creature with this trait fails a Willpower test, it automatically moves in a straight line forwards as far as possible, overrunning anything in its path until the source of danger is escaped or crushed under hoof. Anyone in the way suffers a single hit from the creature's Natural Weapons (or 1d5+SB Impact damage if it does not have that trait). One stampeding creature automatically causes all other creatures with the same trait within sight to stampede as well. The stampede lasts until the source of danger is no longer visible or for 1d10 minutes, whichever occurs last.

Stuff of Nightmares

Some Warp entities are so terribly powerful that the willpower perpetuating their bodies in reality is almost impossible to break or disrupt. Such creatures count as having the Undying trait, and are completely immune to most environmental hazards, Blood Loss, and Stunning. They also ignore any Critical Effect other than one that would destroy them outright, unless it was caused by a psychic power, force weapon, or holy attack.

Table 4–6: Size

Size and Examples	Modifier to Hit	Stealth	Base Movement
Miniscule (1): Autoquill, Knife	–30	+30	AgB–3
Puny (2): Bolt pistol, Servo-skull	–20	+20	AgB–2
Scrawny (3): Gretchin, Human child	–10	+10	AgB–1
Average (4): Human, Eldar	+0	+0	AgB
Hulking (5): Ork Nob, Armoured Space Marine	+10	–10	AgB+1
Enormous (6): Sentinel Walker, Autocarriage	+20	–20	AgB+2
Massive (7): Chimera, Greater Daemon	+30	–30	AgB+3
Immense (8): Land Raider, Valkyrie Gunship	+40	–40	AgB+4
Monumental (9): Ork Squiggoth, Baneblade super-heavy tank	+50	–50	AgB+5
Titanic (10): Reaver Battle Titan, Ordinatus war machine	+60	–60	AgB+6

Sturdy

Sturdy creatures are hard to move, and thus gain a +20 bonus to tests made to resist Grappling and Knock Down actions, and uses of the Takedown talent.

Touched by the Fates (X)

Where the naive might see only luck, those who have glimpsed the true nature of the galaxy can see when powers outside this realm have made their favour known. The NPC has a number of Fate points shown in parentheses (X). It can use these Fate points in exactly the same way as Player Characters and can even burn a Fate point to survive death and destruction at the GM's discretion. The NPC's attacks also use the rules for Righteous Fury.

Toxic (X)

A creature with this trait has corrosive blood or other exotic defensive mechanisms that inflict harm when it is struck. A character that successfully deals damage to a Toxic creature in melee combat must make a Toughness test at the end of his turn with a penalty equal to 10 times the number in parentheses (X), or suffer 1d10 points of Energy damage not reduced by Armour or Toughness. For example, a creature with Toxic (4) would impose a –40 on Toughness tests. Some creatures carry additional effects with their toxins, or inflict more damage as indicated in their individual descriptions.

Undying

This creature has a strange and barely understood physiology. It cannot be harmed by diseases, poisons, or toxic effects. It also has no need to breathe, and thus can survive unaided in a vacuum.

Unnatural Characteristic (X)

One or more of the creature's characteristics is unnaturally enhanced. This is indicated by a number that is then added directly to the relevant Characteristic bonus. For example, a creature with a Strength of 41 normally has a Strength bonus of 4. If the creature had Unnatural Strength (3) then its Strength bonus increases to 7 (4+3). A creature can have this trait more than once, but each time must be applied to a new characteristic. Successful tests using a characteristic tied to this trait gain a number of bonus degrees of success equal to half the Unnatural Characteristic value.

Unnatural Senses (X)

The creature can perceive its surroundings using senses other than sight or hearing, such as special organs, fine hairs, or some other disturbing ability. This trait always includes a range in metres indicated by the number in parentheses (X).

Warp Instability

Most Warp-entities have a tenuous hold on reality, often maintained only by horror and bloodshed, and can be disrupted if sufficient harm can be done to their manifested forms. If a creature with this trait takes damage and does not deal any damage or Insanity points to another creature by the end of its next turn, it must make a Willpower test. The creature suffers 1 point of damage for failing, plus 1 additional point of damage for each degree of failure. If this would deal damage equal to (or in excess of) the creature's wounds, it is cast back into the Warp.

Warp Weapons

Creatures with this trait have weapons that are partially insubstantial, able to ignore such mundane things as armour or cover. Natural weapons and attacks made by a creature with this trait ignore physical armour, unless the armour is created from psychoactive materials or is somehow warded against the Warp. Force fields still work against these attacks normally.





Chapter V: Armoury

Many things define Inquisitors and those who serve them in the defence of Mankind, such as their indomitable will, strength of character, and faith in the Emperor. While the especially devout would insist nothing more is needed, it is rare to find an Acolyte who does not also carry an arsenal of weapons, equipment, protective wear, and other devices. Such additions can allow him to fight more effectively, survive hostile conditions, and conduct better investigations. The nightmarish worlds of the 41st Millennium and the dangerous voids between them are hostile settings, with even placid agri-worlds or civilised palaces filled with unexpected threats and heresies. An Acolyte unprepared for such hazards becomes yet another who falls in service, mourned and forgotten.

Each Acolyte must decide for himself what level and quantity of outfitting is sufficient. One might carry a simple but trusted blade that has served him well throughout his life and ended the lives of many others. Another could prefer to invest in a wide range of lethal devices, perhaps trading off true proficiency with any one of them for greater flexibility in battle. Some Acolytes favour only the most puissant of clothing and armour, seeking to intimidate foes with their visage alone. Others care little for appearance, and use the sharp crack of lasguns and tearing scream of chainswords to end unwanted conversations. So long as heresy is detected and eradicated, the Acolyte has chosen wisely and the Emperor is surely pleased.

Availability and Influence

"Ah, I haven't had anyone asking for one of those since… well, since the last time you were here. It's going to be bad again, isn't it?"

–Bonded Weaponsmith Septimo Mach,
before the Culling of Othim IV

There is no standard currency across the Imperium, and even in established sectors, few respect the coinage of some far-distant world. For most, this is no matter. Very few individuals travel between worlds in the 41st Millennium; the majority of humans spend their entire existence within a few kilometres of their birthplace, as they toil and sweat for the Imperium in the countless billions. Acolytes might gain hoards of precious coins on one world, only to find them worthless on the next. They must rely instead on other means to purchase goods, request aid, and offer material assistance.

In Dark Heresy, this is expressed through Influence, here representing tangibles including any accumulated local wealth, but also the intangibles of debts, favours, and reputation. This can sometimes vary from world to world, depending on previous visits or the company currently kept. An Inquisitor might establish credit on a world for his Acolytes to use in equipping themselves, or (for

greater covertness) they could be left to develop their own means. Despite their often excellent weapons and equipment, the nature of their duties means they are always seeking alternative gear to fit local settings, restocks of ammunition, repairs to damaged armour, and other essentials. It is through using their Influence that they garner the resources they need to accomplish their missions.

Acquiring Items

When a character wants to acquire an item or resource, he makes a Requisition test. This test represents the character using the various resources he has at his disposal, including local currencies or his fearsome reputation, to attempt to purchase, trade, or extort what he wants from his current location. It also takes into account the item's or resource's overall availability and quality.

Availability

Every item has an Availability modifier in its profile that represents how easy or difficult the item is to acquire on an average Imperial world. This modifier is applied to any Requisition test made to attempt to acquire the item. **Table 5–1: Availability Modifiers** lists out the Availability levels used in Dark Heresy, and the modifier each gives to the Requisition test needed to acquire the item. Note that these modifiers stack with any modifiers from craftsmanship levels or other factors that the GM decides to impose.

Craftsmanship

The overall quality of a device is expressed in terms of its craftsmanship. All equipment has a craftsmanship value, classified by Poor, Common, Good, or Best craftsmanship, with Common being the default unless otherwise indicated. This value expresses the care taken when the piece of equipment was created, but also covers how well it has been maintained. A device that might have been of Good craftsmanship when it was created could degrade to Poor after years of abuse and neglect.

Table 5–1: Availability Modifiers

Availability	Requisition Modifier
Ubiquitous (UB)	Automatic
Abundant (AB)	Easy (+30)
Plentiful (PL)	Routine (+20)
Common (CM)	Ordinary (+10)
Average (AV)	Challenging (+0)
Scarce (SC)	Difficult (–10)
Rare (RA)	Hard (–20)
Very Rare (VR)	Very Hard (–30)
Extremely Rare (ER)	Arduous (–40)
Near Unique (NU)	Punishing (–50)
Unique (UN)	Hellish (–60)/GM's discretion

A Dark Age of Technology

Technology is commonplace in the Imperium of the 41st Millennium, but it is mysterious and unfathomable. Most actual understanding has been lost over the ages, replaced with dogma, rote instruction, and myth. What little knowledge that remains from is the carefully guarded domain of the Adeptus Mechanicus, and has been for thousands of years. Acolytes may understand the rudiments of how their weapons and gear work, at least in principle, but more likely they know that if they mumble the correct words and make the proper motions and gestures (rubbing oil here, twisting that knob there) their equipment will work. Showing this respect for the machine spirit that dwells within a weapon is always wise, and only those who want their gun to fail in the midst of battle would ignore such observances.

Weapons and armour offer specific rules for their craftsmanship as outlined below. For other goods and services, their effectiveness and Availability are both modified by their craftsmanship. Because such goods are unlikely to have a frequent impact on game play, the precise effects are subject to the Game Master's judgement. As a general rule, a Poor item might fail at an inopportune time, and a Poor service could take longer to complete and fail to live up to the characters' expectations. In sharp contrast, Good or Best services are completed well within their expected deadlines and should include luxuries that exceed the characters' hopes. Similarly, a Good or Best craftsmanship item might offer unexpected features and prove reliable even under the most extreme circumstances.

Players must also consider craftsmanship when acquiring an item through Requisition (see page 142). The calculation for an item's Availability assumes that it is of Common craftsmanship. If the character is willing to settle for Poor craftsmanship or desires a higher quality item, the Requisition test must reflect this variation. Consult **Table 5–2: Craftsmanship, Requisition, and Repair** and add in the appropriate modifier. Availability of alternative craftsmanship products is always subject to the Game Master's discretion. It could be that in a particular setting, the only items available fall into a particular category or range of craftsmanship.

Table 5–2: Craftsmanship, Requisition, and Repair

Craftsmanship Level	Requisition and Repair Modifier
1 (Poor)	+10
2 (Common)	+0
3 (Good)	–20
4 (Best)	–30

Blood and Gold

The dominant unit of currency in the 41st Millennium is Mankind itself, for it is upon the labour and spilled blood of the teeming ranks of Humanity that the Imperium was founded and is maintained. When exchanges of resources and assets are inevitably required, these are often bartered, and invariably on a staggering scale. An agri-world might supply an entire season's agricultural output to a nearby forge world in exchange for the ongoing maintenance of its mega-harvesters, for example, and without it, that forge world would starve. While many worlds offer material goods as part of their Imperial tithe, almost all must also provide manpower levies to the Imperial Guard, and all worlds are required to deliver any captured psykers to the Black Ships.

Local currencies are used on the planetary level. The Blessed Remuneration of Service, or "gelt" as it is commonly called, is the dominant coin on Juno, but despite that world's status as the capital of the Askellon Sector, the currency has little value elsewhere. On Desoleum, Guild Scrip (or simply "scrip") is the standard currency when oath-cog adjustments are insufficient or impractical, or when dealing with offworlders without oath-bindings. Those on Thaur trade with bone chips believed to be the work of venerable carving-masters. These and other local currencies dominate within a home planet, but it is barter and favours, debts and obligations, that drive goods and services between the stars.

Those that serve an Inquisitor must be aware of such issues. So long as they serve their master well, though, they should have little need to trouble themselves with such petty concerns as personal wealth, when they might die any day. Few are paid for their services in currency, knowing that duty is its own reward and that Emperor provides.

Ranged Weapon Craftsmanship

Poor: Shoddy and dangerous to use, this weapon has the Unreliable quality. If the weapon already has this quality, then it jams on any failed hit roll.
Good: This weapon is constructed well and loses the Unreliable quality. If it does not have the Unreliable quality, it gains the Reliable quality. If it already has this quality, there is no further effect beyond the obvious fine workmanship of the weapon.
Best: As fine a piece of craftsmanship as can be found, this weapon gains all the benefits of Good craftsmanship, but also never jams or overheats.

Melee Weapon Craftsmanship

Poor: Lax craftsmanship or poorly balanced work means this weapon inflicts a –10 penalty to all Weapon Skill tests made with it.
Good: An eye towards balance and design means this weapon grants a +5 bonus to all Weapon Skill tests made with it.
Best: Superior materials and superb design means this weapon grants a +10 bonus to all Weapon Skill tests made with it, and increases the damage it deals by +1.

Armour Craftsmanship

Poor: Badly fitted, designed, or damaged, Poor armour is difficult to wear. Its Maximum Agility (see page 167) is lowered by 10.
Good: Well constructed and better fitting, this armour is easier to wear. The Maximum Agility for this armour is increased by 10.
Best: Finely wrought and perfectly fitted, Best armour is like donning a second skin. Its Maximum Agility is increased by 10 and the AP it provides to each covered location is increased by 1.

Damaged Items

Even the most finely wrought item is not immune to impairment, and it can become damaged. This might come from serious mistreatment, ongoing neglect, or specific effects from other items or even psychic powers. Continual use of a sniper rifle as a melee weapon, for example, could lead the GM to declare it is damaged. A damaged item cannot be used, and must be repaired (or replaced); if traded in, its damaged status imposes a –20 penalty on the subsequent Requisition test. Note that damage differs from actual weapon destruction, such as the result of a weapon's Power Field quality destroying another weapon. Destroyed items cannot be repaired.

Repairing Items

To repair a damaged item, the character makes a Tech-Use test and applies the repair modifier from **Table 5–2: Craftsmanship, Requisition, and Repair** on page 141 that corresponds with the craftsmanship level for the item. If the test succeeds, the item is repaired and can be used again as normal. If the test fails with four or more degrees of failure, the item is destroyed and no further repair attempts are possible.

The Requisition Test

To acquire an item or service, a character must make a Requisition test. To do so, the character makes a test and compare the result to his Influence characteristic. This test is modified by the Availability of the item being acquired, the status of the item being acquired, any items traded, as well as any modifiers decided by the GM due to location-specific conditions. If the character succeeds, he acquires the item or service. Acquired weapons come with two standard ammunition clips, plus one extra clip for every degree of success on the test beyond the first. Successful requisitions for ammo clips yield two clips, plus one extra clip for every degree of success beyond the first, while those for grenades, drugs, and other single-use items garner one item, plus one extra for every degree of success on the test beyond the first.

Each time a character makes a Requisition test to acquire an item with a negative Availability modifier, the group's Subtlety value is decreased by a number equal to the tens digit of that availability modifier. Thus, a Requisition test to acquire an item with the Scarce (–20) availability modifier decreases the group's Subtlety by 2, even if the attempt was unsuccessful. Other tests can impact Subtlety at the GM's discretion, such as in highly conspicuous settings or when dealing with infamous merchants. Each test should also take time to conduct, with the Acolyte relating what means he is using and where he is going. The GM can then apply a realistic time for the attempt to prevent the warband from spending undue time acquiring items during their investigations and adventures.

Location Modifiers

The worlds of the Imperium are infinitely varied, and what is available on a crowded hive world can be very different from what is available on a backwater feral world. Some items might be impossible to obtain on certain worlds or locations. Lasguns, for example, are commonly used across the Imperium, but an Acolyte might not be able to find a working las power cell on a remote feral world. The GM can apply modifiers to the Requisition test based on the economy and trade network of the current location, including native creeds and technological conditions. In cases where the character is not near any source from which he could acquire the item or service, the GM can even simply disallow the Requisition test.

Trading in Items

When attempting to obtain an item or service, any bargaining chip is helpful. When a character is making a Requisition test, he can offer up one item he has in his possession to trade in, making the test easier. The item selected to trade must have an availability lower than the item being requisitioned. For example, if the item being requisitioned has an availability of –20, the traded in item must have an availability of –30 or below.

When trading in an item this way, the character gets a bonus to his Requisition test equal to the difference between the two items' availabilities. For example, if the item being requisitioned has an availability of –10, and the item being traded in has an Availability of –30, the character gains a +20 bonus to his Requisition test.

If the Requisition test succeeds, the offered item is traded away, and lost. If the test fails, however, the item is not traded, and the character keeps it.

"The Emperor Provides..."

A player might decide that it is in his character's best interest to focus his skills so that he is better suited for acquiring equipment. In this way, one Acolyte could be the main negotiator for obtaining unusual items for the warband, or for bartering for any extra gear. A character who chooses to develop himself in this way would likely seek to advance his Commerce skill and Fellowship characteristic. Following this path, the warband improves its odds of having access to the most appropriate gear for its investigation, and might even acquire a few luxuries along the way.

Any time that a character seeks to obtain an item, he begins by identifying the person or group most likely to provide it. Once he has done so, he can engage in a Challenging (+0) Opposed Commerce test. For every degree of success on the test, the Acolyte receives a +10 bonus to his Requisition test to obtain an item. Three or more degrees of failure, however, imposes a –10 penalty on the test and could possibly impact the warband's Subtlety.



Weapons

"Your words are indeed persuasive, but I believe my bolter can be just as eloquent."

–Annaleen Boughkt, Desoleum Bondhound

There is no peace in the nightmare galaxy of the 41st Millennium, and on every world, in every sector, there is the constant sound of lasgun cracks, grenade explosions, and countless wounded crying for relief. Weapons are everywhere, ranging from wondrous archaeotech devices from the Dark Age of Technology, to crude bows made from ancestral bone and sinew. Even on highly civilised worlds, few would be without a hidden pistol or sheathed blade. For Imperial citizens, weapons are as much an essential part of normal life as breathing or faith in the immortal Emperor.

Weapons are divided into several groups covering a plethora of ranged weapons, dealing with everything from crossbows to plasma cannons, and melee weapons covering all manner of close combat weaponry. Unless they are of Poor craftsmanship, all weapons come with the appropriate holster or carrying strap as part of their cost.

All weapons have a profile that is presented using the following statistics, providing players and GMs with all the relevant information needed to use them:

Name: What the weapon is called.

Class: Describes the weapon class: Melee, Thrown, Pistol, Basic, Heavy, or Vehicle.

- **Melee:** These weapons can be used in close combat. When using a Melee weapon, the wielder adds his Strength bonus (SB) to the damage inflicted.
- **Thrown:** Propelled by muscle power alone, these weapons include knives, axes, spears, and the like. Unless they are also classed as Melee, they cannot be used in close combat (or if they are, they count as Improvised weapons). When using a Thrown weapon, the wielder adds his SB to the damage inflicted (with the exception of explosives such as grenades).
- **Pistol:** These weapons are fired one-handed and can be used in close combat. However, when a Pistol weapon is used in close combat, the firer gains no bonuses or penalties to hit for range or targeting equipment. Pistols with the Scatter quality fired in melee are considered to be firing at Point-Blank range, but do not gain a +30 bonus for being at Point-Blank range.
- **Basic:** Weapons of this class normally require two hands, but can be used one-handed with a –20 penalty to hit.
- **Heavy:** Such weapons always require two hands and must be braced in some way, usually either on a bipod or tripod, to be fired without penalty. Equally, bracing could be done using a windowsill or sandbag (or the firer's shoulder in the case of missile launchers). Firing a Heavy weapon without bracing incurs a –30 penalty to hit and prohibits Semi-Auto and Full Auto Burst actions.
- **Vehicle:** These weapons must be mounted either upon a vehicle or as part of a permanent emplacement, and are far too huge to be man-portable. Their complex ammunition feeds, massive scale, and powerful recoil require large support elements, and are therefore often mounted upon a turret.

Range: This number is used to determine how far the weapon can be accurately fired in metres. Weapons can also be fired at Short, Long, and Extreme ranges, as described in Combat Circumstances on page 229. Weapons cannot be fired at targets more than four times their range distance away.

RoF (Rate of Fire): This indicates whether the weapon can be fired either on Semi-Auto or Full Auto, and how many rounds or charges it expends when doing so. A weapon's RoF has three entries to indicate the weapon's firing modes. The first entry indicates whether the weapon can be fired singly (with an S). The second entry indicates whether a weapon can be fired semi-automatically; the number listed describes the number of shots fired when the weapon is used in this manner. Finally, the third entry describes whether the weapon can be fired on full automatic, and how many shots are fired when this happens. Any mode in which the weapon cannot be fired is indicated with a "–" mark.

Some weapons can be fired in more than one mode. If this is the case, each of its different rates of fire is listed in its profile. Characters must choose which mode they are firing their weapon in before making an attack.

Dam (Damage): The damage that a hit from the weapon deals, and the type of damage it inflicts for the purpose of Critical damage:

- **E (Energy):** Using electromagnetic energies, photon blasts, or even arcane power fields, these weapons burn and scar with horrible effect.
- **I (Impact):** Blunt force, brute explosions, and concussive strength mark these devices.
- **R (Rending):** Weapons of this type slice and cut with razor-sharp edges or use whirring chainteeth to lacerate flesh.
- **X (Explosive):** These items rely on devastating eruptions of energy or metal to blast apart targets.

Pen (Penetration): Penetration reflects how good the weapon is at cutting through armour. When a shot or blow hits a target, that hit ignores a number of Armour points on that Hit Location equal to the weapon's penetration value. If this ignores more Armour points than the Hit Location possesses, the hit ignores all Armour and the additional penetration has no effect. For example, if a weapon with a penetration of 3 hits a target with 5 Armour points, the target only counts as having 2 Armour points against any damage the hit causes. Note that penetration has no effect on force fields (see page 168), but it does affect cover.

Clip: How many rounds/charges the weapon holds when it is fully loaded. Should a weapon ever fire more shots than it has remaining ammunition in its loaded clip (for example, from a Full Auto Burst), the excess shots are disregarded.

Rld (Reload): How many actions the weapon takes to reload. This is generally Half (for a Half Action) or Full (for a Full Action). Some weapons can take a number of actions over several rounds (an Extended action). The number of rounds is given as a number, for example 2 Full means that reloading takes 2 Full rounds.

Special: Any special qualities the weapon might have, such as creating a blast when fired or needing to recharge between shots, are listed here.

Wt (Weight): This represents how much the weapon weighs. Unless stated otherwise, this is measured in kg (kilograms).

Availability: This identifies the standard difficulty for acquiring the item, and is used when an Acolyte makes a Requisition test (see page 142). Note that the GM can modify this as needed based on local conditions or other factors.

Weapon Special Qualities

Some weapons possess special qualities to represent such things as special damage or unusual effects. The following is a list of the most widely used weapon qualities:

Accurate

The weapon is crafted for precision attacks, with perfectly crafted las-lenses or finely honed barrels. This grants an additional bonus of +10 to the firer's Ballistic Skill when used with an Aim action, in addition to the normal bonus granted from Aiming. When a character fires a single shot from a single Basic weapon with the Accurate quality while benefitting from the Aim action, the attack inflicts an additional 1d10 damage for every two degrees of success beyond the first (to a maximum of an extra 2d10). These extra d10s cannot generate Righteous Fury.

Balanced

Carefully weighted, the weapon moves naturally with the user, making his parries more successful. Balanced weapons grant a +10 bonus to Weapon Skill tests made to Parry. Even if the wielder is using multiple Balanced weapons, he only gains the bonus once.

Blast (X)

Attacks from this weapon explode on impact, hurling debris and shrapnel in all directions. When working out a hit from a Blast weapon, anyone within the weapon's blast radius in metres, indicated by the number in parentheses, is also suffers a single hit from the weapon. Roll damage once and apply it to each character affected by the blast. A Blast weapon also scatters when the user fails his Ballistic Skill test when firing it (see page 230).

Concussive (X)

Concussive weapons strike with a powerful impact strong enough to temporarily knock a foe senseless. When a target is struck by a Concussive weapon, he must take a Toughness test with a penalty equal to 10 times the number in parentheses (X). For example, a weapon with Concussive (2) would impose a –20 on this Toughness test and Concussive (0) would cause a test with no penalty. If he fails, the target is Stunned for 1 round per degree of failure. If the attack also inflicted an amount of damage greater than the target's Strength bonus, the target is knocked Prone.

Corrosive

These weapons utilise highly caustic acids which cause damage to both the target and his equipment. If a target is struck by an attack from a Corrosive weapon, the Armour points of any armour worn by the target in that location are reduced by 1d10 points. If the Armour points of the armour are reduced below 0 or the target is not wearing any armour in that location, the excess amount of Armour point damage (or the whole amount if the target is wearing no armour in that location) is dealt to the target. This excess damage is not reduced by Toughness. A target's armour can be reduced multiple times by the effects of a Corrosive weapon, and the Armour point damage is cumulative. A suit of armour can be repaired with a successful Challenging (+0) Tech-Use test, and an Acolyte who possesses the Armour Monger talent can repair the armour while making use of that talent.

Crippling (X)

Designed for cruelty and viciousness, crippling devices are favourites amongst those who prize pain and suffering. When a target suffers at least one wound from this weapon, he is considered Crippled for the remainder of the encounter or until healed of all damage. If a Crippled character takes more than a Half Action on his turn, he suffers Rending damage equal to the number in parentheses (X) to the Hit Location that suffered the original damage. This damage is not reduced by Armour or Toughness.

Defensive

A Defensive weapon, such as a shield, is intended to be used to block attacks and is awkward when used to attack. A weapon with this quality grants a +15 bonus to tests made when used to Parry, but imposes a –10 penalty on tests to make attacks with it.

Felling (X)

Felling weapons make a mockery of even the most resilient enemies, cutting dense tissue and bone with ease. When calculating damage from Felling weapons, reduce the target's Unnatural Toughness bonus by the number in parentheses (X). Felling only reduces Unnatural Toughness, not the target's base Toughness bonus, and does not persist once the damage has been calculated.

Flame

Using materials such as promethium and incendiary powders, this weapon ignites with primordial fire. Whenever a target is struck by an attack with this quality (even if he suffers no damage), he must make an Agility test or be set on fire (see page 243).

If the target of the Flame attack is a vehicle, the pilot must make the appropriate Operate skill test with a bonus equal to the vehicle's Armour value on the facing hit by the Flame attack. If the pilot fails, the vehicle immediately catches fire (see the **On Fire!** sidebar on page 263).

Flexible

These are often made of linked metal, rope, or other non-rigid materials that deny defensive counters. They cannot be Parried, though they themselves can be used to Parry an opponent's weapon.

Force

A force weapon relies on the user's mind to unlock its true potential, suddenly turning a sword or staff into a device burning with eldritch energies able to reave tanks.

Force weapons count as Best craftsmanship Mono variants of the equivalent Low-Tech weapon. In the hands of a psyker, the weapon also deals bonus damage and gains bonus penetration equal to the psyker's base psy rating (so a psy rating 3 would grant +3 damage and +3 penetration), and the damage type changes to Energy. In addition, whenever a psyker damages an opponent, he may take a Focus Power action (Opposed with Willpower) as a Half Action. If he wins the test, then for every degree of success, the Force weapon's wielder deals an additional 1d10 Energy damage, ignoring Armour and Toughness bonus. Psykers always use their base psy rating when determining psychic strength for this test, and cannot generate Psychic Phenomena on this test. Force weapons cannot be destroyed by weapons with the Power Field quality.

Table 5–3: Hallucinogenic Effects

d10 Roll	Effect
1	Bugsbugsbugsbugs! The character drops to the floor, flailing and screaming as he tries to claw off imaginary insects devouring his skin and flesh. The character gains the Prone and Stunned conditions.
2	My hands...! The character believes his hands have turned into slimy tentacles, or perhaps the flesh has begun to strip off the bone in bloody lumps. Regardless of the particulars, the character drops everything he is carrying and spends the duration staring at his hands and screaming. The character is Stunned.
3	They're coming through the walls! The character sees gruesome aliens bursting through the walls/ceiling/floor/bushes and opens fire. The character must spend each turn firing at a random piece of terrain within his line of sight. Any creatures caught in the line of fire are subject to attacks as normal. Each round, choose a new target at random (use the Scatter Diagram on page 230) to determine which direction that is, with a "7" meaning he shoots the ground, and a "10" meaning he fires wildly into the air.
4	Nobody can see me! The character believes he is invisible and wanders aimlessly, making faces at those around him. He waddles about in random directions each round (use the Scatter Diagram on page 230), using a Full Action to move. The character retains his Reactions.
5	I can fly! The sky looks so big and inviting, the character flaps his arms trying to imitate a pterasquirrel. He might do nothing but jump up and down on the spot. If he is standing above ground level, he may throw himself off in a random direction, with the usual consequences for falling—appalling injury or death being the likely outcomes.
6	They've got it in for me...! The character is overcome with paranoia, believing even his own comrades are out to get him. On the character's turn, he must move to a position of cover, getting out of line of sight from any other characters. He remains hidden until the effect ends, moving to new cover as needed to stay as hidden as possible.
7	They got me! The character believes that the gas is toxic and collapses to the floor as if dead; he counts as being Helpless. Other characters who sees him "die" must pass a Challenging (+0) Intelligence test; should they fail then they also think the character is dead.
8	I'll take you all on! The character is filled with a burning rage and a desire for violence. The character becomes Frenzied (see page 127) for the duration of the effects, and must attack the closest opponent.
9	I'm only little! The character believes he has shrunk to half his normal size and everything else is big and frightening now. All other characters count as having the Fear (3) trait to the character.
10	The worms! The character desperately tries to remove a massive fanged worm he thinks is slowly winding its way up his leg. If holding a gun, he shoots himself with it or, if not, he hits himself in the leg with whatever melee weapon he is holding. If the character is currently holding no weapon, he draws a random weapon from those he carries and attacks himself with it. Randomly determine which leg the character believes to be trapped by the worm. The attack automatically inflicts a single hit with 1d5 degrees of success that deals damage normally.

Graviton

Graviton weapons alter the target's local gravity field, transforming protective armour into crushing force. When a weapon with the Graviton quality hits a target, it inflicts additional damage equal to the target's Armour points on the struck location. If the target is a vehicle or cover, it instead inflicts additional damage equal to the Armour points of the facing that the attack struck. Vehicles that suffer Critical damage from Graviton weapons always roll on the Motive Systems Critical Effects table, no matter what location was actually hit.

Hallucinogenic (X)

Where most weapons seek to harm the body, those with this quality seek to damage the mind with exotic chemicals and neurotoxic drugs. When a creature is struck by a weapon with the Hallucinogenic quality, it must make a Toughness test with a penalty equal to 10 times the number in parentheses (X) or suffer a temporary delusion and roll 1d10 on **Table 5–3: Hallucinogenic Effects**. Respirators and sealed armour provide a +20 bonus to this test. The effects last for 1 round, plus 1 additional round for every degree of failure.

Haywire (X)

A foul affront to the Omnissiah in the eyes of many Tech-Priests, devices with this quality seek to cripple machine spirits and make metal as weak as flesh. Everything within the field's radius, indicated by the number in parentheses, is affected; Haywire (3), for example, would affect an area with a three metre radius. Roll 1d10 on **Table 5–4: Haywire Field Effects** (adding any modifiers from the weapon) to determine the strength of the effect. As the field slowly dissipates, the strength lessens one step in severity each round until it becomes Insignificant (i.e., a result of Major Disruption would become Minor Disruption the following round and then cease to have an effect the round after that). Additional Haywire attacks in the same area do not stack but instead create a new effect that is either ignored if lower than the current effect or replaces the old one if higher.

Table 5–4: Haywire Field Effects

d10 Roll	Field Strength
1–2	**Insignificant:** Though some machine spirits are unsettled, there is no noticeable effect on nearby technology.
3–4	**Minor Disruption:** All actions utilising powered technology, including firing ranged weapons without the Primitive quality, Tech-Use tests, and any physical actions attempted while wearing power armour or employing cybernetics, suffer a –10 penalty. The base movement of anyone in power armour is reduced by 1.
5–6	**Major Disruption:** All actions utilising technology, including firing ranged weapons without the Primitive quality, Tech-Use tests, and any physical actions attempted while wearing power armour or employing cybernetics, suffer a –20 penalty. The base movement of anyone in power armour is reduced by 3. Melee weapons with technological components function as a Primitive weapon of the analogous type.
7–8	**Dead Zone:** Technology within the affected area completely ceases to function. Power armour becomes unpowered, reducing the wearer's move to 1. Characters with cybernetic replacements to any internal organ(s) suffer one level of Fatigue each round they remain in the Dead Zone. Melee weapons with technological components (i.e. power swords) function as a Low-Tech weapon of their type.
9–10	**Prolonged Dead Zone:** As Dead Zone, but lasting for 1d5 rounds before lessening to a Major Disruption (and then dissipating as normal).

Inaccurate

Poorly manufactured with often shoddy construction, inaccurate weapons are common in underhive gangs and heretical cults. A character gains no benefit from the Aim action when attacking with a weapon with this quality.

Indirect (X)

Many weapons are designed to be fired in high arcs at unseen foes or thrown from protective cover at charging enemies. Indirect weapons do not require line of sight to their target, but the attacker must still be aware of his intended target's location, either through last known position, use of a spotter, or other means.

When making any ranged attack action (Standard Attack, Semi-Auto Burst, or Full Auto Burst) with an Indirect weapon, the attack does not have to target a location in line of sight of the active player, but is made at a –10 penalty and requires a Full Action instead of the normal Half Action. The GM makes the final determination on whether the character is aware of his target's location, and can add penalties to this ranged attack based on how aware the character is of his target.

For each hit the ranged attack inflicts, roll once on the **Scatter Diagram** (see page 230). The hit instead strikes the ground at a location a number of metres away from the intended target, in the direction rolled on the Scatter Diagram, equal to 1d10 minus the firer's Ballistic Skill bonus (to a minimum of zero).

If the ranged attack fails, or if the Semi-Auto Burst or Full Auto Burst actions fail to achieve the maximum potential hits, the remaining missed hits—up to the maximum potential hits for the rate of fire used in the attack—are still fired, but miss their target. For each missed hit, roll once on the Scatter Diagram. The hit instead strikes the ground at a location Xd10 metres away from the intended target in the direction rolled on the Scatter Diagram, where X is equal to the number in parentheses (X).

Lance

Lance weapons focus devastating energy, piercing armour with ease. Weapons with this quality have a variable penetration value that is dependent on the accuracy of each shot. When a target is hit by a weapon with the Lance quality, increase the weapon's penetration value by its base value once for each degree of success the attacker achieves. For example, if a Lance weapon had a base penetration value of 5 and hit with three degrees of success (adding 3x5=15), the total penetration for the attack would be 20.

Maximal

Many energy weapons have multiple settings, allowing the user greater tactical flexibility in combat. As a Free Action, this weapon can be switched between two modes: Standard (which uses the normal weapon profile) and Maximal. When the weapon is fired on Maximal, it adds 10 metres to its range, 1d10 to its damage, and +2 to its penetration. If it has the Blast quality, then the value of this quality is increased by 2 (i.e., Blast [3] becomes Blast [5]). The weapon also uses three times the normal amount of ammunition per shot and gains the Recharge quality.

Melta

These weapons rely on intense heat to negate protective armour, turning even the thickest to steaming liquid. This weapon doubles its penetration when firing at Short range or closer.

Overheats

Through inefficient shielding, defective venting, or simply inherent design, the weapon often becomes overcome with the heat of its ammunition or firing methods. On an attack roll of 91 or higher, this weapon overheats. The wielder suffers Energy damage equal to the weapon's damage with a penetration of 0 to an arm location (the arm holding the weapon if the weapon was fired one-handed, or a random arm if the weapon was fired with two hands). The wielder may choose to avoid taking the damage by dropping the weapon as a Free Action. A weapon that overheats must spend the round afterwards cooling down, and cannot be fired again until the second round after overheating. A weapon with this quality does not jam, and any effect that would cause the weapon to jam instead causes the weapon to overheat.

Power Field

Power fields form a cloud of disruptive energy, allowing a weapon to strike with terrible force. When the character successfully uses this weapon to Parry an attack made with a weapon that lacks this quality, roll 1d100; on a result of 26 or higher, he destroys the attacker's weapon. Weapons with the Warp Weapon or Force quality, and Natural Weapons, are immune to this effect.

Primitive (X)

Crude and basic in design, these kinds of weapons, while still deadly, are less effective against modern armour. When rolling for damage with these weapons, any die result greater than the number in parentheses (X) counts as that number instead. For example, a weapon with Primitive (7) would count all damage rolls of 8, 9 or 10 as 7. These weapons can still generate Righteous Fury (see page 227) as normal, on a damage roll of 10.

Proven (X)

These weapons always inflict massive trauma. When rolling for damage with these weapons, any die result lower than the number in parentheses (X) counts as that number instead. Thus, a Proven (3) weapon would treat any die result of 1 or 2 as a 3 for the purposes of calculating damage.

Razor Sharp

Certain weapons or ammunition types have the ability to slice right through armour if they hit just right. If the wielder scores three or more degrees of success when attacking with this weapon, the weapon's penetration value is doubled when resolving any hits from that attack.

Recharge

Some weapons lack continuous power or ammunition supplies, and each strike drains capacitors or empties fuel reservoirs. When a weapon with this quality is used to make an attack, that weapon cannot be used to attack again until the end of the next round (in effect, it can only be used once every other round).

Weapon Noise

The discharge of bullets, bolts, and blasts of weapons is far from silent, and this can be an inconvenience to Acolytes who want to keep their operations as secretive as possible. How loud each weapon is, and how far that noise travels, can vary incredibly from situation to situation and place to place. **Table 5–5: Weapon Volume** offers some guidelines on the average distances certain common weapons can be heard from in situations free from other sounds. In all cases, however, the determination of how far the sound of a weapon travels is up to the Game Master.

Table 5–5: Weapon Volume

Weapon	Audible Distance
Impact of a throwing knife	10m
Silenced autopistol	50m
Warhammer smashing in a skull	100m
Revving of a chainsword	200m
Lasgun crack	500m
Autogun fire	1km
Bolter round detonation	2km
Earthshaker cannon impact	10km

Reliable

Using ancient and well-consecrated designs, reliable weapons bring glory to the Omnissiah with each attack. Reliable weapons only jam on an unmodified result of 100. Reliable weapons with the Spray quality, or which do not make hit rolls, never jam.

Sanctified

These weapons are blessed against the forces of Chaos. Any damage inflicted by a Sanctified weapon counts as Holy damage, which can have unique effects against some terrible Daemons and other denizens of the Warp.

Scatter

The standard ammunition of these weapons spreads out when fired, ripping apart targets at close range but inflicting considerably less harm from afar. When fired at Point Blank range, this weapon gains +10 to hit and deals +3 damage. When fired at Short range, it gains +10 to hit. At any longer ranges, it suffers –3 damage.

Shocking

Shocking weapons can incapacitate their opponents with a powerful surge of energy or other non-lethal means. A target that takes at least 1 point of damage from a Shocking weapon (after Armour and Toughness bonus) must make a Challenging (+0) Toughness test. If he fails, he suffers 1 level of Fatigue and is Stunned for a number of rounds equal to half of his degrees of failure (rounding up).

Smoke (X)

Rather than inflicting damage, these weapons throw up dense clouds to create cover. When a hit is scored from a weapon with this quality, it creates a smokescreen at the point of impact with a radius in metres equal to the number in parentheses (X). This screen lasts for 1d10+10 rounds, or a shorter time in adverse weather conditions (see the effects of smoke on page 229).



A Galaxy of Guns

As large as Askellon is, it is merely only one of countless of other sectors in the Imperium encompassing billions of worlds and countless forges and factories, all churning out weapons and armour in innumerable models and patterns. The items described in this chapter represent the most common designs, which can have differing names on differing worlds. As such, players are encouraged to create unique names and backgrounds for their guns, armour, and other gear as they would for their own characters; owning a Katerina-pattern Widowmaker is of course much more rewarding than generic stub revolver.

Snare (X)

These ensnaring devices use masses of fibrous webbing, adhesive fluids, and other entangling materials to bring an enemy down. When a target is struck by a weapon with this quality, it must make an Agility test with a penalty equal ten times the number in parentheses (X) or be Immobilised. For example, a weapon with Snare (1) would impose a –10 penalty on this test. An Immobilised target can attempt no actions other than trying to escape the bonds. As a Full Action, he can make a Challenging (+0) Strength or Agility test, with a penalty equal to ten times the number in parentheses (X). If he succeeds, he bursts free or wriggles out. The target is considered Helpless (see page 229) until he escapes.

Spray

Spray weapons use large area-effect shots to strike more foes, sacrificing range for wider coverage. Unlike other weapons,they have just one range and, when fired, hit all those in their area of effect. The wielder does not need to test Ballistic Skill; all creatures in the weapon's path (a cone-shaped area extending in a 30° arc from the firer out to the weapon's range) must make a Challenging (+0) Agility test or suffer one hit from the weapon. If the wielder does not possess the appropriate Weapon Training talent, targets gain a +20 bonus on the test; this rises to +30 if the weapon is Heavy and the wielder is not braced. Cover does not protect from Spray attacks unless it completely conceals a target. Because there is no attack roll, they are always considered to strike the Body location. They jam if the firer rolls a 9 on any damage dice (before any modifiers are applied). Due to the inaccurate nature of their design, they cannot be used to make Called Shot actions.

Storm

Firing with a hail of shots, these weapons strike so rapidly that enemies are filled with metal in an instant. This quality doubles the number of hits the weapon inflicts on the target and the amount of ammunition expended. For example, when firing a weapon with the Storm quality in fully automatic mode, each degree of success yields two additional hits (up to the weapon's firing rate, as normal).

Tearing

These weapons call on spinning chainblades, serrated claws, burrowing projectiles, and other vicious means to rip apart targets. These weapons roll one extra die for damage, and the lowest result is discarded.

Toxic (X)

Filled with malignant chemicals and fast acting poisons, toxic weapons bring down enemies through virulence and sickness. At the end of his turn, if a character has suffered damage (after Armour and Toughness bonus) in the last round from a weapon with this quality, he must make a Toughness test with a penalty equal to 10 times the number in parentheses (X) or suffer 1d10 additional damage (of the same type as the first weapon with this quality to damage him that round). For example, a weapon with Toxic (4) imposes a –40 on the tests to resist its effects. Some weapons or creatures carry additional effects with their toxins or inflict more damage, as indicated in their individual descriptions.



Weapons and Talents

The weapons of Dark Heresy require a talent to be used effectively, as without sufficient training they can prove as dangerous to friend as to foe. Each weapon type (Las, Chain, Low-Tech, etc.) requires the appropriate Weapon Training talent for best use. For example, firing a Boltgun or any other Bolt Weapon would require Weapon Training (Bolt). Exotic Weapons are more specialised, and a user must have the distinct type of Exotic Weapon (Graviton, Needle, or Webber) to use that type of weapon; using a grav pistol would require Weapon Training (Graviton) for example.

There are always circumstances when a character needs to use a weapon for which he does not have the appropriate talent, though, and doing so imposes a –20 untrained penalty on the relevant test.

Twin-Linked

A Twin-Linked weapon represents two identical weapons connected together and set to fire at the same time, increasing the chances of scoring a hit by blasting more shots at the target. A weapon with this quality gains a +20 to hit when fired and uses twice as much ammunition. In addition, the weapon scores one additional hit if the attack roll succeeds by two or more degrees of success. When emptied, the weapon's reload time is doubled.

Unbalanced

Cumbersome, awkward to use, and often heavy, these are usually powerful offensively, but suffer in defence actions such as parrying. These weapons cannot be used to make Lighting Attack actions, and impose a –10 penalty when used to Parry.

Unreliable

A clear affront to the Omnissiah, Unreliable devices represent poorly designed, badly manufactured, or improperly consecrated weapons that are perhaps better than no weapon at all, but not by a great measure. An Unreliable weapon suffers a jam on a roll of 91 or higher, even if fired on Semi- or Full Auto.

Unwieldy

Huge and often top-heavy, Unwieldy weapons are too awkward to be used with finesse. They cannot be used to Parry or make Lightning Attack actions.

Vengeful (X)

These weapons seemingly embody the Emperor's wrath, and eagerly strike down any who would stand against His servants. When attacking with this weapon, the attacker triggers Righteous Fury (see page 227) on any damage die result with a value of X or higher (before any modifiers are applied).

Ranged Weapons

In the 41st Millennium, few would consider themselves properly (and safely) attired without some ranged weapon, from a concealed holdout stub pistol to a massive bolt gun or heavy flamer. Those who chose not to carry one often meet the same fate as the animals that ancient man preyed upon so many millennia ago.

Bolt Weapons

Fear acts to keep the Imperium of Man a rightfully dominant force across the galaxy, and few things are as fearsome as bolt weapons. They fire devastating, self-propelled shells, known as bolts, which explode violently on target penetration. Bolters are a horrific mix of advanced technology and deliberate brutality, and have helped the Imperium survive for over ten thousand years.

Bolt weapons are superb, if temperamental, devices requiring skilled maintenance using the correct rituals and blessings. Many are centuries old, passed down along family or warrior lines through the long years, and have accumulated as many legends as their users. Though primarily the signature weapon of the mighty Adeptus Astartes, other, more human servants of the Emperor also have been blessed to use them, though their versions are much smaller and less massive. Bolter ammunition is equally as rare and difficult to manufacture, and few have the means to obtain it. The standard round has a super-dense metallic core with a diamantine tip, but more specialised shells can be used to deal with even greater threats.

Bolt Pistol

Both a status symbol and puissant weapon, bolt pistols are rare in numbers but always feared. In the hands of an Imperial Guard Commissar, one can reverse a cowardly retreat; in the hands of an Inquisitor, it can stop a cult leader from summoning an unholy Daemon. Such is their power, both symbolic and physical, that many eagerly sacrifice all to possess one.



Boltgun

Boltguns, or bolters as they are often called, are the main weapon of the Space Marines, who carry versions so huge that few humans can easily lift one, let alone fire it. The lighter models others use to serve the Emperor are only slightly less destructive, but still powerful enough to destroy any who oppose His Will.



Heavy Bolter

This huge weapon is rarely used outside of military forces, but sometimes is all that stands against some of the terrors of the Ruinous Powers. The larger shells carry additional propellant and stronger explosive charges, making them deadly against armoured foes at long ranges.



Storm Bolter

Storm bolters combine the firing power of two boltguns into one compact weapon. They fire an unstoppable hail of metal that can tear apart groups of enemies in a single salvo, and can bring a furious charge to a dead halt in moments.



Bolter Combi-Weapons



Combi-weapons combine a bolter with a single other weapon to make one oversized device, allowing the user greater options in combat. Common versions use either a flamer, graviton gun, meltagun, or plasma gun as the secondary weapon, but this comes with a decreased firing capability for this secondary weapon.

A combi-weapon can fire its bolter as normal, but its secondary weapon has a clip size of 1, and so can only be fired once before needing a reload. This action reloads the bolter as well. Each combi-weapon has an Availability equal to one level less available than the Availability of the rarer of the two weapons, and weighs 7 kg plus half the weight of the secondary weapon.

Table 5–6: Ranged Weapons

Name	Class	Range	RoF	Dam	Pen	Clip	Rld	Special	Wt.	Availability
Bolt Weapons										
Bolt Pistol	Pistol	30m	S/2/–	1d10+5 X	4	8	Full	Tearing	3.5kg	Very Rare
Boltgun	Basic	100m	S/3/–	1d10+5 X	4	24	Full	Tearing	7kg	Very Rare
Heavy Bolter	Heavy	150m	–/–/6	1d10+8 X	5	60	Full	Tearing	40kg	Very Rare
Storm Bolter	Basic	90m	S/2/4	1d10+5 X	4	60	Full	Storm, Tearing	9kg	Extremely Rare
Flame Weapons										
Hand Flamer	Pistol	10m	S/–/–	1d10+4 E	2	2	2 Full	Flame, Spray	3.5kg	Rare
Flamer	Basic	20m	S/–/–	1d10+4 E	2	6	2 Full	Flame, Spray	6kg	Scarce
Heavy Flamer	Heavy	30m	S/–/–	1d10+5 E	4	10	2 Full	Flame, Spray	45kg	Rare
Las Weapons										
Laspistol	Pistol	30m	S/2/–	1d10+2 E	0	30	Half	Reliable	1.5kg	Common
Lasgun	Basic	100m	S/3/–	1d10+3 E	0	60	Full	Reliable	4kg	Common
Laslock	Basic	70m	S/–/	1d10+4 E	0	1	Half	Unreliable	4kg	Plentiful
Long Las	Basic	150m	S/–/–	1d10+3 E	1	40	Full	Accurate, Felling (4), Reliable	4.5kg	Scarce
Hot-shot Laspistol	Pistol	20m	S/2/–	1d10+4 E	7	40	2 Full	—	4kg	Rare
Hot-shot Lasgun	Basic	60m	S/3/–	1d10+4 E	7	30	2 Full	—	6kg	Rare
Launcher Weapons										
Grenade Launcher	Basic	60m	S/–/–	†	†	6	2 Full	†	12kg	Average
Missile Launcher	Heavy	300m	S/–/–	†	†	1	Full	†	35kg	Rare
Low-Tech Weapons										
Bolas	Thrown	10m	S/–/–	—	0	1	—	Inaccurate, Snare (1)	1.5kg	Average
Bow	Basic	30m	S/–/–	1d10 R	0	1	Half	Primitive (6), Reliable	2kg	Common
Crossbow	Basic	30m	S/–/–	1d10 R	0	1	2 Full	Primitive (7)	3kg	Common
Melta Weapons										
Inferno Pistol	Pistol	10m	S/–/–	2d10+10 E	12	3	Full	Melta	3kg	Near Unique
Meltagun	Basic	20m	S/–/–	2d10+10 E	12	5	Full	Melta	15kg	Very Rare

†*The damage, penetration, and special qualities of these weapons are dependent upon the grenade or missile used.*

Flame Weapons

As the name suggests, flame weapons shoot gouts of fire at their targets. They are common in many factions of the Ecclesiarchy, as they not only kill, but also purify with cleansing flame. Each blast spreads into an inferno of liquid fire that burns even without air. Targets find themselves hard-pressed to extinguish the flames, and most perish while still attempting to bat out the blaze.



Hand Flamer

Also known as flame pistols or burners, these small weapons are ideal for close-range fighting, where their very short range and poor accuracy are less important than their furious effect.

Flamer

A common weapon in many gangs and cults (who savour the smell of burning flesh), flamers relatively easy to construct and maintain. They do not rely on expert marksmanship, and are ideal for attacking enemies in cover or confined spaces with indiscriminate conflagrations.

Heavy Flamer

Large and terrifying, heavy flamers use two muzzles to create huge blasts of fire that can incinerate entire swaths of enemies in a single shot. Only the strongest can carry the weapon as well as the massive backpack of fuel it requires, but its presence has turned the tide against many a heretical attack.

Table 5–6: Ranged Weapons (Continued)

Name	Class	Range	RoF	Dam	Pen	Clip	Rld	Special	Wt.	Availability
Plasma Weapons										
Plasma Pistol	Pistol	30m	S/2/–	1d10+6 E	6	10	3 Full	Maximal, Overheats	4kg	Very Rare
Plasma Gun	Basic	90m	S/2/–	1d10+7 E	6	40	5 Full	Maximal, Overheats	18kg	Very Rare
Solid Projectile Weapons										
Autopistol	Pistol	30m	S/–/6	1d10+2 I	0	18	Full	—	1.5kg	Average
Autogun	Basic	100m	S/3/10	1d10+3 I	0	30	Full	—	5kg	Average
Autocannon	Heavy	300m	S/3/–	3d10+8 I	6	24	2 Full	Reliable	40kg	Very Rare
Hand Cannon	Pistol	35m	S/–/–	1d10+4 I	2	5	2 Full	—	3kg	Scarce
Heavy Stubber	Heavy	100m	–/–/8	1d10+4 I	3	80	2 Full	—	30kg	Rare
Shotgun	Basic	30m	S/–/–	1d10+4 I	0	8	2 Full	Scatter	5kg	Average
Shotgun (Combat)	Basic	30m	S/3/–	1d10+4 I	0	18	Full	Scatter	6.5kg	Scarce
Sniper Rifle	Basic	200m	S/–/–	1d10+4 I	3	20	Full	Accurate, Reliable	5kg	Scarce
Stub Automatic	Pistol	30m	S/3/–	1d10+3 I	0	9	Full	—	1.5kg	Average
Stub Revolver	Pistol	30m	S/–/–	1d10+3 I	0	6	2 Full	Reliable	1.5kg	Plentiful
Exotic Weapons										
Grav Pistol	Pistol	15m	S/–/–	1d10+3 I	6	6	Full	Concussive (1), Graviton	3kg	Near Unique
Graviton Gun	Basic	30m	S/3/–	1d10+6 I	8	9	2 Full	Concussive (2), Graviton	6kg	Extremely Rare
Needle Pistol	Pistol	30m	S/–/–	1d10 R	0	6	Full	Accurate, Felling (1), Toxic (5)	1.5kg	Very Rare
Needle Rifle	Basic	180m	S/–/–	1d10 R	0	6	2 Full	Accurate, Felling (1), Toxic (5)	2kg	Very Rare
Web Pistol	Pistol	30m	S/–/–	—	0	1	Full	Snare (0)	3.5kg	Very Rare
Webber	Basic	50m	S/–/–	—	0	1	Full	Blast (5), Snare (1)	8kg	Rare

Las Weapons

Las weapons are perhaps as common across the Imperium as humanity itself. They are reliable, cheap to manufacture, and easy to maintain. Forges and factories across the galaxy generate untold billions each year to supply the massive armies of the Imperial Guard, with millions of the weapons making their way to criminal cartels, hive cults, and other sordid organisations as well. Each shot emits short, sharp pulses of laser energy from high-storage, fast-discharge capacitors, with a flash of light and a distinctive snap like the cracking of a whip.

Las Weapon Variable Setting: The standard las weapon has a variable setting option, allowing it to fire higher-powered bursts. It may be set to overcharge mode, dealing +1 damage, but using two shots worth of ammunition per shot fired. Further, the weapon may be set to overload mode, dealing +2 damage and gaining +2 penetration. In this case, it uses four shots of ammunition per shot fired, loses Reliable, and gains Unreliable.

Laspistol

Compact and reliable, laspistols are a favourite weapon for Imperial officers and gang leaders alike.



Lasgun

Lasguns are the basic weapon of Imperial Guard troopers, and as such are the most common las weapon in existence. They come in many varieties and patterns, and the continued survival of the Imperium owes much to their reliability, simplicity of design, and ease of use.



Laslock

On worlds where the standard power pack pattern has been lost, laslocks are commonly used in place of lasguns. Often found in the hands of desperate and poorly equipped insurgents or renegades, laslocks might be scratch-built or modifications of antique or damaged las rifles brought back into service by scav-workshops and heretek forges. A laslock's jury-rigged cells are temperamental things at best, but still potent, firing a more powerful discharge than that of a standard lasgun. Laslocks do not benefit from the Las Weapon Variable Setting rules.

Recharging Las Power Packs

One of the reasons las weapons are so prevalent is their power source. These dependable power packs allow for easy recharging, even in battlefield conditions, ensuring they almost never run out of ammunition for long. Players can make a Tech-Use test to successfully charge any power pack if there is a suitable power source available, such as a standardised replenishment cell or even a running Chimera. The power output of the source determines the time the pack takes to charge, and is ultimately up to the GM, but typically this takes several hours. Las packs can also be recharged through exposure to intense heat, even an open flame, though this takes much longer and degrades the pack permanently. The pack's clip size is reduced by half the first time this is done, and the weapon loses its Reliable quality (or gains the Unreliable quality if it was not already Reliable) when using this pack. Each time the pack is recharged in this manner, roll a d100. On a 70 or higher, it fails to recharge and becomes permanently useless.

Long Las

The long las is a specialised version of the basic lasgun designed for snipers. The longer barrel and precise collimator allows for accurate shots at much farther ranges, with little of the signature loud crack of other las weapons. The barrel length and lack of a rapid-firing mode, however, make it impractical for close range operations.



Hot-shot Laspistol & Lasgun

Specialised variants of the standard las weapon design, hot-shot weapons use stronger power packs that provide extra energy for each shot. High ranking military officers and elite forces such as the Militarum Tempestus use them frequently, but other Imperial agencies with sufficient means also favour the extra stopping power they provide against heretics and other threats.

Hot-shot weapons use a 10 kg backpack power source rather than a standard plug-in pack, even for the smaller hot-shot pistol. Larger packs mean greater power behind each shot, but make reloading more impractical, which is a trade-off most are willing to make. Hot-shot weapons can also be linked to larger backpacks for additional ammunition (see page 162). Hot-shot weapons do not benefit from the Las Weapon Variable Setting rules.

Launcher Weapons

Unlike most ranged weapons, launchers fire large rounds with highly explosive or penetrating payloads, often in tall arcs designed to offer greater range or effectiveness. Most can also fire a variety of rounds, making the weapon more tactically flexible than most.

Unless stated otherwise, launcher weapons come with one clip of frag rounds and one clip of krak rounds when acquired.

Grenade Launcher

This weapon uses compressed gas charges to fire grenades either directly or in indirect blasts against unseen foes, and is a common suppressive weapon in many battles.

The grenade launcher uses grenades as its ammo (see page 157). When the character reloads the grenade launcher, he can choose any six grenades of the same type to load into the grenade launcher. For the next attacks before reloading again, the damage, penetration, and special sections of the grenade launcher's profile use the stats from the profile for the chosen type of grenade.

Man-Portable Missile Launcher

Missile launchers fire heavy shells with great explosive power, and are well-suited to puncturing enemy armour or decimating assaulting cultists. The portable version is lighter than the regular military model, and is normally used shoulder-mounted or strongly braced against a wall or siding. Many users have someone nearby to aid in carrying the large shells and reloading between shots.



Low-Tech Ranged Weapons

The war-torn reaches of the 41st Millennium feature the entire range of weaponry, from the wondrous relics of the Dark Ages of Technology and advanced xenos devices, to primitive but effective armaments. Low-tech weapons can be just as deadly in the hands of skilled warriors. On many worlds, where technology has either collapsed or has yet to rise, many have been left bloody and dead from what they considered laughable hardware.

Bolas

An ancient weapon often seen with hive city bounty hunters and feral worlders alike, bolas have swirling weights at the ends of ropes or wires to entangle a target and often knock him to the ground. Once wrapped up, the foe is easily dispatched or further bound for transport and delivery.



Bow

Though bows come in a multitude of shapes and are made from a wide variety of materials, their basic form and function has changed little throughout the millennia. Even where the Mechanicum may be ascendant, a well-placed and silent arrow can be just as effective as a revered boltgun. A bow always requires both hands to use.

Crossbow

Crossbows are more compact than regular bows, but require additional mechanical fittings and usually have a shorter range.

Melta Weapons

Melta weapons use intense, short ranged blasts of heat to roast enemies of the Imperium. Most combine highly pressurised gases into an unstable sub-molecular thermal state, forming a focused beam that can turn even tank armour into molten slag. The water vapour in the air is seared away along the path of the shot, creating a distinctive hissing sound as the target melts away.

Inferno Pistol

These pistols are nearly impossible to manufacture any more, and almost all that exist are ancient relics of ages long ago. Possessing an inferno pistol is a sign of status, and few but the powerful and influential have the honour of owning one of these valuable devices.

Meltagun

Meltaguns are a favourite weapon for anti-tank specialists, who use their close-range destructive power to cut through armour plate and heavy bulkheads alike.



Plasma Weapons

Like much of advanced Imperial technology, plasma weapons represent an almost-lost art, making their manufacture and repair secrets known only to a few within the Adeptus Mechanicus. They use a hydrogen fuel suspended in a photonic state within durable flasks to create an unstable plasma reaction. This is fired along the barrel of the weapon, barely contained though magnetic constraints, and emerges as a ball of rapidly moving energy. Leaking plasma heats up the weapon with each shot, despite vents along the muzzle, requiring a pause between each firing for high-powered blasts, but often the heat grows so intense that the user is badly burned as well.

Plasma Pistol

Each of these small weapons contains the fury of a burning star. A hit can rip apart even heavily armoured enemies in a single incandescent blast, as if the Emperor had turned His gaze upon the foes.



Plasma Gun

Many plasma guns date back centuries or even millennia, and it is common for an ally to recover one rather than rescue its fallen user if there is no time for both. Despite the hazards a plasma gun can pose, those who carry one know it is a special honour few others can comprehend.



Solid Projectile Weapons

Though there are many esoteric energy-based weapons throughout the Imperium, in many places the more basic solid projectile weapons still dominate. Also known as slug-throwers, they rely on firing heavy masses of metal at high velocities, with deadly results. Easy to manufacture, they especially dominate the farther from advanced civilisations one ventures, such as in feral worlds or dark underhives. In many regions, citizens commonly carry some type of solid projectile weapon for their basic protection or livelihood.

Autocannon

Autocannons are heavy, powerful weapons that can devastate light vehicles and armoured foes alike with long ranged firepower. They are commonly mounted on tanks or crewed with infantry teams in Imperial armies, but can also be found in the unclean hands of insurrectionists and heretical forces.

Autogun

While not as commonplace as lasguns in military formations, many local forces rely on these sturdy and inexpensive weapons to defend their home world from threats within or without. They use common, low-calibre shells in standardised clips, and can be set to fire in single, semi-automatic, or full-automatic modes making them as versatile as they are simple to construct and supply.



Autopistol

Rapid firing and compact, many veteran Guardsmen carry an autopistol to supplement their regulation lasgun or other, less reliable weapons. They are also popular in gang hierarchies, and have settled many underhive leadership disputes in a hail of shells.



Hand Cannon

This stub gun variant concentrates on stopping power above all else. It is a huge and brutal weapon, and those who use it generally do not care about the state of their target after the shot. Hand cannons kick like a grox and, unless used with two hands or a Recoil Glove, impose a –10 penalty on Ballistic Skill tests.



Heavy Stubber

Heavy stubbers are common both on the battlefield and in the underhive, as many times there is little difference between the two locations. Relatively simple to produce and maintain, they use standard ammunition that can provide a hail of suppressive fire against infantry and light vehicles. Few have the muscles to fire one, especially with its infamous recoil, so most users rely on a bipod or other support. Like all stub weapons, heavy stubbers come in many forms and use many ammunition intakes, such as long belt feeds, huge clips, or wide drums.



Shotgun

Shotguns are relatively easy to produce, and their wide area of effect makes them appealing for those unskilled in ranged combat. Their short range and low shot velocity can be detrimental in larger conflicts, but these qualities make them the perfect weapons for shipboard combat. The standardised shell construction also allows them to take a wide variety of specialised ammunition.



Sniper Rifle

Less advanced than the elite needle rifles, sniper rifles are still very effective against most lightly armoured foes. When the gun is combined with a tripod brace and telescopic sight, a skilled marksman can easily turn the tides of a battle with a single shot.



Stub Automatic

Unlike the stub revolver, this pistol weapon can fire in rapid semi-automatic mode as well as single shots. Like the autopistol, it is easy to produce and maintain, but less accurate at longer ranges.

Stub Revolver

Revolvers use a rotary feed for fire single shots, with a small clip that must be manually replenished. Their open design makes it easy to load in custom rounds for special situations, and thus many bounty hunters and trackers find them useful backup weapons.



Exotic Ranged Weapons

Some weapons are so specialised or rare that even veteran warriors may never have seen one, let alone used one in battle. Others are alien and anathema to regular citizens of the Imperium, and only the desperate or radical would avail himself of such tainted devices. Exotic weapons are uncommon in the extreme, and often a foe is felled before becoming aware of the peril he faces.

Graviton Weapons

These exceedingly rare relics from the Dark Age of Technology are sacred devices jealously guarded by the Adeptus Mechanicus, who very rarely allow one outside of their armouries. Each fires arcane particles that disrupt the gravimetric fields surrounding the target, using the victim's own armoured mass against him. The terrible, crushing force of the unnatural energies reduces targets to ruptured hulls and crumpled armoured forms. Most common are graviton guns, though grav pistols and grav combi-weapons can also be found in elite warbands and Mechanicum tech-heresy capture units.



Needle Weapons

Needle weapons use a thin laser beam to fire crystalline slivers coated with virulent toxins, each shot as silent as it is lethal. They excel against unarmoured foes, but almost any protection can successfully blunt needle rounds. Those wounded often fall dead before they know they have been hit. Needle pistols make excellent backup weapons for infiltrating spies and thieves, while snipers prize the larger needle rifles which offer much greater range. Needle weapons count as having a built-in silencer (see page 164).



Webber Weapons

A webber weapon fires masses of jellied filaments, which expand in the air to form a web of sticky, near-unbreakable material. A favoured armament for Adeptus Arbites and bounty hunters alike, it can easily subdue violent mobs who would dare violate the Emperor's Law. Once entangled, few can escape from the constricting threads. The filaments becomes brittle and dissolve away after 1d5 hours.



Grenades and Explosives

The devices listed in this section are designed to explode violently, releasing shards of deadly metal, obscuring smoke, or other effects designed to smite enemies. Unless stated otherwise, grenades can be thrown or loaded into grenade launchers, while missile rounds can only be loaded into missile launchers.

Blind

Blind explosives detonate with a burst of dense smoke, IR bafflers, and broadband EM-spectrum chaff, all of which is designed to block detection through the cloud. Sensors and vision that would pierce normal smoke cannot see through haze thus created.

Choke

Designed primarily for combatting riots, a choke grenade's foul gases can reduce violent mobs to easily dispersed groups of coughing, sobbing wretches. In dense hives the gases often spread across hab areas, a reminder of the price for disobeying the Emperor's Laws. Characters within the radius of the choke gas must make a Toughness test each turn; failure inflicts one level of Fatigue. Four or more degrees of failure indicates serious harm, and the character suffers a 1d10 Toughness damage. The gas lasts for 2d5 rounds, or less in adverse weather conditions.

Fire Bomb

A relatively primitive explosive, the fire bomb is normally a breakable canister of flammable liquid with a fuse made from cloth or other material that the liquid can soak into. Once the fuse is set aflame, the bomb is hurled at the enemy; the canister breaks open on impact to release the now burning liquid. Fire bombs take a Half Action to ready before use, and cannot be loaded into launcher weapons.

Frag



Frag grenades explode into a cloud of deadly metal shards, and make excellent anti-personnel weapons. Many close-quarters combat specialists carry bandoliers of them to hurl into enemy positions as part of an assault.

Hallucinogen



These grenades use mind-altering drugs or even exotic energies to induce a variety of short-lived psychological states and delusions. They are often used for crowd control or areas where non-lethal results are necessary.

Haywire

Haywire grenades ignore the flesh and instead seek to injure machine spirits and technological devices through a shower of harmful electromagnetic radiation. Machines that suffer such indignities are often crippled, leaving their users helpless against attacking foes.

Krak



Designed more for armour penetration, these weapons focus their explosion into a concentrated effect that can punch holes in most tanks or bunker walls. Krak weapons gain the Vengeful (9) quality when used against vehicles.

Melta Bomb



Melta bombs are unwieldy but extremely powerful explosives that can rip apart even the thickest of tank hulls or bunker walls. Unlike other grenades, they adhere to their target then detonate with a shaped charge blast similar in effect to a melta weapon. Melta bombs cannot be used with launcher weapons and cannot be thrown.

Table 5–7: Grenades and Explosives

Name	Class	Range	RoF	Dam	Pen	Clip	Special	Wt.	Avl.
Grenades/Missiles									
Blind Grenade	Thrown	SBx3	S/–/–	—	0	1	Smoke (2)	0.5kg	Scarce
Choke Grenade	Thrown	SBx3	S/–/–	Special	0	1	Blast (3)	0.5kg	Scarce
Frag Grenade	Thrown	SBx3	S/–/–	2d10 X	0	1	Blast (3)	0.5kg	Common
Hallucinogen Grenade	Thrown	SBx3	S/–/–	—	0	1	Blast (6), Hallucinogenic (2)	0.5kg	Scarce
Haywire Grenade	Thrown	SBx3	S/–/–	—	0	1	Haywire (2)	0.5kg	Very Rare
Krak Grenade	Thrown	SBx3	S/–/–	2d10+4 X	6	1	Concussive (0)	0.5kg	Rare
Photon Flash Grenade	Thrown	SBx3	S/–/–	—	0	1	Blast (6)	0.5kg	Rare
Smoke Grenade	Thrown	SBx3	S/–/–	—	0	1	Smoke (4)	0.5kg	Common
Stun Grenade	Thrown	SBx3	S/–/–	—	0	1	Blast (3), Concussive (2)	0.5kg	Common
Web Grenade	Thrown	SBx3	S/–/–	—	0	1	Blast (3), Snare (2)	0.5kg	Rare
Frag Missile	—	—	—	2d10+2 X	2	—	Blast (5)	1kg	Average
Krak Missile	—	—	—	3d10+8 X	8	—	Concussive (3), Proven (2)	1kg	Scarce
Explosives									
Fire Bomb	Thrown	SBx3	S/–/–	1d10+2 E	0	1	Blast (2), Flame	0.5kg	Plentiful
Melta Bomb	—	—	—	6d10 E	12	1	Blast (2), Flame, Melta	12kg	Very Rare

Throwing Grenades

Throwing grenades requires no special training or talents, and is resolved using a Ballistic Skill test including any modifiers (such as range). On a miss, the thrown grenade lands instead in a random direction using the **Scatter Diagram** (see page 230).

Fumbling Grenades and Duds

Whenever a jam results from throwing a grenade or firing a grenade launcher or similar weapon (see the **Weapon Jams** sidebar on page 224), something unfortunate has happened. Roll 1d10; on any result other than 10, the explosive is simply a dud and nothing happens. On a 10, the explosive detonates immediately with the effect centred on the attacker. If the explosive was fired from a launcher, it detonates in the barrel, halving its normal effect as well as destroying the weapon.

Photon Flash

These grenades explode with an intensely brilliant light that overloads unprotected eyes with temporary blindness, and make for excellent non-lethal weapons. Any character within the blast radius of a photon flash grenade when it detonates must succeed on an Ordinary (+10) Agility test or be blinded for a number of rounds equal to his degrees of failure.



Smoke

A relatively simple and easy-to-construct device, smoke grenades release huge gouts of thick, black clouds that obscure vision. They do not block detection systems that use heat or other spectral bands outside of normal human eyesight, but are much more widely available and easier to construct.



Stun

Using a combination of loud noise and brilliant light, these grenades can incapacitate targets long enough for assault forces to apply non-lethal restraints, or to finish off the now-disabled foes with ease.

Web

Web grenades use the same ensnaring filament-filled gel as webber weapons, and can entangle masses of targets in moments when they detonate. Web filaments becomes brittle and dissolve away after 1d5 hours.

Melee Weapons

Despite the power of ranged armaments, there is always a demand for weapons designed to attack at arm's length. It might be a matter of honour, distrust of advanced mechanisms, local customs, or a preferred fighting style, but for many across the Imperium, travelling without a close combat weapon is unthinkable. This might vary from an ancient power sword that could date to the times of the Heresy, to a favoured bone knife used to foil a cultist's plot. No matter the form, a fine melee weapon in the hands of a skilled wielder can be as deadly as any bolter or plasma gun.

Unless stated otherwise, all melee weapons require one hand to use. Some require power for full effect, such as Power, Shock, and Chain weapons. If used in a deactivated mode, remove those weapon qualities that add to its lethality (Power, Shock, Tearing, etc.). It then functions as a Low-Tech version (power sword becomes a regular sword, shock maul becomes a truncheon, and so on) with appropriately lowered damage and penetration.

Chain Weapons

The roar of a chainsword is one of the signature sounds of the Imperium at war. Chain weapons have been found in human armies dating to the Great Crusades, when they helped unite Terra and then the galaxy under the rightful rule of the Emperor. They are brutal and horrific, using loops of rapidly moving metal teeth set along an edge to tear apart flesh and armour. Even with their engines stilled, the serrated chain can still be used to deadly effect.



Chainaxe

While the chainsword can be wielded with finesse, the chainaxe is a more simple and savage affair. The added leverage of the long haft allows its wide chain edge makes for a heavier strike with each blow, but with less control or precision. Most wield the chainaxe for just these reasons, and savour the terror and destruction they cause. This is a two-handed melee weapon.

Chainblade

Chainblades are one of the smallest chain weapons, little more than a knife with a tiny chain around its edge. The size is deceptive, for the extra tearing the chain provides makes it much more effective than any ordinary dagger.

Chainsword

The most common type of chain weapon, these heavy swords usually only have the tip and one edge exposed for the spinning, deadly chain teeth. Despite their barbarous nature, many elaborate fencing schools devoted to the artistic practice of the chainsword exist across the Imperium. For many users, however, any strike is enough to deal with most enemies, leaving behind only torn flesh and blood.



Table 5–8: Melee Weapons

Name	Class	Range	Dam	Pen	Special	Wt.	Availability
Chain Weapons							
Chainaxe†	Melee	—	1d10+4 R	2	Tearing	13kg	Scarce
Chainblade	Melee	—	1d10+1 R	1	Tearing	2kg	Scarce
Chainsword	Melee	—	1d10+2 R	2	Balanced, Tearing	6kg	Average
Eviscerator†	Melee	—	2d10 R	9	Razor Sharp, Tearing, Unwieldy	15kg	Very Rare
Force Weapons							
Force Sword	Melee	—	1d10+1 R	2	Balanced, Force	5kg	Near Unique
Force Staff†	Melee	—	1d10 I	2	Force	2kg	Extremely Rare
Low-Tech Weapons							
Great Weapon†	Melee	—	2d10 R	0	Unbalanced	7kg	Scarce
Hunting Lance	Melee	—	2d10+3 X	7	Concussive (3)	4kg	Scarce
Improvised	Melee	—	1d10–2 I	0	Primitive (7), Unbalanced	—	—
Knife	Melee/ Thrown	5m	1d5 R	0	—	1kg	Plentiful
Shield††	Melee	—	1d5 I	0	Defensive	3kg	Common
Spear†	Melee	—	1d10 R	0	Primitive (8)	3kg	Common
Staff†	Melee	—	1d10 I	0	Balanced, Primitive (7)	3kg	Plentiful
Sword	Melee	—	1d10 R	0	Balanced	3kg	Common
Truncheon	Melee	—	1d10 I	0	Primitive (7)	2kg	Plentiful
Warhammer†	Melee	—	1d10+3 I	1	Concussive (1), Primitive (8)	4.5kg	Scarce
Whip	Melee	3m	1d10 R	0	Flexible, Primitive (6)	2kg	Average
Power Weapons							
Omnissian Axe†	Melee	—	2d10+4 E	6	Power Field, Unbalanced	8kg	Extremely Rare
Power Fist	Melee	—	2d10††† E	9	Power Field, Unwieldy	13kg	Very Rare
Power Sword	Melee	—	1d10+5 E	5	Balanced, Power Field	3kg	Very Rare
Power Axe†	Melee	—	1d10+7 E	7	Power Field, Unbalanced	6kg	Very Rare
Power Maul (High)	Melee	—	1d10+5 E	4	Power Field, Shocking	3.5kg	Very Rare
Power Maul (Low)	Melee	—	1d10+1 E	2	Shocking		
Shock Weapons							
Shock Maul	Melee	—	1d10+3 I	0	Shocking	2.5kg	Scarce
Shock Whip	Melee	3m	1d10+1 I	0	Flexible, Shocking	3kg	Rare

† *Weapon is Two-Handed*

†† *Provides 2 AP to the Body and Arm wielding the shield, which stacks with existing armour.*

††† *Power Fists add the user's SB×2 to the damage.*

Eviscerator

One of the largest chain weapons, the eviscerator is a huge chainsword, often double-edged, that requires both hands to use. The priests of the Adeptus Ministorum often wield them with unrestrained fury against heretics, caring little if they themselves are injured in each wild swing.

If an attack made with an eviscerator triggers Righteous Fury (see page 227), the wielder adds +1 to the resulting roll on the appropriate Rending Critical Effects Table. This is a two-handed melee weapon.

Force Weapons

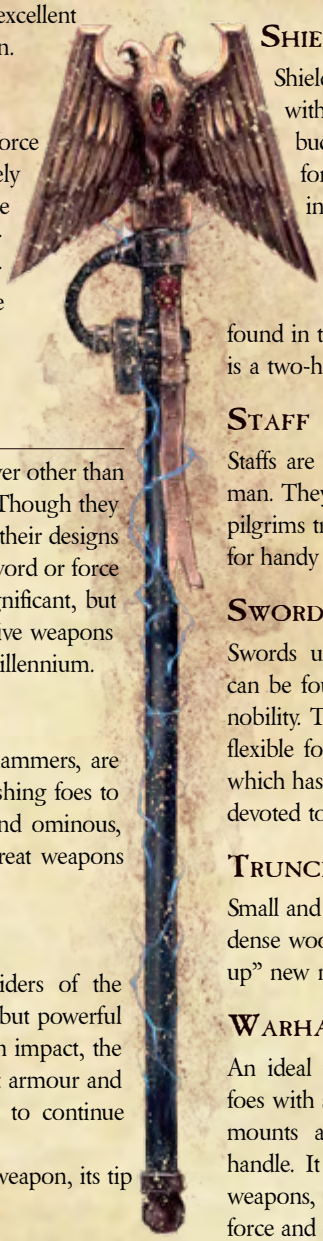
Force weapons have no special abilities unless a psyker wields them. In the hands of anyone else, a force weapon is simply another sword or staff, though still extraordinarily rare and valuable beyond compare. When a psyker channels his mental energies through the psychoreactive circuitry and arcane runes covering the weapon, however, it becomes tremendously powerful. His will and rage multiplied into a force that can rend armour and reality alike, a psyker with such a weapon is a warrior to be rightly feared.

Force Sword

A force sword is often mistaken for a highly ornate blade, though sometimes made of unusual metals or crystalline materials. Once infused with a psyker's Warp-based energies, it can cleave daemonic and mortal flesh with ease. Many psykers, who are often not known as skilled fighters, have become excellent swordsmen to take full advantage of the weapon.

Force Staff

Many psykers prefer these staffs above other force weapons, as most resemble nothing but ornately shaped lengths of exotic wood or metal. Some staffs mount an impressive Imperial Aquila or other signs of Emperor, whose psychic power lights the Astronomican and illuminates the galaxy. These are two-handed melee weapons.



Low-Tech Melee Weapons

Some melee weapons have no need for any power other than the muscles the Emperor provides the wielder. Though they may now be made of plasteel and adamantium, their designs are as old as Mankind. Compared to a power sword or force staff, a bare length of metal might appear insignificant, but many a corpse can testify that even such primitive weapons can be just as deadly as any other in the 41st Millennium.

Great Weapon

Great weapons, such as huge axes and giant hammers, are oversized and cumbersome but capable of smashing foes to bloody pulp with each blow. Highly visible and ominous, the mere sight of one can lead to violence. Great weapons are two-handed melee weapons.

Hunting Lance

A mainstay weapon amongst the Rough Riders of the Imperial Guard, hunting lances mount a small but powerful explosive charge at the end of a metal spear. On impact, the charge detonates with enough force to rip apart armour and barricades alike, allowing the mounted riders to continue their assault.

After a successful attack is made with this weapon, its tip is destroyed and it is treated as a staff.

Improvised

When proper weapons fail or run out of power, desperate fighters turn to anything nearby that looks suitable: broken table legs, hab duct-pipes, and even severed limbs or rifle butts. None of these would match even the dullest of swords, but when facing a horde of cultists, they are better than nothing at all.

Hitting someone with the butt of a Basic ranged weapon (such as a lasgun or boltgun) also counts as using an improvised weapon in combat.

Knife

So common that almost everyone in the Imperium carries one, knives can range from crudely sharpened metal daggers to elaborately inscribed blades of xenos crystal. Most are carefully weighted, making them useful throwing weapons as well.

Shield

Shields are a useful protective device, either in conjunction with armour or on their own. Sizes range from light bucklers to huge full-body plates. As they are not designed for offense, attacks made with shields suffer a –20 penalty instead of the normal penalty from the Defensive quality.

Spear

Common on feral and feudal worlds, a spear can be found in the hands of hunters and warriors across the galaxy. This is a two-handed melee weapon.

Staff

Staffs are long rods of wood or metal, often taller than a man. They are commonly used as walking sticks amongst pilgrims travelling in the steps of the saints, but also make for handy weapons. Staffs are two-handed melee weapons.



Sword

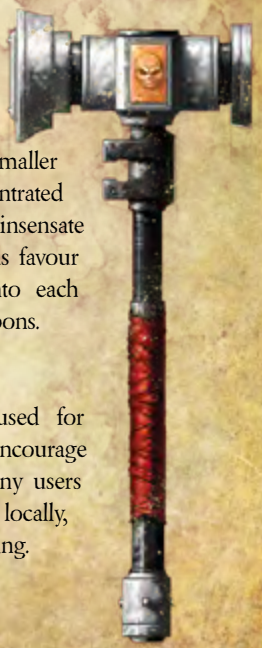
Swords use sharp, bladed edges to cut and stab, and can be found everywhere from underhive gangs to spire nobility. They come in endless styles—from stiff blades to flexible foils, with edges on one side or both—each of which has millennia of fighting techniques and schools devoted to proper form.

Truncheon

Small and easily concealable, these short and heavy sticks of dense wood or metal are often used by press gangs to "sign up" new naval crews with a swift blow to the back of the head.

Warhammer

An ideal weapon to pound armoured foes with strong impacts, a warhammer mounts a compact head on a long handle. It takes longer to swing than smaller weapons, but each hit strikes with concentrated force and can knock foes to the ground, insensate and helpless. Many of the Ordo Malleus favour such hammers, pouring their fury into each blow. These are two-handed melee weapons.



Whip

Whips have existed across history, used for horrific punishments or merely to encourage worker productivity. Easy to create, many users fashion their own using materials found locally, such as leather hides, vines, or stray wiring.

Power Weapons

These weapons generate a disruptive energy field along their edge or head, which can puncture even the thickest of armour with each explosive strike. Some appear as ornamented variants of base metal, only revealing their true nature when activated and crackles of lightning dance across the surface. They still function as dangerous weapons even when disabled or their power source is exhausted, or if the wielder prefers a more inconspicuous approach in combat.

Omnissian Axe

Granted to suitably-devoted followers of the Omnissiah, this weapon has a long staff-like body tipped with half of the circular Adeptus Mechanicus skull and cog icon. The symbol forms a blade, and is sheathed in a power field. Covered with inscribed circuitry designs indicating its sacred nature, many a foe has realised far too late that what appeared to be a religious walking staff was really a deadly weapon. An Omnissian axe also functions as a combi-tool and is a two-handed melee weapon.

Power Fist



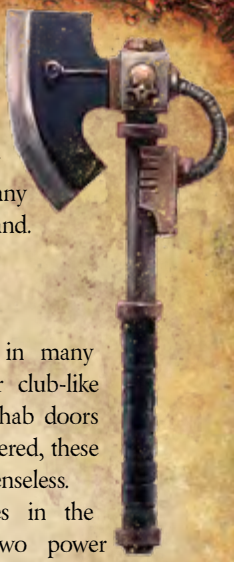
One of the most devastating melee weapons in the 41st Millennium, a power fist encloses the user's own hand with a huge mechanical glove complete with articulated fingers. The entire device is sheathed in a power field generated from a source mounted on a backpack or contained within heavy armour, allowing the weapon to crush tank hulls and tear apart barricades. Many are relics dating back centuries, with each user's accomplishments and lineage carefully enscrolled upon the outer surface.

Power Sword



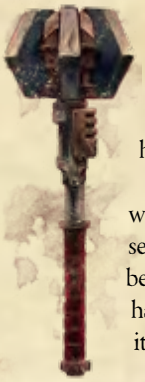
Power swords are a sign of prestige within the Imperium, and many officials without skill wear one in public simply to demonstrate stature. Some of these weapons are handed down as heirlooms, carrying the family name across generations from battle to battle. Power swords come in many styles, allowing for a wide variety of fighting disciplines depending on the blade and its user.

Power Axe



A common weapon amongst the followers of the Machine God, a power axe combines the heavy striking power of an axe with an energy field. While less artful than a power sword, many prefer its devastating attack that few can withstand. A power axe is a two-handed melee weapon.

Power Maul



Power mauls are elite weapons in many fighting formations, where their club-like form can blow apart reinforced hab doors or crack open armour. Even unpowered, these heavy devices can knock a heretic senseless.

This weapon has two entries in the weapons table, representing its two power settings: high and low. Switching the power maul between its two settings is a Free Action. This is a one-handed melee weapon, but when used with two hands it gains the Concussive (0) quality.

Shock Weapons

As the name suggests, shock weapons use violent electrical discharges to add additional power to each strike. Most are designed to harm rather than kill, leaving painful burns rather than corpses. They are ideal for encouraging productivity in hive factories, and quelling riots when workers rebel against their rightful lot in the Imperium.

Shock Maul



The signature armament of the Adeptus Arbites, shock mauls come in many designs, from elegant truncheons to heavy, brutal clubs that would injure even without the electrical discharge. They are primarily non-lethal, though enough blows can kill a heretic as surely as a battlefield chainsword.

Shock Whip

This weapon is common wherever there are workers or slaves requiring additional encouragement to improve their efforts. Though not designed for combat, the extra reach it offers can mean the difference that halts a dark ritual or xenos incursion.



Weapon Modifications

Even with the untold billions that exist, each weapon becomes as unique as its owner in time. Some wielders might specifically acquire a specially modified weapon, or customise their own to better match their fighting style. Such changes can alter its precision, the damage it inflicts, and other factors to make it and its user even more valued servants of the Emperor.

The descriptions below list which weapons are eligible, as well as how many modifications can be applied. Modifications can be made when first acquiring a weapon, or later a character (or an ally) can try to apply them himself (see the **Applying Personal Modifications** sidebar on this page). A weapon can have a total of four modifications, only one of which can be a sight. Note that the GM has final say over which modifications can be applied; a sniper rifle, for example, would be too unwieldy for a pistol grip.

Auxiliary Grenade Launcher

A small, single-shot version of the regular grenade launcher is fitted onto another ranged weapon such as a lasgun, allowing the user to fire a single grenade instead of firing as normal, and adding 2.5 kg to the weapon's weight. A character using a weapon with an auxiliary grenade launcher can choose to either fire the launcher or the weapon it is attached to in his turn, but not both at once. It has a range of 45 metres with damage and penetration as per the loaded grenade, and can be fired Indirectly. The device however is too cumbersome to be reloaded during combat; each new acquisition for the weapon reloads the launcher with one fresh round but does not require the modification to be reapplied.
Upgrades: Any Las, Solid Projectile, or Bolt weapons of the Basic class can take this upgrade.

Backpack Ammo Supply

The weapon is fed from a backpack supply, which flows ammunition along fuel lines, power cables, or linked shells to the weapon. Though the user can now fire much longer, its more cumbersome form means reloading must wait until the combat is concluded. This increases the clip size of the weapon to five times its current clip size, but it cannot be reloaded in combat. To reload the weapon, the character must have the necessary amount of ammunition and spend five minutes reloading the backpack. If the weapon jams, it only loses one clip's worth of ammunition and does not need to be reloaded.
Upgrades: Any Bolt, Flame, Las, Melta, Plasma, and Solid Projectile weapon.

Compact

This upgrade is ideal in stealth missions, when concealing a weapon is more important than its lethality. This halves the weight of the weapon, but also halves its clip size and range as well as reducing the inflicted damage by 1. Anyone attempting to find a concealed weapon with the Compact upgrade suffers a –20 penalty to any related Skill test (e.g., Awareness, Scrutiny). If this upgrade is forcibly removed the weapon remains smaller, but its range and clip size are reduced by half again, and its damage is reduced by 2.
Upgrades: Any Pistol or any Las, Solid Projectile, Flame, Bolt, or Plasma weapon of the Basic class.

Applying Personal Modifications

Some characters may wish to apply their weapon modifications personally. If a character decides to do this, he gains a +30 bonus to the modification's Availability when making the requisition test to acquire it. If he succeeds the test, the modification is not applied to his weapon but instead, he receives all of the parts necessary to apply the modification himself.

Once a character has the parts for a weapon modification, he can use the Trade (Armourer) skill to apply that modification to the desired weapon. This test receives a modifier equal to the Availability of the customisation being applied. If the test succeeds, the modification is successfully applied. If the test fails, the modification is not applied, and the parts necessary to apply the modification are lost in the process. Characters who suffer two or more degrees of failure damage their weapon, and it becomes Unreliable. If the weapon was previously Reliable, it instead loses that quality.

Removing and Re-Using Modifications

A character can also recover the parts necessary to apply a modification by removing that modification from a different weapon. To do this, the character makes a Tech-Use test with a modifier equal to the Availability of the customisation being removed. If the test succeeds, the modification is successfully removed with its parts intact. If the test fails, the modification is removed, but the parts necessary to reapply the modification are lost in the process.

Custom Grip

Though minor, altering the weapon's grip to perfectly match its owner's hand can make the weapon feel like a literal extension of his arm. This alteration can be done for either the user's actual hand, or to match a certain glove or armour he wears, or even a special gripping action that the owner has made part of his attack style. As a consequence of these changes, the character for whom the customisation was performed receives a +5 to Ballistic Skill or Weapon Skill when wielding the weapon. Other characters wielding the weapon suffer a –5 penalty, as the weapon feels slightly out of alignment when they attempt to use it.
Upgrades: Any weapon.

Deactivated Safety Features

The weapon has been modified so that its volatile nature is always at the forefront, and is always ready to be fired or wielded in an instant. When using a Ready action to prepare a weapon with this modification, a character may Ready another weapon or draw another item as part of the same action. However, any time a character who is carrying a weapon with this modification suffers four or more degrees of failure on a Movement skill test, this weapon fires, activates, or cuts itself free as a result of the jostling.
Upgrades: Any weapon.

Expanded Magazine

The ammunition storage device, such as drum cartridge or plasma flask, is increased, thus lessening the need to reload during a battle. The clip size of the weapon increases by half its current clip size (rounded up), and thus must be reloaded using ammunition/energy from multiple standard clips to fully stock the larger magazine.
Upgrades: Ranged weapons.

Exterminator

Many of the more zealous religious warriors of the Imperium use an exterminator cartridge on their regular weapons. This small device contains a small one-shot device that shoots out a sheet of fire. Rather than firing the weapon as normal, the wielder may discharge the exterminator cartridge as a Half Action, resolving the effects as if he had made a Standard Attack action with a flamer.
Upgrades: Any weapon except Pistol or Thrown.

Fire Selector

An ideal upgrade for those using weapons that can take multiple types of ammunition, this device allows the user to swap types without needing to reload the weapon. The weapon can now have up to three different types of ammunition loaded (the total amount of shells not exceeding its clip size); at the start of his turn, the wielder can use the fire selector to select which type of ammunition he fires for his shooting that round.
Upgrades: Any Bolt, Launcher, and Solid Projectile weapon of the Pistol or Basic class.

Fluid Action

The weapon's internal mechanisms have been thoroughly lubricated and carefully maintained down to the finest detail. When the character uses the weapon as part of a successful Semi-Auto Burst action, he counts as scoring one additional degree of success for purposes of determining the number of rounds that hit the target. Weapons with this customisation are trickier to load, as the ammunition feed must be more carefully engaged, and so reload time is increased by an additional Half Action.
Upgrades: Any ranged weapon capable of Semi-Automatic fire.

Forearm Weapon Mounting

This heavy bracing allows a single ranged weapon to be mounted along the arm, with specific hand movements triggering the weapon. It allows the user to keep both hands free and can have a strong visual impression on their foes, as fire seems to appear from the user's outstretched arms. This upgrade reduces the weapon's range by one-third.
Upgrades: Any Las, Low-Tech, Solid Projectile, Bolt, or Melta weapon of the Pistol class.

Melee Attachment

Millennia of combat have shown the worth of a bayonet and other close combat attachments, as often foes can close before a more powerful melee weapon can be drawn. The ranged weapon counts as a spear when used in melee combat.
Upgrades: Any Basic ranged weapon.

Modified Stock

When the character holds a weapon with a modified stock up to aim, its contours perfectly align to his form. As the character takes aim with the weapon, it feels like a natural extension of his arms. When a character takes an Aim action with weapons modified in this way, he receives an additional +2 bonus on a Half Action or an additional +4 bonus for a Full Action. This customisation is compatible with any other devices that modify Aim actions. It is most commonly applied to the stock of a Basic ranged weapon, but comparable changes can be made to virtually any weapon.
Upgrades: Any weapon.

Mono

Mono weapons have extraordinarily sharp edges, making each blade an even greater threat. Melee weapons without an actual edge, such as mauls or hammers, can also use this upgrade; for these weapons the effect can be due to pneumo-shocks, inertial multipliers, or some other more fitting enhancement. A weapon with this modification loses the Primitive quality (if it had it) and has its penetration increased by 2. This upgrade can be applied to a power weapon, but it has no effect whilst the power field is active. If the power field is ever lost or deactivated, the mono upgrade's bonuses then apply.
Upgrades: Any Low-Tech or Power Melee weapon.

Motion Predictor

The powerful cogitator within this device processes movement, and when the weapon is fired the machine spirit uses this data to follow its prey with a long, accurate burst. A motion predictor adds a +10 bonus to any Ballistic Skill test made as part of a Semi-Auto Burst or Full Auto Burst action.
Upgrades: Any ranged weapon (except Low-Tech) capable of Semi-Auto or Full Auto fire.

Omni-Scope

A vastly expensive and rare device normally found only in the hands of legendary assassins or bounty hunters, the omni-scope is a cluster of finely-tuned sensor wands linked to a precision lens. Some of these scopes plug directly into a bionic cranial port, allowing the user to shoot around corners without exposing himself—the scope becomes a "third eye." The omni-scope combines the benefits of a preysense sight, red-dot laser sight, and telescopic sight.
Upgrades: Any Las, Solid Projectile, Bolt, Low-Tech, or Plasma weapon of the Basic class. An omni-scope counts as a sight, and a gun can only have one sight.

Photo Sight

This sight reveals enemies lurking in the night, using wavelengths human eyes cannot detect. A character using a photo sight suffers no penalties due to darkness.
Upgrades: Any ranged Las, Solid Projectile, Bolt, Low-Tech, or Plasma weapon of the Basic class. A gun can only have one sight.

Pistol Grip

This modified handle is designed for smoother usage, and allows the weapon to be wielded in one hand without the usual –20 penalty. However, it becomes more difficult to aim accurately and thus its range is halved.

Upgrades: Any Basic ranged weapon.

Preysense Sight

This device shows thermal images and reveals the hiding places of enemies who lurk in the darkness. A character using a preysense sight suffers no penalties due to darkness and gains a +20 bonus to vision-based Perception tests in the dark.

Upgrades: Any ranged Las, Solid Projectile, Bolt, Low-Tech, or Plasma weapon of the Basic class. A gun can only have one sight.

Quick-Release

This customisation can encompass blessed lubricant oils, extra clips mounted along the stock, revered ejection springs recovered from ancient weapons, and more, all designed to create more time shooting and less time reloading. The weapon's reload time is reduced by a Half Action, down to a minimum of a Half Action. For example, a weapon that normally took 2 Full Actions to reload can be reloaded with one Full Action and one Half Action.

Upgrades: Any ranged weapon.

Red-Dot Laser Sight

This small, crimson laser sight is common on many guns, where it aids in both targeting and intimidating foe. It grants a +10 bonus to Ballistic Skill tests when firing a single shot.

Upgrades: Any Las, Solid Projectile, Bolt, Low-Tech, or Plasma weapon of the Pistol or Basic class can take this upgrade. A gun may only have one sight.

Reinforced

Most combat veterans know that no matter their ranged skill, there are always occasions where the enemy closes and there is no time to reload. A suitably modified gun can be a surprisingly effective weapon in these situations, and turn a charging heretic into the makings for new CS Rations. A weapon's weight is increased by 20% when it becomes reinforced. If it is a ranged weapon, it receives an additional +1 bonus to damage when used as an improvised weapon. A melee weapon with this upgrade is only destroyed on a result of 41 or higher when Parried by a weapon with the Power Field quality.

Upgrades: Any weapon.

Sacred Inscriptions

The character inscribes a sacred script from the Imperial Creed upon the weapon. These inscriptions are generally etched into the weapon's surface and might be lavishly illuminated with valuable metals, jewels, and embedded relics, medals, or talismans from members of the Ecclesiarchy. The constant reminder of his faith serves to instil additional courage in the weapon's wielder when his courage is tested. A character who possesses one or more weapons with this modification gains a +10 bonus to Pinning tests.

Upgrades: Any weapon.

Table 5–9: Weapon Modifications

Name	Weight	Availability
Auxiliary Grenade Launcher	+2.5kg	Rare
Backpack Ammo Supply	+15kg	Scarce
Compact	x1/2	Average
Custom Grip	—	Rare
Deactivated Safety Features	—	Rare
Expanded Magazine	+1kg	Scarce
Exterminator	+1kg	Common
Fire Selector	+1kg	Rare
Fluid Action	—	Rare
Forearm Weapon Mounting	+1kg	Scarce
Melee Attachment	+2kg	Plentiful
Modified Stock	—	Scarce
Mono	+0kg	Scarce
Motion Predictor	+0.5kg	Very Rare
Omni-Scope	+2kg	Near Unique
Photo Sight	+0.5kg	Very Rare
Pistol Grip	—	Rare
Preysense Sight	+0.5kg	Very Rare
Quick-Release	—	Rare
Red-Dot Laser Sight	+0.5kg	Scarce
Reinforced	+20%	Scarce
Sacred Inscriptions	—	Scarce
Silencer	+0.5kg	Plentiful
Suspensors	x1/2	Extremely Rare
Targeter	+1.5kg	Rare
Telescopic Sight	+1kg	Average
Tox Dispenser	+0.75kg	Rare
Tripod/Bipod	+2kg	Average
Vox-Operated	+0.5kg	Rare

Silencer

These upgrades use sonic bafflers, blessed coolant oils, and other methods to muffle the weapon's discharge noise, preventing detection from nearby foes. Awareness tests to hear shots made with a silenced weapon suffer an additional –20 penalty, and can only be attempted at half the normal distance.

Upgrades: Any Solid Projectile weapon of the Basic or Pistol class.

Suspensors

Suspensors are similar to the grav plating on voidships, but instead act to lighten loads. Weapons fitted with such a wondrous technology are much easier to operate, but are so valuable that often they are salvaged before the weapon itself. Suspensors reduce the weight of a weapon by one-half. When firing a weapon with suspensors, the operator counts as having the Auto-stabilised trait and so always counts as being braced.

Upgrades: Any Heavy weapon.

Targeter

Heavy and precious, targeters are highly valuable devices that use a combination of guidance cogitators and sensors to improve accuracy. They are often linked directly into a gun's machine spirit, and allow a greater bond between wielder and weapon. If there is a final penalty to a Ballistic Skill test when using a weapon with a targeter, it is reduced by ten. Thus, a Very Hard (–30) final penalty to hit becomes Hard (–20) for example.

Upgrades: Any Las, Solid Projectile, Bolt, or Heavy weapon.

Telescopic Sight

This sight magnifies images, allowing the user to better target enemies at greater distances, and is a common upgrade when precision shots are needed. A weapon with a telescopic sight ignores penalties for Long and Extreme range, as long as the shooter is benefitting from a Full Action to Aim.

Upgrades: Any Las, Solid Projectile, Bolt, Low-Tech or Plasma weapon of the Basic class. A gun can only have one sight.

Tox Dispenser

The custom of lining a blade with deadly toxins has been with humanity since the dawn of recorded time. Although smearing a poison on the blade has the advantage of simplicity, technology has since provided a better solution. A series of micro-dispensers allow a wielder to coat his weapon with poisons by simply pushing a button. As a Free Action, a character with a weapon equipped with a tox dispenser may cause his weapon to gain the Toxic (2) quality for one round. A tox dispenser can be used 10 times before requiring refilling; no Requisition test in needed as long as the character is in a location the ingredients would be available.

Upgrades: Any Low-Tech or Chain melee weapon.

Tripod/Bipod

These attachments are for heavier weapons, or those using integral ammunition canisters rather than a backpack-mounted source (as plasma guns or meltaguns sometimes do). Resting the weapon on the ground increases accuracy but sacrifices mobility, thus making them more common in static defence lines. Bipods and tripods allow a weapon to be braced anywhere there is a reasonably flat surface. A weapon braced on a bipod has a 90° fire arc, while one on a tripod has a 180° arc.

Upgrades: Any Basic or Heavy weapon.

Vox-Operated

Keyed into the user's vocal signature, these vox receptors are linked into a weapon's firing controls. With spoken commands, the operator can fire his gun, switch firing modes, and also change ammunition (should it be fitted with a fire selector).

Upgrades: Any Pistol, Basic, Launcher, or Heavy weapon that is not of the Low-Tech type.

Custom Ammunition

Imperial ranged weapons are wondrous indeed. Many are relics, claiming lineages greater than the dynasties that hand them down from generation to generation. Without ammunition, however, most are little more than ornate clubs. While standard ammunition is somewhat commonplace, at least as easy to acquire as the weapon itself, many seek out more unusual and unique ammunition for their guns. An Acolyte can become infamous for the specialised rounds he uses in combat, with enemies running in fear from the inferno shells or bleeder rounds they know are coming their way.

Custom ammunition can be acquired with a Requisition test like any other item. When a character attempts to requisition custom ammo, he specifies which weapon it is for, and each successful Requisition test obtains up to 2 clips of the desired ammunition, plus one clip for every degree of success beyond the first on the test. When a character reloads his weapon, he can choose to reload it using a clip of custom ammunition suitable for the weapon. For all attacks made using the ammo in that clip, the effects listed in the custom ammo's entry are applied to the weapon. Custom ammo cannot be mixed in a clip with regular ammo (unless a Fire Selector is being used).

Amputator Shells

These bullets are filled with explosive micro-shrapnel, shearing flesh and shattering bone in each limb-tearing hit.

Effect: Amputator shells add 2 to the weapon's damage.

Used With: Stub revolvers, stub automatics, shotguns (all types), sniper rifles, hand cannons, autopistols, and autoguns.

Bleeder Rounds

Each of these rounds bursts on penetration, spreading chemicals that prevent coagulation and keep wounds bleeding freely.

Effect: If a target takes damage from bleeder rounds, he begins to gush blood and suffers from the Blood Loss condition for 1d5 rounds or until it is successfully treated. Bleeder rounds do not affect targets with the Daemonic or Machine traits.

Used With: Stub revolvers, stub automatics, hand cannons, autopistols, and autoguns.

Dumdum Bullets

Heavy and blunted, these bullets tear apart tissue and cause terrible carnage against softly-armoured targets.

Effect: Dumdum bullets add 2 to the weapon's damage, but Armour points count double against them.

Used With: Stub revolvers, stub automatics, sniper rifles, and hand cannons.

Expander Rounds

The dense shells shred open after impact to create horrific exit wounds that few survive, and are ideal when there is no care if the target lives or dies.

Effect: These rounds add 1 to a weapon's damage and penetration.

Used With: Stub revolvers, stub automatics, sniper rifles, autopistols, and autoguns.



Explosive Arrows/Quarrels

Explosive arrows and quarrels can be crudely tipped with shells or treated with one of a variety of unstable alchemical compounds.
Effect: Attacks using these rounds suffer a –10 penalty. These rounds change the weapon's damage type to Explosive, remove the Primitive quality, and grant the weapon the Blast (1) quality.
Used With: Bows and crossbows.

Hot-Shot Charge Packs

This is a powerful charge pack for a las weapon, favoured by snipers in some Imperial Guard regiments. Each hot-shot charge pack is good for only a single shot.
Effect: A weapon using a hot-shot charge adds 1 to its damage, gains the Tearing quality, and gains a penetration of 4. The weapon also loses its Reliable quality, and its clip size is reduced to 1.
Used With: Laspistols, lascarbines, lasguns, and long las weapons.

Inferno Shells

Filled with promethium and other highly flammable agents, inferno shells ignite on impact to cover their targets with an adhesive gel of fire.
Effect: A weapon using inferno shells gains the Flame quality.
Used With: Shotguns and all Bolt weapons.

Table 5–10: Ammunition

Name	Availability
Amputator Shells	Extremely Rare
Bleeder Rounds	Rare
Dumdum Bullets	Scarce
Expander Rounds	Scarce
Explosive Arrows/Quarrels	Scarce
Hot-Shot Charge Packs	Scarce
Inferno Shells	Rare
Man-Stopper Bullets	Scarce
Scrambler Rounds	Rare
Tempest Bolt Shells	Near Unique
Tox Rounds	Scarce

Man-Stopper Bullets

These densely tipped bullets are designed to punch through many forms of personal armour.
Effect: Man-stopper bullets add 3 to the weapon's penetration.
Used With: Stub revolvers, stub automatics, hand cannons, sniper rifles, autopistols, and autoguns.

Scrambler Rounds

Specially designed to disorient and subdue, these rounds take extra time to make ready to fire, but can bring down foes otherwise impervious to regular munitions.
Effect: Scrambler rounds add the Hallucinogenic (2) and Recharge qualities to the weapon.
Used With: Bolt and Solid Projectile weapons.

Tempest Bolt Shells

Tempest bolt shells are perhaps the rarest variety of bolt round, manufactured only in the temples of Mars. Each contains a powerful miniaturised plasma-shock generator that releases a pulse of electromagnetic and thermal energy as the shell detonates. They are particularly effective against machine targets, but obtaining them from the Machine Cult is a nigh-impossible task.
Effect: Tempest bolt shells change the weapon's damage type to Energy and grant it the Shocking quality. They also add 3 to the weapon's damage against targets with the Machine trait.
Used With: Bolt pistols, boltguns, and heavy bolters.

Tox Rounds

Tipped with deadly poisons or loaded with pungent fungi, tox rounds inflict terrible harm when they pierce flesh.
Effect: Tox rounds add the Toxic (1) quality to the weapon but reduce its damage by 2.
Used With: Bolt and Solid Projectile weapons.

Standard Ammunition

Most ranged weapons have a standard ammunition and ammunition storage device, the default type that often is as defining as the weapon itself. From lasgun charge packs and photonic hydrogen plasma flasks to basic shotgun shells and autogun rounds, these are generally as common as the weapons that use them.

The weapon characteristics listed in this chapter, such as damage and clip size, are for its standard ammunition. Standard ammunition for a weapon has an Availability one level more available than the weapon itself. A clip of 18 standard autopistol rounds, for example, has a Common (+10) Availability because the weapon has an Average (+0) Availability. A successful Requisition test for standard ammunition yields two clips, plus one extra clip per degree of success beyond the first. Should it be important to know how much ammunition weighs, consider a weapon's full clip to weigh 10% of the weight of the weapon itself.

Protective Gear

"Emperor protect my soul, flak protect the rest."

–Common saying amongst the Havarth Heavy Infantry

Given the power and lethality of the weaponry surrounding them, it is to be expected that many seek out as much protection as possible. Such protection generally comes in two forms: personal armour designed to absorb or redirect damage, and exotic field devices that rely on arcane technologies to shield the wearer from harm. Refraining from some sort of physical protection is to invite a speedy death, and while all servants of the Emperor trust in His Protection, all know that to die before doing their duty to the Emperor is to fail Him.

Armour

Armour provides Armour points (AP) to various locations on a character's body, which can mitigate damage as per page 227. Some kinds of armour also have special properties noted in their description. Each type of armour has the following characteristics:

Armour Type: Describes the type of armour: Basic, Flak, Mesh, Carapace, or Power.

Location(s) Covered: What locations the armour covers, which can be a combination of arms, legs, body, and head. Some armour covers all six locations and is noted as covering "All."

AP (Armour points): How many Armour points the armour provides for the locations covered. Any non-Best craftsmanship armour that provides 7 or more APs inflicts a –30 penalty on the wearer's Stealth tests.

Max Ag: This is the maximum value a character wearing this armour can count his Agility: if the character's Agility is higher than this number, it counts as this number instead. If wearing multiple armour devices (such as a helmet and vest), a character uses the lowest Max Ag value.

Weight: Represents how much the armour weighs. For information on how much a character can carry, see page 248.

Availability: This identifies the armour's Availability, and is used when making Requisition tests to acquire it (see page 142).

Table 5–11: Armour

Name	Locations Covered	AP	Max Ag	Weight	Availability
Basic Armour					
Heavy Leathers	Arms, Body	1	—	5 kg	Common
Imperial Robes	Arms, Body, Legs	1	—	4 kg	Average
Armoured Bodyglove	Arms, Body, Legs	2	—	5 kg	Rare
Chainmail Suit	Arms, Body, Legs	3	35	15 kg	Common
Feudal World Plate	All	5	25	30 kg	Scarce
Xenos Hide Vest	Body	6	50	20 kg	Very Rare
Flak Armour					
Flak Helmet	Head	2	—	2 kg	Average
Flak Gauntlets	Arms	2	—	1 kg	Average
Light Flak Cloak	Arms, Body, Legs	2	55	4 kg	Scarce
Flak Vest	Body	3	60	5 kg	Average
Flak Cloak	Arms, Body, Legs	3	55	8 kg	Scarce
Flak Coat	Arms, Body	3	60	5 kg	Average
Imperial Guard Flak Armour	All	4	50	11 kg	Scarce
Mesh Armour					
Mesh Vest	Body	4	—	2 kg	Rare
Mesh Cloak	Arms, Body, Legs	4	60	3 kg	Very Rare
Carapace Armour					
Carapace Helm	Head	4	—	2 kg	Rare
Carapace Gauntlets	Arms	5	—	2 kg	Rare
Carapace Greaves	Legs	5	—	3 kg	Rare
Enforcer Light Carapace	All	5	45	15 kg	Rare
Carapace Chestplate	Body	6	55	7 kg	Rare
Militarum Tempestus Carapace	All	6	45	15 kg	Very Rare
Power Armour					
Light Power Armour	All	7	40	40 kg	Very Rare

Mixing Armour

Characters can wear multiple armours if desired, but the protective qualities are not additive. When an area covered by multiple pieces of armour is struck, the highest AP value is used and all other armours are ignored for purposes of determining damage.

Basic Armour

While not necessarily of lesser defensive capability, this type of armour is generally of a straightforward nature. Thick leather coats, protective body gloves, xenos furs, heavy robes, quilted vests, and chainmail are common across the Imperium. On many remote planets, and also in isolated locations within civilised worlds, such wear is standard. They rarely offer adequate protection from lasgun fire or other advanced weapons, but are often inexpensive and usually enough to deal with most threats.

Carapace Armour

Made from moulded plates of plasteel or ceramite, carapace armour is often a sign of status amongst Imperial officers and Acolytes. Elite warriors from the Militarum Tempsetus and Adeptus Arbites wear full body suits of the material, but it is more commonly used for chest protection, or woven into flak suits as modular plates which can be removed and replaced when damaged. Carapace comes in levels of protection, with the associated trade-off between effectiveness and weight.

Enforcer Armour

A lesser version of carapace armour, Enforcer armour is part of the uniform for local policing forces on planets across the Imperium. Though lacking the well-crafted plating that the elite Militarum Tempestus troopers or Arbitrators wear, it is still effective enough to deal with most hive gangers or heretical scum.

Flak Armour

Just as the lasgun is the most common type of weapon in the galaxy, so too is flak the most common type of armour, both due to their standard usage in the Imperial Guard. Flak armour is made from multiple layers of ablative and impact–absorbent materials, designed to deal with light weapon attacks and proximity blasts. While not prepared to stop heavy weapons fire, it is relatively lightweight, simple and inexpensive to manufacture, and dependable in combat. As long as the wearer is not on the target spot of the blast, flak armour counts as 1 AP higher against damage from weapons with the Blast quality.



Mesh Armour

Mesh armour is made from thousands of tiny thermoplas rings linked together to create a fabric-like cloth. The material becomes momentarily rigid on impact, dissipating the attack. The finest types are of clear xenos origin, though even the cruder human versions offer excellent protection.

Power Armour

This advanced armour consists of thick, ceramite plates and uses an integral power source to augment the user's strength and mobility. Many suits are heirloom items hundreds—or even thousands—of years old. They come in a variety of styles, from lighter suits befitting elite Acolytes to heavy versions designed for intense fighting. The huge and ancient versions of the Adeptus Astartes are a separate class of power armour, using special implants to link the armour to the user in a manner no human could wear or operate.

Light power armour requires a constant power supply, normally built into the suit, which offsets its weight so it does not count against the user's normal carrying limit (see page 248). It grants the user the Unnatural Strength (1) trait and increases the value of his Size trait by 1 level. Unless stated otherwise, the power supply functions for 1d5 hours before needing recharging or refuelling. Most suits feature a detachable helmet; when this in place, the wearer benefits from an internal oxygen supply and standard vox systems.

Force Fields

While physical armour is often as effective as it is impressive (sometimes merely the sight of a heavily armoured Acolyte is enough to quell a would-be heresy), there are other times where a stealthy approach is required, or the situation calls for a less combative presence. Force fields can provide protection in these instances, as they are usually more concealable and often much more effective as well. Most are small, otherwise unobtrusive devices that none even within the Adeptus Mechanicus fully understand. Some are impossibly ancient archaeotech creations from the Dark Age of Technology, considered holy relics to be venerated and sanctified before each use.

Unless stated otherwise, force fields offer protection for the entire body. It is a Half Action to turn the field on or off. A character may only benefit from one field at a time, regardless of how many different fields he may have equipped. When a character wearing an active field is attacked, but before Evasion tests are made, roll 1d100. If the result is lower than or equal to the field's protection rating, the attack is nullified and has no effect on the protected character (although the attack might have an impact on the character's surroundings or other nearby characters, such as with weapons with the Blast quality).

Table 5–12: Force Fields

Name	Protection Rating	Weight	Availability
Refractor Field	30	2 kg	Very Rare
Conversion Field	50	1 kg	Extremely Rare
Displacer Field	55	2 kg	Near Unique
Power Field (Personal)	80	50 kg	Near Unique
Power Field (Vehicle/Emplacement)	80	500 kg	Very Rare

Fields can also overload. Compare the 1d100 roll to avoid damage to **Table 5–13: Field Overload Chance**. If the result is lower than or equal to the listed number, the field overloads. It ceases to function until it is recharged or repaired, requiring a successful Very Hard (–30) Tech-Use test.

Table 5–13: Field Overload Chance

Field Craftsmanship	Overload Roll
Poor	01-15
Common	01-10
Good	01-05
Best	01

Refractor Field

Refractor fields are small enough to be disguised as jewellery or other ornamentation. While active, they can disperse an attack across the field's entire surface area to negate the damage, but they also constantly envelop users with a soft halo as their energies interact with the surrounding air.

The glow of an active refractor field makes the user more noticeable in low lighting or darkness, and imposes a –20 penalty on all Stealth tests he takes.



Conversion Field

Also known as flare fields, these devices convert the energy of an attack into radiated light, often strong enough to act as a blinding visual blast against nearby foes. A more powerful version known as a Rosarius is often granted to members of the Ecclesiarchy to guard against the predations of heretics and the unholy.

If the conversion field blocks more than 12 points of damage from a single attack, the release of light is strong enough to act as a photon flash grenade burst centred on the wearer (see page 158). The character wearing the conversion field is unaffected by this burst.

Displacer Field

Displacer fields are powerful, but sometimes as dangerous to use as the actual attack. They operate not by absorbing or shunting away an attack's energy, but instead by shifting the user away using miniature Warp-jump technologies. This jump is normally triggered through sensors located with the device, though it can also be activated manually if desired. Each activation carries the supreme risk of unprotected travel through the Empyrean; even as the body is swept to safety, the soul risks damnation.

When the field successfully nullifies an attack, the user jumps in a random direction using the **Scatter Diagram** on page 230. Roll 3d10 for the number of metres travelled—the wearer always emerges on solid footing and in a suitable empty space. If all three dice come up with the same number (e.g., 3 results of 7), then the user does not re-emerge for 1d5 rounds and gains 1 Corruption point from exposure to the unnatural energies within the Warp. If the activation is unexpected, then the wearer cannot act for one round while he regains his sense of place.

Power Field

Unlike most other field devices, power fields are large, bulky affairs that cannot be easily disguised. Personal versions must be worn as heavy backpacks, while larger units are fitted with motive mechanisms, due to their weight and size. Power fields are very effective, projecting a force wall to negate incoming attacks, but drain energy quickly once active.

A power field causes the air to visibly ripple and crackle with static discharge, imposing a –20 penalty on all Stealth tests. It also does not defend against ranged attacks made within 1 metre, or attacks in melee.

Gear

"Pack it all. Once we're stuck in, there won't be time to get more."

–Yanto Ka'Wie, preparing for an assault on the Order of Purity

While weapons and armour are of paramount importance in combat, other equipment is needed for investigating heresies, infiltrating cults, and interrogating the guilty. From mundane needs such as clothing to advanced medicae supplies, the items in this section can help ensure an Acolyte can be as effective as possible in his service to the Emperor.

Clothing and Personal Gear

The following are items worn or carried for personal use, from types of clothing to precious keepsakes of previous, simpler lives.

Backpack

These personal carrying items can range from containers of heavy cloth to elaborate, body-conforming devices with internal bracing for comfort. They all allow the wearer to transport roughly 30 kg of extra weight, but removing an object from the pack requires a Full Action. Only one backpack or combat vest can be worn at a time.

Chameleoline Cloak

Chameleoline material is made up of mimic fibres that blend the coloration of the wearer into their surroundings, and is the garb of choice for snipers. The wearer gains a +20 bonus to Stealth tests. If he remains stationary during his turn, Ballistic Skill tests targeting him suffer a –30 penalty until the beginning of his next turn.

Chrono

Chronos are small timepieces, and are essential for Acolytes to properly time their actions. Basic versions simply indicate local time and require manual setting, but finer models can synch to external datastreams for the greatest possible accuracy.

Clothing

Clothing styles vary greatly across the Imperium, some as basic protection with no thought to aesthetics, some purely ornamental with no concern for environmental or other lesser worries. For some, clothing styles are set at birth or through factory dictates. Others adopt the styles of their gang, sect, house, or other affiliation. While basic clothing common to a setting should be simple to acquire, more elaborate garb of either higher status or specialised function should be more difficult, with the GM acting as final arbiter on Availability or creation.

Combat vest

While this outerwear vest offers no additional protection, it does include numerous pouches and straps to keep extra weapon clips, sidearms, and grenades within easy reach. Common styles include hip packs, holsters, bandoliers, and vests and can hold 15 kg comfortably. Items held in the combat vest can be drawn as a Free Action during the character's turn. Only one backpack or combat vest can be worn at a time.

Table 5–14: Clothing and Personal Gear

Name	Weight	Availability
Backpack	2 kg	Abundant
Chameleoline Cloak	0.5 kg	Rare
Chrono	0 kg	Plentiful
Clothing	2 kg	Abundant
Combat Vest	2 kg	Scarce
Concealed Holster	1 kg	Average
Deadspace Earpiece	—	Very Rare
Explosive Collar	3 kg	Scarce
Filtration Plugs	—	Common
Photo-Visors/Contacts	0.5 kg	Scarce
Preysense Goggles	0.5 kg	Very Rare
Rebreather	1 kg	Scarce
Recoil Glove	0.5 kg	Rare
Respirator/Gas Mask	0.5 kg	Average
Survival Suit	—	Average
Synskin	2 kg	Very Rare
Void Suit	8 kg	Scarce

Concealed Holster

These conformal pouches can hold a small pistol such as an autopistol or stub automatic, and are worn under obscuring clothing to disguise the weapon from observers. Attempts to detect such a weapon suffer a –20 penalty, but Ready actions for this weapon become a Full Action rather than a Half Action (or a Half Action instead of a Free Action where applicable).

Deadspace Earpiece

Each of these tiny devices can limit high-volume sonic disturbances (such as explosions) by automatically detecting and dampening the excessive noise down to a tolerable level. Users wearing this earpiece make any Toughness tests against sonic effects or against the auditory effects of a Concussive weapon with a +20 bonus.

Explosive Collar

These give penal legionnaires extra incentive to fight and expunge their sins to the Emperor, as well as to keep captured prisoners in line. Each of these heavy collars comes with a remote, usually with a range of 1 km. The remote can either release or explode the collar, which automatically explodes if out of range of the remote for longer than 5 minutes.

When triggered, the explosive on the collar detonates. The resulting decapitation instantly kills the wearer, and counts as having a frag grenade detonated at the location (see page 157). Removing an explosive collar without the remote requires a Hard (–20) Tech-Use test. If the character trying to remove the collar fails by two or more degrees of failure, the collar explodes.

Clothing in the Askellon Sector

Askellon Sector represents a wide range of worlds and settings, from the decaying opulence of Juno to the fungal plains of Orsca. The clothing that the endless billions of humans wear on these worlds is even more wide-ranging, with entire fabric-cults in a single hab level on many hives or gang codes that must be followed to the stitch lest death follow. Below is a mere sampling of the countless types and styles to be found in the sector, to be used as guides for Acolytes seeking to blend in or stand out.

Rag-Robes

Common in the depths of Desoleum, these are made from assorted cast-off lengths of clothing scavenged from corpses or washed up on effluent tides, and then bound together into formless coverings. Some of the tatters might have once been gossamer silks or xenos leathers, but few notice such details in the feeble lighting and muck encasing the material.

Port Lokhart Coveralls

The standard clothing for service workers on the transport levels on Port Lokhart, these sturdy and cheap designs come in a variety of colours and patterns denoting position and speciality. They also provide a modicum of protection against the harsh blasts of transport takeoffs and corrosive fuel venting.

Mercantile Bodyglove

Many rising merchants on Snope's World have adopted these comfortable sheaths of form-fitting, flexible material, a variant of the rougher ones many workers on that planet wear. While bodygloves are more common for those with physical or hazardous duties, they have become a fashion choice here, with elaborate glyphs denoting house affiliation.

Court Robes

Heavy and encrusted with layers of stitching in remembrance of each ruler to have graced Juno, these robes are common within the many courts and other judicial offices, from lowly offence-barkers to sentencing lords.

Mirrorcloth

A new fabric style of unknown origin, clothing made from this material resembles liquid silver as it softly drapes over the wealthy and powerful of Vouxis Prime in waves of perfect reflection. Nearly impossible to find, it is often more about having the right connections than enough currency. Rumours persist of what lengths some have gone to, or the dread favours they have promised to acquire them.

Filtration Plugs

Worn in each nostril, filtration plugs screen out most pollutants and hazardous gases. A character wearing filtration plugs gains a +20 bonus to any Toughness test made to resist the effects of damaging gases. Good craftsmanship models add another +10 bonus, while Poor models must be replaced after five hours of usage as the filter becomes clogged and unusable.

Photo-Visors/Contacts

These can be worn as corneal lenses or as outer eyewear, and amplify any low-level light to allow the wearer to see as if normal lighting was present. Characters wearing these gain the Dark-sight trait (see page 135). Good craftsmanship visors also dampen the effects of photon flash grenades, making the wearer immune to their effects.

Preysense Goggles

This eyewear device reveals thermal images so that the wearer can detect things that would be otherwise hidden in obscuring mists and shadow. Poor craftsmanship models cannot belie their true nature and are bulky goggles with glowing lenses; Good and Best craftsmanship models are disguised as normal (if elaborate) eyeglasses. A character wearing these goggles suffers no penalties due to darkness, and gains a +20 bonus to vision-based Perception tests at night.

Rebreather

These devices store and recycle breathable air via a mask and external supply tank, making the user to immune to toxic atmospheres, even allowing him to survive underwater. The air canister lasts only for about one hour and then must be replaced, which takes a Full Action. Good craftsmanship models last two hours, while Poor ones take two Full Actions to replace the canister. Replacement canisters are Scarce.

Recoil Glove

This heavy gauntlet uses interlocking plates laced with memory wire to stiffen in a protective grip, absorbing the shock from powerful hand weapons. A character using a recoil glove can fire a Basic weapon with one hand without the normal –20 penalty, and can wield pistol weapons that normally require two hands in one hand without penalty. Note that specialised weapon training is still required to use the weapon properly, without which the Untrained penalty of –20 still applies.

Respirator/Gas Mask

A simple breathing mask that covers the nose and mouth or entire face, these offer much better protection than filtration plugs. A character wearing a respirator gains a +30 bonus to a Toughness test made to resist the effects of gas and can re-roll the test if failed. Good craftsmanship models add another +10 bonus, while Poor models must be replaced after 10 hours of usage as the filter becomes clogged and unusable.

Survival Suit

When working in harsh and extreme conditions (especially when it is not known in advance what they will be), survival suits are a must. No matter if it is too hot or too cold, the suit can maintain proper body temperature and hydration via excellent insulation capabilities. Using the differential between body temperature and outside temperature to drive thermoelectric power cells, it also has reclamation systems for turning sweat into drinking water. Most suits come complete with a hood, as well as goggles to protect the head and face. While it does not protect forever, for medium-duration emergencies it can help sustain life until a rescue.

The suit grants a +20 bonus to any tests to withstand the effects of extreme environments. Good and Best craftsmanship suits grant a +25 and +30 bonus, respectively, while Poor outfits only last three days before their internal mechanisms falter and need removal from the extreme temperatures to recharge.

Synskin

Synskin is a bio-reactive body glove with an inert non-reflective surface that moulds itself to the wearer's form. It grants 2 Armour points to all locations not already armoured and the wearer gains a +10 bonus to Stealth tests. It also renders the wearer invisible to the use of preysense goggles and those with the Dark-sight trait.

Void Suit

These fully-sealed suits are essential for operating in the vacuum of space, but can also be useful in toxic or hostile environments. A Common craftsmanship void suit has 12 hours of air and imposes a –10 penalty to Agility tests. Poor craftsmanship versions have six hours of air, while Good and Best craftsmanship versions eliminate the Agility penalty.



Drugs and Consumables

Millennia of experimentation and degradation have led to thousands of drugs commonly available to humanity, from simple stimulants to arcane potions that can imbue unholy effects. These, along with more usual foodstuffs and drinks, are frequently part of any Acolyte's travel kit when preparing for action.

Some of these items have no direct game rules, but can add to the narrative roleplaying experience for both Acolytes and NPCs. Many can be used as trade items on many worlds, or to embellish a character's behaviour or background. If the GM desires, special rules can also be created for specific items based on local variants; an especially potent regional recaf blend, for example, might keep an Acolyte from restful sleep for several days. Many drugs are Addictive, and if so noted follow the rules from the **Excessive Drug Use and Addiction** sidebar on page 173.

Amasec

This refreshment is made from distilled wine or other fermented beverages, and is popular in many regions of the Imperium. It is usually a fine-quality product, with some well-aged vintages renowned across the sector for bouquet and flavour.

Desoleum Fungus

A hallucinogen made from unusual narcotic mushrooms that grow in ancient aquifers deep in Hive Desoleum's lower reaches, this drug has a disorienting, intoxicating effect that causes users to stumble about despite retaining the full spectrum of their senses. Depraved gangers particularly enjoy dosing themselves and then instigating extended gunfights, whirling about drunkenly and watching the havoc of their wayward shots.

A dose of lasts 1d10 rounds, and the user immediately suffers 1 Fatigue as his body spins wildly. A character under the effects of the drug can take advantage of the skewed perspective this gives him: once during this time, he may invert the result of any 1d100 roll, exchanging the tens digit for the ones digit (turning a 73 into a 37 or a 91 into a 19, etc.).

De-Tox

De-tox can negate most of the dangerous effects of other drugs or toxins. A dose immediately ends the effects, both positive and negative, for any chemicals the subject has inhaled, ingested, or injected, unless the item specifically states de-tox cannot work against it. Its use is extremely unpleasant, however, with common side-effects so extreme (excessive vomiting and diarrhoea being the mildest) that many would rather abide their current woes.

Using de-tox, however, is both painful and debilitating, and can cause several unpleasant side effects such as vomiting, nose bleeds, and a great voiding of the bowels. Upon taking this drug, a character is Stunned for a number of rounds equal to 1d10 minus his Toughness bonus. A result of 0 or less means that the character suffers no ill effects.

Table 5–15: Drugs & Consumables

Name	Weight	Availability
Amasec	1 kg	Average
Desoleum Fungus	—	Scarce
De-Tox	—	Rare
Frenzon†	—	Very Rare
Lho-Sticks	—	Common
Obscura†	—	Rare
Ration Pack	2 kg	Plentiful
Recaf	—	Abundant
Sacred Unguents	—	Very Rare
Slaught†	—	Scarce
Spook†	—	Rare
Stimm†	—	Average
Tranq	1 kg	Abundant

† *Drug is Addictive*

Frenzon

Frenzon is a term for a number of combat drugs used in conscript and assault forces, especially in penal legions. A dose creates a fanatical and fearless state, leaving the user ready to fight any foe, no matter how suicidal it may seem.

A character using frenzon gains the Frenzy talent and immediately becomes Frenzied. These effects last for the duration of the drug; a single dose of which lasts for 1d10 minutes. Frenzon is Addictive.

Lho-Sticks

A mild narcotic, each stick contains dried and cured plant leaves that release a scented, stimulating smoke when ignited and inhaled through a cheap tube that burns away with the drug. As the leaves vary with the planet, lho-sticks can vary from world to world as well, often making them useful trade items.

Obscura

Though often illegal, obscura is popular in many fighting units where combatants are eager for respite from constant battle, as well as among civilians seeking relief from the drudgeries of harsh life. Obscura-users enter a dream-like state for 1d5 hours (if required to engage in combat, consider them under the effects of a hallucinogen grenade). For 1d10 hours after the effects wear off, they enter a deep depression, unless another dose of obscura is taken. Obscura is Addictive.

Ration Pack

These small pouches contain concentrated or dehydrated foodstuffs suitable for one complete meal, and also include vitamin supplements, water puri-tabs, a protein bar, and heating pellets. Well-made packs are actually quite palatable, but even a master Ratling chef would have difficulty with the poor ingredients used in cheaper packs.

Besides the benefits of holding off starvation, ration packs can help to keep an Acolyte effective in the field. Eating one or more ration packs (or other, comparable meals) during a period of rest of at least two hours removes one additional level of Fatigue.

Recaf

These common beverages offer a mild stimulant effect as well as pleasing taste. Hot recaf starts many days across the sector, from Imperial Guardsmen fighting on combat lines against the xenos threat to Acolytes striving to stay alert on an all-night vigil near a suspected cult hideout.

Consuming recaf helps to hone senses dulled by exhaustion, and a dose removes one level of Fatigue from the character. The cumulative penalty to Toughness tests taken for consuming additional doses of recaf is –20 instead of the normal –10.

Sacred Unguents

Holy lubricating oils that have received the blessings of the Omnissiah, these liquids are highly sought after for their calming effect on recalcitrant machine spirits. If applied to a weapon—which requires a Full Action—the weapon becomes immune to jamming (see page 224) for a number of shots equal to its clip size. If the unguent is applied to an already jammed weapon, the jam immediately clears, but there is no further effect.

Excessive Drug Use and Addiction

When the same drug is used too often in a short period of time, there is a chance for it to have a diminished effect as the user builds up an immunity or tolerance. A character who uses more than one dose of a given drug in a 24 hour period must make an Ordinary (+10) Toughness test for each use after the first, with a cumulative –10 penalty for each additional dose. If he fails, the drug has no useful effect and further doses do nothing for the next 24 hours.

Excessive drug use can also lead to Addiction. Every time the effects of a drug indicated as Addictive wears off, the user must take a Routine (+20) Willpower test with a –5 modifier for every dose taken in the last week. Failure means the user is Addicted and will suffer one level of Fatigue unless he gets another dose within 12 hours (should this dose trigger the Excessive Drug Use test above, he must pass the test to overcome the Fatigue loss). Once per day, the character (should he so choose) can overcome the Addiction by passing Very Hard (–30) tests for both Willpower and Toughness.

Table 5–16: Spook Effects

d100 Roll	Power Gained
01-04	Assail
05-08	Crush
09-12	Dominate
13-16	Endurance
17-20	Enfeeble
21-24	Fire Shield
25-28	Flame Breath
29-32	Foreboding
33-36	Hallucination
37-40	Invigourate
41-44	Misfortune
45-48	Objuration Mechanicum
49-52	Perfect Timing
53-56	Prescience
57-60	Psychic Shriek
61-64	Scrier's Gaze
65-68	Shockwave
69-72	Smite
73-76	Spontaneous Combustion
77-80	Telekine Dome
81-84	Vortex of Doom
85-88	Roll twice, gaining both powers.
89-92	Pick any one power.
93-96	Gain 1 Insanity point and roll again.
97-100	Gain 3 Insanity points.

Slaught

This combat drug (also known as onslaught) is frequently taken to heighten awareness and improve reaction time. It literally speeds up the user, but causes neural and physiological damage with prolonged application.

Taking a dose increases the user's Agility bonus and Perception bonus by 3 for 2d10 minutes. Note this does not increase the actual characteristic values. When the drug runs its course, the user must pass a Challenging (+0) Toughness test or suffer a –20 penalty to Agility tests and Perception tests for 1d5 hours. Slaught is Addictive.

Spook

A highly-proscribed drug, spook creates and augments that most hazardous of effects: psychic abilities. Even the briefest of connections to the Warp and the Ruinous Powers that dwell within can allow daemonic incursions or worse, but in desperate instances, even these horrific effects are brushed aside.

If a character without any psy rating takes a dose of this drug, he must successfully make a Challenging (+0) Willpower test or gain 1d5 Insanity points due to his mind being filled with terrifying visions of the Warp. If he succeeds, the user gains a psychic power from **Table 5–16: Spook Effects** (see descriptions in **Chapter VI: Psychic Powers**). The power lasts for 1d5 hours, and the user makes all Focus Power tests during this time as if he had a psy rating of 1.

If a character with a psy rating of 1 or more uses spook, he must make a Challenging (+0) Willpower test. If he fails, he gain 1 Insanity Point and the drug has no further effects. If he passes, he adds 1 to his psy rating for the next hour. However, add +25 to rolls he makes on **Table 6–2: Psychic Phenomena** (see page 196).

Spook is Addictive, and depending on the setting, its mere possession can incur intense and even lethal punishment from local authorities.



Stimm

A dose of stimm is enough to energise the weary and mask pain with short-term vitality, often enough to finally bring a protracted combat to a successful conclusion. Each dose lasts for 3d10 rounds. During this time, a character ignores any negative effects to his characteristics from damage, Critical damage, and Fatigue, and cannot be Stunned. When the stimm wears off, the character suffers a –20 penalty to Strength, Toughness, and Agility tests for one hour and gains one level of Fatigue. Stimm is Addictive.

Tranq

The drug tranq covers an array of artificial, alcoholic chem-distillates brewed by underhive scum, criminals, and even Guardsmen desperate for respite from their wretched lots. It numbs the body and mind, which provides a very different feeling than being drunk on amasec, rotgut, or other spirits. Though similar in the end result, the effects of tranq are unpleasant, depressive, and require an acquired taste.

Tools

While most Acolytes refrain from becoming overly dependent on devices or other contrivances to prosecute their sacred duties, there is no denying that having the right tool at the right time can be vital to success. The following is but a fraction of the accessories, aids, and other implements that can aid in combating heresies or worse across the sector.

Auspex/Scanner



These standard Imperial detection devices are used to reveal energy emissions, motion, life-signs, and other information. A character using an auspex gains a +20 bonus to Awareness tests. Once per round, as a Free Action, a character with one may make a Tech-Use test to spot things not normally visible to human senses, such as invisible gases, nearby signs of life, non-visible radiation, or other things as appropriate. The standard range is 50m, though walls more than 50cm thick and certain shielding materials can block a scanner. Good craftsmanship models increase the bonus to +30, but Poor models an only penetrate 20cm of material.

Auto Quill

Often elaborate devices of ink-stained brass and vat-grown or artificial quills, these devices allow a user to copy text or transcribe speech with impressive speed and accuracy. Many scribes carry portable units, suitable for recording interrogation sessions or xenos translations. A character with a relevant Trade skill can use it to gain a +10 to his tests involving this skill when recording data.

Clip/Drop Harness

A simple (but robust) spooled safety line with a magnetic or hooked clasp at the end, these tools attach to the user's belt or shoulder straps. When deployed, they allow for relative safety in rappelling down vertical surfaces or preventing falls from unsteady rooftops. A character using a clip harness to descend a vertical surface gains a +30 bonus on tests to Climb and cannot fall if he fails. Common quality harnesses can hold 150kg, while Good quality harnesses can support 200 kg.

Combi-Tool

Most combi-tools are small, compact devices filled with foldout and extending probes, blades, hooks, and socket-plugs. They are ideal for coaxing operation from recalcitrant machinery, repairing damaged devices, and in general bending errant machine spirits to the will of the user. A character using a combi-tool gains a +10 bonus to Tech-Use tests.

Comm Leech

A somewhat heretical item in the eyes of the Mechanicum, these tap into vox signals or data transmissions. After making a successful Tech-Use test (with the GM setting the difficulty based on the situation and signal), the user can use it to receive a signal or transmission within 1km for a number of minutes equal to his degrees of success. If the character fails by a number of degrees of failure greater than his Intelligence bonus, the sender and receiver of the signal become aware that someone is attempting to tap in.

Dataslate



These devices are common across the Imperium, and are the primary means of storing and reading printed text and other forms of data such as pict or audio recordings. Well-crafted dataslates can also re-record new information, or transmit and receive data from other devices.

Demolition Kit

Some investigations end with explosive results, and these kits are essential for such a conclusion. They contain the tools for a character to more easily set up sophisticated detonation devices and explosives. Each kit includes the following:

- **Five demolition charges:** These detonate with the same profile as krak grenades (see page 157).
- **100 metres of det-cord:** This thin rope can be lit with any fire source or detonator, and burns at a rate of 10 seconds per metre, useful for setting a delay on an explosive or activating it at a distance.
- **Five pressure-release detonators:** These can be used to light a det-cord line or trigger explosives directly.

All of the materials in this kit can be refilled to these quantities without the use of a Requisition test as long as the character is in a location they would be available.

Diagnostor

The diagnostor is a sophisticated medical device used across the galaxy. It can detect and diagnose almost every ailment known to the Imperium, and can be incorporated into medical kits, servo-skulls, and other dedicated servitors. Any individual trained in medical knowledge in the Imperial Guard understands its use.

A diagnostor provides +20 to Medicae or Perception tests to determine an ailment; success indicates the proper treatment to be used.

Disguise Kit

Acolytes often conceal their true identity as part of their investigation, either to create new personas or impersonate others. These kits contain the following:

- **Basic makeup:** Grants a +10 bonus to Deceive tests made to visually disguise the character.
- **Prosthetic appliances:** Allow the character to impersonate individuals with different facial structures.
- **Skin dyes:** Allow the character to impersonate individuals with different skin colours.
- **Vocal augmenter:** Grants a +10 bonus to Deceive tests made to impersonate another voice.
- **Retina lenses:** Allow the character to impersonate individuals with different eye colours.

All of the materials in this kit can be refilled to these quantities without the use of a Requisition test as long as the character is in a location they would be available.

Excruciator Kit

While all such kits are used in the gathering of information from the unwilling and unrepentant, each is as unique as its user. Most contain a wide range of blades, needles, chemicals, drugs, barbed hooks, neural probes, thermal prods, and other essential tools needed to extract the truth.

Employing an excruciator kit grants the user a +20 bonus to Interrogation tests.

Field Suture

Common implements found on battlefields across the Imperium, field sutures are used to quickly sew shut wounds to prevent blood loss. They can vary in form, from a simple needle and thread to archaic devices which staple shut the injury. Field sutures provide a +30 bonus for Medicae tests used to staunch Blood Loss.

Glow-globe/Stablight

Just as the Inquisition acts as a light against soul-devouring darkness, so these small portable lamps act against the physical darkness of night. Glow-globes are roughly the size of a clenched fist, and can illuminate an area a dozen or so metres in radius, while cylindrical stablights can project a narrower, conical beam but at twice that distance. Both last roughly five hours before their power packs need recharging or replacing.

Grapnel & Line

A combination of clip-harness and gas-powered pistol, this can fire a hook or magnetic clasp attached to a thin, strong wire at an overhead target up to 100m away. Once the grapnel attaches to the desired spot such as a rooftop, a user can manually climb the line or activate a powered winch that can lift the user roughly 5m per round. Common sets can hold 150kg, while Good or Best can support 200 kg.

Grav Chute

Used by the Imperial Guard to drop onto the battlefield from the air, grav chutes use anti-grav fields to slow a rapid fall into a controlled (and safe) descent, with small attitude jets allowing for extra braking and directional finesse. Unlike jump packs, grav chutes are only useful for safe landings and cannot be used for bounding or aerial leaps.

If the character passes a Challenging (+0) Agility test or Routine (+20) Operate (Aeronautica) test, the grav chute allows for a safe, guided fall from any height; otherwise the character counts as having fallen two metres for each degree of failure (see Falling on page 243 in **Chapter VII: Combat**).

Hand-held Targeter

A hand-held targeter is a small device used in most forces of the Imperium. It is capable of detecting ranges to targets using optical sights for zooming, prediction systems for firing, and so on. It is commonly used by spotters assisting with artillery fire. An Acolyte with a hand-held targeter may spend a Half Action to grant another character +20 bonus to his next Ballistic Skill test when firing a weapon with the Indirect quality.



Inhaler/Injector

Many drugs require a device to administer a dose such as a syringe, spray-injector, or gas flask. Each can hold one dose of any drug, which a character may administer as a Half Action.

Lascutter

Ideal for slicing open doors and bulkheads, lascutters were originally designed for mining, where their short-range, intense cutting beam could chop apart even the toughest rock. Most can cut or weld around 10cm of metal depending on the thickness involved. They are large and cumbersome, and so can only be used as a Heavy weapon (acting as a Meltagun without any special weapon qualities) on stationary targets within 2 metres.

Laud Hailer

Whether belting orders over the ferocious roar of combat or addressing a crowd of thousands of the faithful, Imperial officials often require great volume, and a laud hailer is the perfect tool. Each can amplify normal speech levels such that an entire crowd can hear the speaker's words clearly.

Magboots

Heavy and bulky, these oversized boots contain electromagnets. They allow the wearer to adhere to metallic surfaces such as exterior hull plating, and are often found in voidship emergency lockers. Magboots reduce the character's Agility bonus by 2, but allows him to move normally when in low- or zero-gravity areas, provided there is a suitable metallic surface to walk upon.

Magnoculars

These powerful vision aids can magnify distant items into clear focus, helping ensure no heresy goes unspotted. More advanced, high-quality magnoculars can also do such things as give range read-outs, detect heat sources, calculate target location positioning, and take pict-captures of a view for later analysis.

Manacles

No bounty hunter or Enforcer would be without several sets of these solid restraints, though they are often used to ensure sacrificial offerings do not stray from a cult's altar or for other, darker purposes.

Medi-kit

Medi-kits contain synth-skin patches, antiseptics, self-sealing bandages, pressure tourniquets, and other medical aids. A standard kit grants a +10 bonus to Medicae tests so long as the user possesses the Medicae skill. Advanced versions also contain tox wands, synth-skin spray, diagnostic cogitators, and additional high-quality supplies. These grant a +20 bonus to Medicae tests (whether or not the user possesses the Medicae skill) but weight an extra 3kg and are of Rare Availability instead of Common.

Micro-bead

Also known as a bead-comm, these small devices are worn in the ear and allow for short-range communications out to roughly 1 kilometre (depending on weather conditions and intervening terrain). Each fits discreetly in the ear, with higher Craftsmanship models nearly undetectable in casual inspection.

Monotask Servo-Skull

Servo-skulls represent the honoured remains of valued Imperial servants and Tech-Priests who continue their service even after death. The skull is carefully cleansed and engraved, then fitted with a machine spirit to guide its actions, and tiny grav platings to sustain it in flight. Monotask models are dedicated to a single, basic function and are a common sight on many worlds. Each responds to basic verbal commands, and unless otherwise commanded, always hovers near its master. The types below represent only a fraction of the countless patterns found across the sector.



- **Augur:** The skull carries a scanner and vox-data systems to relay its findings. The character gains the benefits of an auspex as long as the servo-skull is within 10 metres and active.
- **Illumination:** The skull is fitted with a glow-globe or burning brazier to light an area 20 metres in radius.
- **Laud Hailer:** The servo-skull incorporates a laud-hailer, which can play recorded speech or amplify its master's speech as directed.
- **Medicae:** The skull is fitted with a medicae scanner and tools. The character gains the benefits of a standard medi-kit as long as the servo-skull is within 2 metres and active.
- **Utility:** The skull is equipped with probes, plugs, and tools to aid in technical tasks. The character gains the benefits of a combi-tool as long as the servo-skull is nearby and active.

Multicompass

When exploring new worlds, a device of this ancient tech-pattern is indispensable—but few have the means or influence to acquire one. After a few seconds of analysing planetary data, a multicompass can display directions, show topographical maps, point out compass bearings, indicate altitude, and much more. Possessing a multicompass grants a +20 bonus to all Survival and Navigation (Surface) tests.

Multikey

In the right hands, a multikey can open most standard Imperial locks and is thus is highly suspect for honest citizens to possess. This also makes it very desirable for criminals or those operating outside normal channels. A character with a multikey gains a +30 bonus to any Security test when trying to open locks.

Null Rod

Few things invoke terror as much as a psyker calling on the unholy powers of the Warp to twist reality and rend souls. While faith in the Emperor is always essential, a null rod can also be effective in negating such threats. Most null rods appear as short obsidian cylinders, often crawling with arcane icons and glyphs. Each can dampen the powers of any psykers within 2d10 metres, causing them to take all tests to use any of their psychic powers with a –30 penalty.

They also offer an Acolyte personal protection from psychic attacks by granting a +30 bonus to resist any psychic power that directly affects him. A null rod acts as a truncheon with the Power Field quality when used in close combat.

Pict Recorder

A relatively simple recording device, pict recorders—or picters—can capture audiovisual media. Most models can also display recorded data on integrated screens, with advanced models using holographic imagery. Specialised pict-servitors are essentially ambulatory recorders, brought on hazardous events or missions to autonomously capture occurrences for later codifying.

Psy Focus

Many psykers use these small, personalised items to steady themselves before accessing the terrible powers of the Warp. Each is different; some might be no more than a carved finger bone or pressed flower, while others could be a softly glowing crystal or void-iron glyph. All, however, are specially attuned to their bearers through long meditation or ritual, allowing them greater control over their abilities. When a psyker with a psy focus makes a Focus Power test (see page 194), he gains a +10 bonus.

Regicide Set

A two-player game played across all classes from lowly refresher-scrubbers to spire nobility, regicide is simple to learn but difficult to master. Many Imperial Guard officers hone their tactical senses in games with small sets that can fold into their combat kit. A typical regicide game takes 1d5 hours, and while it usually has no in-game effects, the GM can offer benefits to well-roleplayed games such as a +10 bonus to Fellowship-based tests with the opponent for the following day.

Screamer

These proximity alarms set off a piercing wail when they detect intruders. Screamers can detect sound, movement, and even odours. To activate, the player must succeed on a Challenging (+0) Tech-Use test, but the GM rolls this test in secret; players will not know how well the device is working until later on. Once set, a screamer has a Perception of 75 for the purposes of detecting sounds or motions. If it detects an intruder, it sounds its alarm, which can be heard anywhere out to one kilometre. Doors, walls, and other barriers reduce the alarm's range.

Poor craftsmanship models only detect loud noises or fast movements nearby. Good versions can detect specific sounds, movement, or even odour ranges, and can also have more subtle warning methods (such as screaming only into vox channels).

Table 5–17: Tools

Name	Weight	Availability
Auspex/Scanner	0.5 kg	Scarce
Auto Quill	—	Scarce
Clip/Drop Harness	2 kg	Common
Combi-tool	1 kg	Rare
Comm Leech	1 kg	Very Rare
Dataslate	0.5 kg	Common
Demolition Kit	4 kg	Very Rare
Diagnostor	4 kg	Rare
Disguise Kit	2 kg	Very Rare
Excruciator Kit	2 kg	Very Rare
Field Suture	0.5 kg	Average
Glow-globe/Stablight	0.5 kg	Abundant
Grapnel & Line	2 kg	Common
Grav Chute	15 kg	Rare
Hand-Held Targeter	0.5 kg	Scarce
Inhaler/Injector	0.5 kg	Common
Lascutter	4 kg	Average
Laud Hailer	4 kg	Scarce
Magboots	2 kg	Rare
Magnoculars	0.5 kg	Average
Manacles	1 kg	Plentiful
Medi-kit	2kg	Common
Micro-bead	—	Average
Monotask Servo-Skull	2 kg	Rare
Multicompass	4 kg	Near Unique
Multikey	—	Scarce
Null Rod	1 kg	Near Unique
Pict Recorder	1 kg	Average
Psy Focus	—	Average
Regicide Set	1 kg	Plentiful
Screamer	2 kg	Scarce
Signal Jammer	2 kg	Rare
Static Generator	3 kg	Very Rare
Stummer	2 kg	Average
Vox-caster	4 kg	Scarce
Writing Kit	2 kg	Plentiful

Signal Jammer

As the name suggests, this device acts to overpower local vox, data, or other transmissions within a range of roughly 1km. Basic models are overt and obvious, such that the transmitting agencies know they are being jammed. Sophisticated versions emit precisely-tuned frequencies that dampen out transmissions without anyone detecting the action.

Static Generator

Simple but obvious, this emits a powerful sphere of white noise across commonly used transmission frequencies within 30 metres. Comm devices do not function, but it is also clear to all users that they are being disrupted, and the device can be easily located. Still, when set on a timer and placed next to a transmission tower, they are effective for short-duration sabotage.

Stummer

The reverse of a screamer, a stummer blankets sound within 5m through sonic detection and dampening projectors. A character carrying an active stummer gains a +30 bonus to Stealth tests. A stummer typically has enough power for 20 minutes of continuous use before needing to be recharged, a process that takes about one hour.

Vox-caster

A standard Imperial long-distance communications device, vox-casters can transmit and receive to other units within 100km, and can reach most orbiting vessels overhead. Higher craftsmanship models have increased ranges, and can include encryption and other security settings.

Writing Kit

Simple and basic, standard writing kits contain parchment, inks, and quills for Acolytes to transcribe confessions, diagram important finds, and leave messages for fellow Acolytes.

Services

"I need transport for six to the main orbital. No questions, and that settles your debt with a lot less bloodshed than you expected, right?"

–Overheard at Port Gyre

Services represent the many mundane requirements that Acolytes need to not only exist from day to day, but also to travel across the sector to prosecute their holy charge. Necessities such as a base of operations, food and provisions, and modes of transportation: all these and more are perhaps less thrilling than combat, but just as essential to a successful investigation.

These are near limitless in scope, and can vary wildly from world to world. As such, Game Masters should create appropriate services and their levels of availability to match the adventure. The examples in **Table 5–18: Services** can be used as guidelines for this process, to give Acolytes a rough idea of what they may face. Note that some can, at the GM's discretion, increase or decrease the group's Subtlety level.

Table 5–18: Services

Type	Examples	Avl
Accommodations		
Low Grade	Hab capsule, grox barn, taproom hammock	Abundant
Mid Grade	Basic hab room, main cabin quarters, mid-hive hostelry	Average
High Grade	Grand hall lodgings, high berth billet, spire suite	Rare
Provisions		
Low Grade	Stickrats, fungus loaf, void sweat ale	Abundant
Mid Grade	Vatmeal cakes, grox stew, bowl of recaf	Average
High Grade	Jellied heffen tongue, vintage amasec, roast starfin cheek	Rare
Transportation		
Low Grade	Rickshaw, dust sailer, hab conveyer	Abundant
Mid Grade	Basic autocarriage, short-range cutter, intra-hive tramway	Average
High Grade	Orbital shuttle, dedicated autocarriage with driver, furnished palanquin	Rare

Accommodations: This covers all manner of rented lodgings for a single night's stay, from crude tavern dosses to the glittering suites of a high spire.

Provisions: The foodstuffs and beverages needed for a single meal, ranging from stale slurry-cake to ambrosial rox eggs.

Transportation: This includes travel across a world or to points in orbit, but not including interplanetary or interstellar journeys (see below for extended void travel). The duration and destination can also modify standard examples.

Travel through the Void

The eradication of heresy can take Acolytes far from their home world, or even home region, to new systems on the far side of the sector. Unless the Acolytes or their Inquisitor have access to a dedicated vessel (perhaps under arrangement with a captain, or even their own ship), they need to manage space travel just as they must manage travel across a world. Much of the time this is relatively straightforward as most ships, even those not dedicated to passenger travel, can take on travellers in spare berths. **Table 5–19: Finding a Ship** covers examples of typical vessels and the Availability to find passage on a routine voyage (per passenger on one passage). Berthing and shipboard meals can vary, but the examples in **Table 5–18 Services** for accommodations and provisions can serve as suitable representations for their ship-board equivalents. Note that not all ships have all levels of accommodations, and the GM should adjust berthings depending on the nature of the vessel.

Travel to dangerous destinations, forbidden worlds, and other unwelcome locations are another matter, and the GM should modify the examples in **Table 5–19: Finding a Ship** accordingly. Illegal cargo or passengers can also cause problems, as can requests for expeditious speed or travel along hazardous Warp routes. In many circumstances, the Acolytes might need to book special passage, or convince a captain to travel on an unplanned voyage; this should be reflected in a much lower Availability requiring more difficult negotiations and Influence tests. Inquisitorial commandeering is always a possibility, though this should impact the Acolyte's Subtlety and possibly their Inquisitor's Influence as well.

Table 5–19: Finding a Ship

Ship Type	Availability
Bulk transport	Abundant
Passenger ship	Plentiful
Pilgrim ship	Common
System ship (intra-system only)	Average
Tramp freighter	Average
Void jumper (nearby systems only)	Scarce

Medical Care

Service to the Emperor is never easy, especially for Acolytes who must singularly enforce His will. The aftermath of many a battle can leave them near-death, and only with proper medicae attention can they live to serve another day. **Table 5–20: Medical Care** can serve as a guide for Acolytes seeking such assistance.

Type: This indicates the level of care to be found, ranging from poor to excellent.

Example: A typical representative of this level of care.

Availability: Good medicaes or other healers are often hard to find; their Availability here indicates a single attempt to care for an injured character. The GM should modify this as needed to reflect extended care as well as accommodations for lengthy stays.

Effect: This represents the medicae's skill level and any bonuses or training to use on his skill tests heal his patient. See **Chapter III: Skills** for information on medical attention and relevant skill usage.

Table 5–20: Medical Care

Type	Example	Avl	Effect
Poor	Underhive bonecutter	Average	Int 30, Medicae skill +0 (rank 1)
Standard	Factory medic	Scarce	Int 40, Medicae skill +0 (rank 1)
Good	Trained medicae, med-servitor	Rare	Int 50, Medicae skill +10 (rank 2)
Excellent	Spire Medicae	Very Rare	Int 60, Medicae skill +20 (rank 3)

Cybernetics

"The Flesh is Weak."

–Common Adeptus Mechanicus litany

Cybernetics are a highly visible part of the Imperium. It is rare for the powerful to not have at least one mechanical implant, given the dangerous nature of life in the 41st Millennium. Age and wear also contribute to the substitution of organs or other body parts. The Adeptus Mechanicus holds that the replacement of flesh with blessed technology acts to move one closer to the purity of the Omnissiah. Many bionics are indeed superior to the organics they replace, though some would argue that with each alteration of flesh to metal there is a price to be paid in humanity, and perhaps also sanity.



Due to superstition and the uneven availability of technology across the Imperium, the sophistication and use of bionics varies widely, as does the reaction to those who display augmentations. Each different kind of cybernetic device grants the user different benefits (and sometimes penalties) depending on craftsmanship (see page 141). The exception to this is Best craftsmanship cybernetics, which rarely provide additional benefits beyond those of Good craftsmanship, but are far more impressive in the construction and design. This can be reflected in bonuses to Social tests, Influence, or Subtlety at the GM's discretion. The Availabilities listed on page 182 represent Common cybernetics. All mechadendrite cybernetics are considered to be of Good craftsmanship unless otherwise noted.

Bionic Replacements

Bionic replacement limbs are assumed to operate at the same level of strength and dexterity as the body they are attached to—rather than risk ripping themselves out of their host through overpressure—though their robust construction does add 2 to the owner's Toughness bonus against hits scored to that particular location. Damage taken to these locations counts towards damage to the character, and Critical damage dealt to these locations functions as normal. Any result that causes bleeding or some other inappropriate result instead renders the bionic limb useless. Critical damage to a limb that results in death has the full effect, as it can be assumed that the limb explodes into shrapnel, incinerates, or discharges stored energy through its owner with lethal effect.

Note that the bonuses and penalties relate only to tests made using the bionic limb, and characters who possess two bionic limbs do not gain double the bonus, but rather they may apply the bonus regardless of which bionic limb they are using.

Bionic Arm

Bionic arms are a common replacement, and Common models can mimic normal hand and arm functions, including dexterity and even sense of touch.

- Poor craftsmanship versions are more cumbersome and visibly artificial; halve the owner's Agility characteristic (rounded up) where matters of fine dexterity are involved. In addition, Weapon Skill and Ballistic Skill tests made when using the limb suffer a –5 penalty.
- Good craftsmanship bionic arms improve on natural design and provide a +10 bonus on Agility tests requiring delicate manipulation.
- Best craftsmanship bionic arms provide a +10 bonus on Agility tests requiring delicate manipulation and add a +10 bonus to Strength tests using the arm. They can be also used to store small items (such as pistol ammo clips) inside concealed interior compartments within the arm.

Attaching Bionics and Implants

Implants and bionics are only available if the character has access to both the resources and the skilled labour to have them installed; commonly this is only available in substantial medicae facilities and worlds with a high technological base.

If a character can find a chirurgeon willing to install a bionic or implant, then the process takes no less than 2d10 days, minus one day for each point of his Toughness bonus—to a minimum of one day. How difficult it is to attach a bionic or implant is up to the GM. He might decide that given enough time, and in an advanced enough facility, it is automatic, or he can call on the chirurgeon to make a series of Medicae or even Tech-Use tests that could lead to such damage conditions as permanent crippling or Blood Loss (see page 243).

Bionic Heart

The paranoid (or the prepared) are ever-willing to replace crude flesh with more durable, armoured materials—the light armour shielding of a bionic heart provides a last line of defence. Superior models can be triggered to pump more rapidly to increase physical capacity, though this risks bodily strain as the rest of the circulatory system is put under pressure. A character with this implant gains +1 Armour point to the Body location—this bonus stacks with any armour worn—and gains the Sprint talent.

Bionic Legs

These bionics are fully integrated into the hip with a spinal link, and Common versions allow the user to walk, run, and climb at normal human levels.

- Poor craftsmanship models are lumbering affairs that reduce a character's Movement rate by 1, and when running, the user must succeed on an Ordinary (+10) Agility test or fall Prone at the end of his movement.
- Good craftsmanship bionic legs grant the owner the Sprint talent, and add a +20 bonus to Agility tests that he makes when attempting to jump or leap.

Bionic Respiratory System

Common bionic lungs and implanted respiratory systems mimic the action of human lungs and keep the body supplied with oxygen. Such characters gain a +20 bonus to Toughness tests made to resist airborne toxins and gas weapons.

- Poor bionic lungs offer the same benefits as the Common system, but are raucously loud affairs and characters suffer a –20 penalty to Stealth tests. Their generally poor oxygen supply to the body means that the character suffers a –10 penalty on all tests involving strenuous physical activity.
- Good bionic lungs count as a full life support system—if for any reason the user's own respiratory system fails, his bionic lungs keep his blood oxygenated—and can be designed to be unnoticeable if desired.

Bionic Senses

Eyes, ears, and even noses are often lost through combat or accident, and replacement versions use cranial interfaces to allow a very close approximation to natural senses. Bionic eyes in particular are frequently seen amongst senior Imperial Guard officers, Rogue Traders, and other powerful individuals. Common systems, while usually clearly artificial and often oversized, manage to more or less duplicate the approximate human range of senses adequately and have no further game effects.

- Poor quality cybernetic senses are problem-ridden imitations of the real thing. Hearing might be troubled by static, for example, or vision rendered in low-resolution monochrome. A character with this system suffers a –20 penalty to tests made involving the cybernetic sense.
- Good cybernetic senses grant a +10 bonus to tests using that particular sense, and a +20 bonus to tests made to resist attacks on the sense itself, such as deafening noises and blinding flashes. Advanced cybernetic eyes can also incorporate magnifying lenses, a full photo-visor, or a system granting the Dark-sight trait (see page 135). Advanced cybernetic ears can also include an internal micro-bead system. Each additional upgrade requires a separate Requisition test to be fitted into existing cybernetic senses.

Bionic Augmentations and Implants

Not all cybernetics are designed to replace human limbs or organs; others are integrated into the holy form of man purely to add functionality, or create entirely new abilities. Most are highly visible and act as clear indications of the Ominissiah's blessing. Those that extend outside the body, such as mechadendrites, are more akin to weapon than limbs for purposes of targeting, and only cease functioning when indicated in the appropriate Critical Effects–Body table results from Critical damage (see page 232).

Augur Array

These implanted devices duplicate the effects of sensor systems that go beyond normal human senses. In all cases, their use requires concentration and a Half Action. Common systems function identically to a standard hand-held auspex device (see page 175).

- Poor systems possess only a single detection ability (heat, radiation, electromagnetics, or very rarely daemonic taint) and have the limited range of 20 metres. If the augur is set to detect daemonic taint, it has the possibility to be overwhelmed and malfunction should a Warp-denizen get too close.
- Good systems function as a full auspex, but also allow the character to re-roll all Perception-based tests.

Autosanguine

This ancient and blessed microscopic technology flows as a metallic liquid within the character's bloodstream, repairing minor injuries and accelerating healing. It repairs minor injuries and speeds recovery. When applying healing, the character is always considered Lightly Damaged, and heals at an increased rate, removing 2 points of damage per day instead of 1.

Table 5–21: Cybernetics

Name	Availability
Augur Array	Rare
Autosanguine†	Very Rare
Baleful Eye	Near Unique
Bionic Arm	Scarce
Bionic Legs	Scarce
Bionic Respiratory System	Rare
Bionic Heart	Very Rare
Bionic Senses	Rare
Calculus Logi Upgrade	Very Rare
Cerebral Implants	Very Rare
Cranial Armour	Scarce
Ferric Lure Implants†	Very Rare
Interface Port	Rare
Internal Reservoir	Rare
Locator Matrix	Rare
Luminen Capacitor†	Very Rare
Maglev Coils†	Very Rare
Mechadendrite†	Very Rare
Memorance Implant	Rare
Mind Impulse Unit	Rare
MIU Weapon Interface	Rare
Respiratory Filter Implant	Rare
Scribe-tines	Rare
Subskin Armour	Very Rare
Synthmuscle	Rare
Vocal Implant	Scarce
Volitor Implant	Rare

† *Some cybernetic systems are only provided to tech-adepts of the Adeptus Mechanicus. It is possible, though, that skilled hereteks might risk the wrath of the Machine Cult by implanting crude versions of these systems in anyone willing to pay their price.*

Baleful Eye

This legendary archaeotech bionic pattern incorporates a tiny las weapon. Each baleful eye has been passed from recipient to recipient across centuries or millennia, reclaimed by the Machine Cult whenever its owner dies. As might be imagined, it is very intimidating when used as a part of negotiations with primitive societies. A character with this implant has a weapon in his eye that counts as a hot-shot laspistol (see page 154) with a range of 10m. The baleful eye can be fired even if the character's hands are full. It has no clip size, however a jam result causes the character to lose sight in the eye for a number of rounds equal to the degrees of failure on the attack.

Calculus Logi Upgrade

These bionics are internal cogitator implants which aid in data retention and processing. The user can rapidly sift through stacked dataslates and parchments, applying intuition to vast reams of data far beyond the capabilities of a normal man. This implant grants the user a +10 bonus to Literacy, Logic, and Scholastic Lore tests.

Cerebral Implants

Commonly used to repair a severely damaged brain or (hopefully) augment its abilities, these often-risky implant systems represent a major step from simply replacing a limb to altering a character from human to mechanism. Common-level implants can restore paralysed and brain-damaged users to a semblance of normality, but with a permanent loss of 1d10 points from the character's Weapon Skill, Ballistic Skill, Agility, Intelligence, and Fellowship characteristics.

- Poor versions restore brain function, but destroy the subject's personality and memories, rendering them no better than a servitor, and as such are unsuitable for PCs.
- Good cerebral implants are very rare even among high ranking Imperial officials, and are exceedingly difficult to acquire, becoming Near Unique in Availability. These grant the user the Unnatural Intelligence (2) trait (see page 139) and a +20 bonus to Logic and Lore tests, thanks to the superior mental capabilities he now enjoys.

Cranial Armour

This augmentation covers or replaces most of the skull with layers of plasteel and gel padding to better prevent concussion and other brain injuries. This implant adds +1 Armour point to the Head, and stacks with any worn armour on that location.

Ferric Lure Implants

Powerful electromagnets are implanted in the Acolyte, allowing him to cast forth a net of invisible energy as a Full Action after a successful Challenging (+0) Willpower test. He can call an unsecured metal object into his hand; the object cannot mass more than 1 kg per point of Willpower bonus, and must be within 20 metres. He must already have Mechanicus Implants trait (see page 137) for this system to function, and it can be improved through certain talents as described in **Chapter IV: Talents & Traits**.

Interface Port

The Acolyte now has a mechanical port implanted in his body, commonly in the rear of the neck, which can be connected to machines via a data cable. This allows the user faster and smoother access to the valuable information within, and grants a +10 bonus to Common Lore, Inquiry, or Tech-Use tests whilst connected to a relevant mechanism or data spool.

Internal Reservoir

This implant acts as a powerful battery, storing energy for various implants and (especially) for functions that require energy to be expended in rapid or violent fashions. When it is fully charged, the Acolyte no longer gains Fatigue from using Luminen Capacitors either to recharge or attack something, but each use of those implants drains the reservoir by half. The battery fully recharges after one day of resting.

Locator Matrix

Micro-cogitators implanted at the base of the skull allow the user to be aware of the direction of the planetary poles, the Acolyte's present location to within a few metres, relative velocity, altitude, time of day, and other valuable information. The user must still have access to maps and other planetary data in order to benefit from this information, however—knowing one is at a specific location on a planetary surface has little meaning without knowing what is over the next rise, or what is the direction needed to reach a given destination.

Luminen Capacitor

This implanted energy source charges internal capacitors, allowing the character to recharge devices or even unleash powerful energy blasts. With a successful Toughness test, the character recharges or powers machinery. This requires one minute of mental focus and meditation. The difficulty of the Toughness test varies depending on the nature of the powered system.

- **Ordinary (+10):** Simple power cell, glow-globe
- **Challenging (+0):** Lasgun charge pack, dataslate
- **Difficult (–10):** Shuttle launch systems, servo-skull
- **Hard (–20):** Lascannon charge pack, servitor
- **Very Hard (–30):** Cogitator core, xenos technology

The device can also be used offensively, but requires talents to use properly as described in **Chapter IV: Talents & Traits**. Only an Acolyte with the Mechanicus Implants trait (see page 137) may use this device.

Poor craftsmanship variants impose a –10 penalty to all Toughness tests made to use them. Good craftsmanship variants grant a +10 bonus to all Toughness tests made to use them.

Maglev Coils

Archaeotech systems of powerful gravimetric coils are implanted in the body, allowing the user to become unshackled from gravity's grasp for short periods. Using a Half Action, the user may hover 20-30 centimetres off the ground for a number of minutes equal to 1d10 plus the character's Toughness bonus. The character must employ a Half Action each round to concentrate on operating this implant and may use the other action to move normally. The character can slow his rate of descent when falling so long as this implant is active when the character reaches the ground, reducing all falling damage to a maximum of 1d10+3 Impact damage. Each time the character activates the coils, it drains the stored power and cannot be used again until recharged (which takes 24 hours).

Mechadendrite

Mechadendrites are mechanical attachments of brass and steel that act as additional arms. They are normally mounted on the shoulders or back, though some within the Mechanicum also project these cybernetics from their waists or chests. Each is usually 2 metres in length when fully extended, and has a specialised function based around the mechanisms affixed at their end. The number of mechadendrites coiled or folded around a Tech-Priest's crimson-robed figure is often an excellent indicator of his rank within the Priesthood of Mars.

Unless stated otherwise, mechadendrites can only be used to perform tasks that the owner already knows how to do. For example, a character with a medicae mechadendrite must have the Medicae skill in order to take advantage of the extra abilities the limb grants. A character must have the appropriate Mechadendrite Use talent (see page 130) to operate his mechadendrite, and the maximum number of mechadendrites he can have installed upon his body is equal to his Toughness bonus.

Ballistic

Designed for ranged combat, this mechadendrite is fitted with a weapon that functions as a laspistol that does not require recharging. The user does not need weapon training in this weapon class to fire the mechadendrite's weapon without the normal untrained penalty, and can attack with this weapon as his Reaction.

Manipulator

A heavy and powerful attachment, this mechadendrite is designed for heavy lifting and handling of industrial gear. It grants the user +20 to Strength-based tests; the vicious gripping and crushing pincers can also tether the user to gantries or suitably heavy objects as a Free Action. Once per round, the character can utilise this mechadendrite as a weapon by spending a Half Action or a Reaction to make a Standard Attack action with it. It counts as a melee weapon that inflicts 1d10+2 Impact damage, Pen 0.

While powerful, the manipulator is not subtle, and attempts to use it for such tasks as dataslate typing, inscribing sacrificial etchings, handling delicate objects, or the like only ends with equipment being dropped, smashed, or otherwise ruined.

Medicae

This model hosts a variety of medical and surgical tools ideal for combat first aid, and grants a +10 bonus to Medicae and Interrogation tests. The mechadendrite houses six injector pistons, each of which may be filled with one dose of a drug. In addition to providing first aid, the mechadendrite's flesh staplers may be used to staunch Blood Loss as a Half Action. A small chainscalpel attachment reduces the difficulty of limb amputation to Challenging (+0). Once per round, the character can utilise this mechadendrite as a weapon by spending a Half Action or a Reaction to make a Standard Attack action. It counts as a melee weapon with the Balanced quality that inflicts 1d5 Rending damage, Pen 0.

Optical

Often consisting of highly flexible, snake-like tubing, this contains pict-capture and other sensory devices for inspection and detection. It is long for a mechadendrite, extending to 3 metres, and grants a +10 bonus to all vision-based Perception tests. The mounted pict-devices allow it to examine surfaces at a microscopic level or to be used as telescopic sight. It contains an infrared torch and sensors with a range of 40m, and so within this area the user ignores combat or other penalties due to darkness. The mechadendrite is also fitted with a stablight that can be tinted a variety of different colours depending on the controller's whim.

Utility

The most common type of mechadendrite, these are tipped with a variety of mechanisms for the repair and succour of blessed technologies. It counts as a combi-tool, granting a +10 bonus to all Tech-Use tests. The limb also houses six injector pistons, each of which may be filled with one dose of a sacred unguent. In addition to this, the limb contains an electrically-powered censer, which can gust incense fumes over troublesome faults. Unless the censer is deactivated, all Perception tests made to detect the Tech-Priest that rely on a sense of smell gain a +10 bonus. As a Half Action, the censer can create one "blast" of smoke every fifteen minutes, which imposes a –5 penalty to Weapon Skill tests made by all living creatures within a two-metre radius for one round. Once per round, the character can also utilise this mechadendrite as a weapon by spending a Half Action or a Reaction to make a Standard Attack action. It counts as a melee weapon with the Defensive quality that inflicts 1d5 Rending damage, Pen 2.



Bionics and Craftsmanship

The craftsmanship of individual bionic parts should have an impact on roleplaying as well as in-game mechanics. For instance, Poor craftsmanship bionics might be crude, obvious augmetics that creak, grind, squeal, or constantly leak fluids. On the other hand, Good craftsmanship bionics could be so unobtrusive that they are mostly invisible to the naked eye. Best craftsmanship bionics should be gold- and brass-inlaid works of art, perhaps reflecting an ancient and refined design.

Memorance Implant

This implant is a neurally-linked datavault and pict-capture array, often incorporating augmetic replacement of one or both eyes, that records information on people or scenes viewed. It can then later replay that information, or overlay the present view with additional data on people and objects viewed. It is a tool of chroniclers, loremancers, and masters of ceremonies, as well as factors or nobles who like to see the secrets of their rivals overlaid upon their view of the negotiating table. It provides a +10 bonus to Trade (Loremancer) tests or other tests in social situations where the recorded information provides leverage or value.

Mind Impulse Unit (MIU)

These devices, also known as sense-links, allow the owner to interface directly with a machine or technological device. MIUs see widespread use among the Adeptus Mechanicus, who regard them as objects of divine communion. A basic model involves a single spinal or cortex connector, while advanced variants include wrist connector probes—and possibly mechadendrite connectors—in addition to the spinal plug. Common models impose no modifiers to machine spirit communication, and add a +10 bonus to Tech-Use or Operate tests used in conjunction with devices capable of MIU linking.

- Poor MIU systems require a Challenging (+0) Willpower test to use and impose a –10 penalty when attempting to interface with a device.
- Good models grant a +10 bonus to commune with machine spirits and for Tech-Use, Operate, Logic, Inquiry, and Ballistic Skill tests made as part of interfacing with the MIU systems.

MIU Weapon Interface

Unlike the more advanced MIU version normally only granted to priests of the Adeptus Mechanicus, this model is more simplified, allowing the user to remotely operate a single weapon which is attached user's body. While not as elaborate, it is easier to use and a favourite of many militant professions.

This system allows the user to fire the linked ranged weapon as a Free Action during his turn. Note that he can still only take a single Action with the Attack subtype during his turn. This additional weapon must be connected to the user via the MIU weapon interface, and is usually equipped as a shoulder mount.

Respiratory Filter Implant

These are implanted inside the lungs or involve masses of tubes, wires, vox-grills, or other augmetic parts replacing the neck and upper chest. The implant sifts out most toxic gases; inhaled particulate matter is also filtered, making breathing easier in heavily polluted atmospheres. This implant grants the user a +20 bonus to resist inhaled poisons, gas weapons, or atmospheric toxins.

Scribe-tines

The hand and lower forearm are replaced with specialised and sensitive tools ideal for manipulating parchment, autoscribing, dataslate tuning, and other efforts to record and preserve information. While somewhat disquieting in appearance, they are viewed with favour by hive-world scholars and lexmechanics. This implant gives the user a +10 bonus to all Lore skill tests.

Subskin Armour

Thin carapace plating is inserted under the skin in various locations, giving the user added protection against damage. While not as impressive as most augmentations and sometimes uncomfortable, subskin armour is very reliable. This implant adds +2 Armour points to the Arms, Body, and Legs locations, which stacks with any other Armour points for these locations.

Synthmuscle

Ropey strands of vat-grown muscle tissue, thick with slurried nutrients and laced with flakweave, are woven into existing muscle groups, granting increased strength of varying levels. This implant grants the Unnatural Strength (1) trait; Best craftsmanship grafts instead grant the Unnatural Strength (4) trait but also impose a –10 penalty on Agility tests due to the newly misshapen and unnatural body form.

Vocal Implant

This implant is usually found with those who use their voice to project commands or proclamations, such as Ecclesiarchy Preachers or Adeptus Arbites Crowd Dispersal Officers. This implant works to amplify the vocal cords to an inhuman range in order to shout commands over the noise of a raging battle, and counts as using a laud hailer.

Volitor Implant

The subject has cranial surgery to implant neural receptors and artificial nerve routing, and can be compelled not to reveal a certain item of information, remain within a set area, or perform a specific task. If the subject attempts—or is forced—to counter this compulsion, his brain shuts down into unconsciousness, or even death for some severe volitor patterns.

Vehicles and Mounts

"Plating looks thick enough. It comes with the pintle-mounted heavy stubber, correct?"

–Overheard in a Desoleum bazaar

The investigation and elimination of heresy often requires extensive travel, not only through huge manufactorums or hab districts but often across wide vistas or continents to other hives or remote locations. Vehicles and other modes of planetary transportation, including living steeds, become necessary in such times, but they can also offer Acolytes greater speed and firepower in their quests. The following section describes how these are used in Dark Heresy, including some common versions found across the Askellon sector. Like weapons and armour, these represent only a fraction to be found, as each world and locale is sure to have unique mechanical and living modes of transport.

Types

Within Dark Heresy, there are six types of vehicle and mounts:

- **Tracked:** While wheeled tyres are easy to manufacture and replace, many Imperial war machines make use of massive, grinding treads instead. Tracks allow a vehicle to barrel forward through difficult terrain without losing traction, and are much more resilient to small arms rounds. Unless otherwise noted, vehicles with this trait must remain on the ground at all times while moving.
- **Wheeled:** The wheel is one of humanity's most versatile inventions, and many vehicles still benefit from the means of transport it provides. Wheeled vehicles are also easier to repair than their more resilient tracked counterparts; replacing a damaged wheel takes far less time and expertise in the ways of the machine spirits than resetting a fouled set of treads. Unless otherwise noted, vehicles with this trait must remain on the ground at all times while moving.
- **Skimmers:** These vehicles hover over the ground, floating from place to place as their whirring engines stir up the dust below. Thanks to their ability to defy gravity, Skimmers can be extremely fast and nimble, though they also tend to be more fragile than ground-based vehicles.
- **Walkers:** This vehicle's motive systems are not wheels or treads, but legs. Whether these be of steel, grafted synthmuscle, or even natural flesh and blood, this vehicle moves more like a creature than a standard vehicle. Walkers are typically not as fast as Wheeled or Tracked vehicles, but are often more agile and more capable of negotiating difficult terrain.
- **Aircraft:** These use the aerodynamic principles of lift and powerful engines to remain aloft. They can range from exotic flying mounts to air superiority fighters like the Imperial Navy Thunderbolt.
- **Spacecraft:** These vehicles are capable of travelling through the cold vacuum of space. Although this vehicle trait does not include the massive, kilometres-long Imperial starships, it does include various kinds of smaller craft that these mighty vessels employ, including Aquila landers, Arvus lighters, and Fury interceptors.

Vehicle Speeds

In Dark Heresy, vehicles have two different modes of movement:

- **Cruising Speed:** A vehicle's Cruising Speed represents how fast a vehicle moves when it is travelling long distances and is therefore mostly relevant to narrative time. This speed is also used for high-speed situations, such as chases.
- **Tactical Speed:** A vehicle's Tactical Speed represents how fast a vehicle moves in situations that require skilful handling, or when the vehicle is operating in a limited or specific area such as a narrow canyon or small field. This is not the vehicle's full speed, but an abstraction of the distance it can move taking into account turns, acceleration, driver distractions, and terrain. Vehicles use Tactical Speed during structured time.

Manoeuvrability

Much of a vehicle's manoeuvring depends on the skill of the driver, but some vehicles are innately more manoeuvrable than others. An Eldar Falcon grav-tank is extremely fast and nimble, able to duck and weave to avoid enemy fire, whereas a Leman Russ Demolisher is a ponderous leviathan of armour and is more likely to plough straight through a hab block than go around it. A vehicle's Manoeuvrability is a representation of how well a vehicle responds to the commands of its driver or crew. This is represented by the vehicle's Manoeuvrability value, which provides a modifier (either positive or negative) to the driver's Operate skill while operating said vehicle. The vehicle's type can also play a part in how manoeuvrable a vehicle is, as can some vehicle traits. These are noted where applicable.

Crew and Carrying Capacity

Many vehicles are designed primarily to carry passengers, either as civilian worker transports or military armoured personnel carriers used to ferry soldiers into combat. Even non-transport vehicles can have large crew complements; the Leman Russ battle tank can have up to six crew at any given time. Other vehicles, such as the nimble Sentinel scout walker, only have room for one.

All vehicles have a crew rating that lists both how many crew a vehicle may have at its maximum, as well as what positions those crew must fill (e.g. driver, gunner, sponson gunner, etc.). Some vehicles also have a Carrying Capacity to represent their ability to transport additional personnel outside of their regular crew complement. Carrying Capacity is always looked at in terms of standard-sized humans, and the GM should be sure to keep the vehicle's total Carrying Capacity in mind should larger beings (like Ogryn) or smaller constructs (like servo-skulls) find themselves needing transport. The Chimera armoured transport, for example, has a Carrying Capacity of 12, indicating that twelve standard-human-sized people can be transported within the vehicle along with the crew.

Facings and Integrity

All vehicles have facings, used to determine how many Armour points (see page 255) an attacker must overcome. They also determine the Firing Arcs of some weapons, especially Fixed and Hull-Mounted weaponry. There are four facings:

- **Front:** Represented by a 90° arc to the front of the vehicle, any attacks made within this arc strike a vehicle's Front facing and is applied to the Armour points (AP) there.
- **Rear:** Represented by a 90° arc to the Rear of the vehicle, any attacks made within this arc strike a vehicle's Rear facing and is applied to the AP there.
- **Left Side/Right Side:** Both of these locations are represented by 90° arcs, and while most vehicles have the same number of Armour points on their left and right side, it is important to distinguish between the two. A vehicle that has a weapon on its Right Side facing but not its Left Side facing cannot suffer damage to that weapon if attacked from the opposite facing.

Vehicles also have an integrity value, representing how much damage a vehicle can sustain before exploding into ruin. See page 255 for more information on vehicle integrity.

Weapons, Weapon Mounting, and Firing Arcs

Most vehicles in the Imperium are armed, ranging from the heavy stubbers on many civilian autocarriages to the massive volcano cannons mounted on Shadowsword super-heavy tanks. All vehicle weapon entries include the statistics for the weapon, which crew member controls the weapon, and also what Weapon Mounting the weapon has. A weapon's mounting determines its fire arc. Each type of weapon mounting may also have additional rules.

There are five main types of weapon mountings:

- **Fixed:** These weapons are embedded within the hull of a vehicle and cannot turn. They might have a limited vertical traversal ability, but otherwise only fire directly ahead; to turn the gun from left to right, the vehicle itself must move.
- **Hull:** These are similar to Fixed weapons in that they have a limited range of movement, but can move from left to right as well as up and down. A Hull weapon has a 45° fire arc from the facing the weapon is mounted.
- **Turret:** Turret-mounted weapons are often placed high on a vehicle on top of its hull to give them the greatest line of sight in as many directions as possible. A Turret weapon has a 360° fire arc, and only the vehicle itself can block this arc (e.g., a vehicle with multiple turrets would find that the fire arc of one turret blocks the other turret, or the vehicle itself depending on its shape). Turrets cannot turn to face directions instantaneously, and thus it takes a Half Action for every full 180° that a turret needs to turn. The GM and the players should always be aware of which direction their turrets are facing, as this can be important for Critical damage. Additionally, due to their heavier armour, turrets treat all hits to them as hits to the Front facing, regardless of the direction the attack came from in relation to the turret's current facing (see **Table 7–28 Vehicle Hit Locations** on page 254).

- **Sponson:** Sponson-mounted weapons are often used defensively on the flanks—and sometimes even the rear—of a vehicle, whilst the vehicle's main weapon continues its assault upon the enemy. A Sponson weapon has a 180° fire arc from the facing the weapon is mounted (e.g. a Sponson-mounted Weapon on a vehicle's Left Side facing has a 180° Fire Arc to the left of the vehicle). Walkers, unless specified otherwise, treat all their weapons as Sponson-mounted, specifically a Sponson mounting that gives them a 180° Fire Arc to the Walker's Front facing. This is to represent the fact that most Walkers have the ability to twist their torsos or even move their arms independently of its main body in much the same way as a normal human does.
- **Pintle:** These are usually optional or additional weapons bolted onto turret rings or placed in areas where spare crew or even passengers can use them. They are usually comparatively light weapons, such as heavy stubbers, and are used to defend the vehicle in much the same way as Sponson weaponry. Unlike the other mounted weaponry, Pintle weapons do not automatically have a crew member assigned to them. Instead, they can be fired by anyone who can realistically reach one during his turn, or who reached one in a previous turn. Pintle weapons usually have a 360° fire arc, as they are often mounted on the highest point of a vehicle, but there are exceptions to this and the GM should be aware of what might block a Pintle weapon's fire arc.

Vehicle Traits

Much like characters, vehicles possess traits that modify their base rules, granting them new abilities or setting new limitations on the feats they can be used to perform. These traits include various means of locomotion, and also include other characteristics.

Amphibious

The vehicle has additional waterproofing, sealed fuel lines, or is just simply resistant to water. Amphibious vehicles treat bodies of water as open ground.

Bike

The smallest sub-type of vehicles, bikes take many different forms, from the iron steeds ridden by the Adeptus Astartes, to the nimble darts of the Eldar, right through to the smoke-belching contraptions favoured by the Orks. Bikes follow all the standard rules for vehicles and are treated as having the Open-Topped trait. However, due to their size and lower profiles, in melee characters attacking a vehicle with the Bike trait can choose between the rider and the vehicle without needing to make a Called Shot. Bikes are usually Wheeled vehicles, but can also be Skimmers or Tracked. They cannot make Ram! actions due to their light construction.

Bred for War

The mount is used to the rigours of combat and the din of battle, and thus automatically passes all Willpower tests to avoid fleeing due to the Bestial trait. Vehicles without the Living trait cannot possess this trait.

Daemonic Possession

Thanks to the bound daemonic essence that drives it, a vehicle with the Daemonic Possession trait does not require a pilot or gunners to function. Instead, the vehicle uses its own characteristics profile on all necessary tests. Essentially, a vehicle with this trait is its own pilot and gunner. This trait allows a vehicle to fire all of its weapons as a part of a single attack action as though each weapon had its own gunner. A vehicle with this trait can make melee attacks if it is armed with a melee weapon and adjacent to a viable target. In addition, a Possessed vehicle that suffers any Critical damage that results in damage to the crew ignores these effects. The vehicle itself can still suffer Critical Effects from these results, but any damage that would be inflicted upon the crew is ignored.



Damage Control

The vehicle possesses some limited form of self-repair. This could be an ancient machine spirit, slaved servitors, quick-growing Eldar Wraithbone, or even a team of Ork Grots scurrying across the hull hammering at loose armour plates and holding wires together. When a vehicle with the Damage Control vehicle trait suffers Critical damage due to Righteous Fury, the vehicle's commander (or driver if there is no designated commander) can force the 1d5 to be re-rolled. If a vehicle with the Damage Control trait ever catches fire, then attempting to put out that fire is a Free Action for whichever crewmember or passenger makes the attempt.

Enclosed

The greater majority of vehicles are completely enclosed, keeping their crew and passengers safe from the outside elements with thick armour, bulky hatchways, and heavy glassteel visors. Crew and passengers within an Enclosed vehicle cannot attack targets with their own personal weapons unless they have some way of getting outside of the vehicle, be it through a hatch, doorway, or firing slit. Within an Enclosed vehicle, crew and passengers cannot be specifically targeted by those outside the vehicle (unless there is a particularly good reason, such as a mind-based psychic attack).

Enhanced Motive Systems

The vehicle has some way of gaining extra speed out of its engines, either via an enhanced form of promethium, ancient xeno-technology, or even a squig fuel injector. Vehicles with the Enhanced Motive Systems trait can move up to twice their Tactical Speed as a Half-Action rather than a Full Action, and can up to move three times their Tactical Speed as a Full Action. This applies to the Floor It! action as well, where vehicles with this trait move triple rather than double their Tactical Speed for the Full Action, and the Operate test for this action is treated as Ordinary (+10) rather than Difficult (–10).

Environmentally Sealed

The vehicle is sealed off from the outside world completely, allowing it to function in almost any environment. It will also have its own life support system. Vehicles that become exposed due to Critical damage results lose this ability until their armour is repaired. Passengers and crew cannot fire their own personal weaponry from a vehicle with the Environmentally Sealed trait without first breaching those seals (or if they were already breached due to vehicle damage).

Extremely Volatile

The vehicle possesses an unstable power plant, large ammunition bays, or great quantities of explosive fuel. Extremely Volatile vehicles double their chance of exploding whenever they catch fire. When an Extremely Volatile vehicle explodes, all those caught in the blast must make a Difficult (–10) Agility test or catch fire (see page 243).



Immobile

Some vehicles, such as drop pods, are deployed via types of motive systems that do not operate on the ground. An Immobile vehicle cannot move under its own power, has a default Manoeuvrability Value of +0, and cannot make use of the Jink action. Immobile vehicles often have some other method of movement (such as large rocket engines to bring them in via orbital drop), and Motive Systems Critical damage applies to these methods.

Living

This vehicle is a flesh and blood creature (or at the very least incorporates such a being into its chassis) which is used as a steed or conveyance. It has the standard set of characteristics, but follows the rules for other vehicles in many other ways. It takes damage in the same way as a vehicle, but the Game Master should modify the way some effects occur, especially for Critical damage results. For instance, if a steed suffers a hit to its "motive systems" location, it might suffer a vicious gash in its leg rather than having a tyre explode. Explosive or Fire effects might similarly be translated into terrible disembowelments or skeletal destruction. Rather than needing promethium to keep it functional and repairs to restore lost function, a steed would require feed and rest to continue carrying its rider, and time and care to recover from injury.

Living vehicles can sometimes be repaired with the Tech-Use skill if they have cybernetic components. For fully organic creatures, however, the GM should treat wounds and critical wounds as normal for the purposes of healing like other living creatures, which can occur via natural healing (see page 244) or with use of the Medicae skill.

Vehicles with this trait can have a variety of traits like other creatures (commonly Flyer or Quadruped), along with other vehicle traits where applicable such as Walker. A character can ride any Living mount with a Size trait larger than his own Size trait unless the mount's specific traits or abilities say otherwise.

Riding a mount uses the Wrangling special use of the Survival skill (as per page 116). Simply riding most steeds under normal conditions does not usually require a test, but when performing vehicle actions that would require the rider to make an Operate test, he makes a Survival test instead.

Living vehicles use profiles much like standard NPCs, and follow many of the same rules that they do when in combat. See **Chapter XII: NPCs and Adversaries** for more information on NPC types and rules.

Open-topped

The vehicle's passenger or crew compartments are not sealed and are instead exposed to the open air around them. This limits their protection, but it does allow transported troops to fire their own weapons as the vehicle moves. Crew and passengers mounted on an Open-topped vehicle can be specifically targeted by those outside the vehicle via the use of the Called Shot action. Additionally, passengers mounted in Open-Topped vehicles are struck by any Blast or Spray attacks of which they are in range. Crew and passengers within an Open-topped can attack targets with their own personal weaponry.

Ramshackle

The vehicle's construction methods are so haphazard that it is both more fragile than regular vehicles, yet at the same time has many more redundant and jury rigged systems, making the vehicle easier to repair. When rolling Righteous Fury (see page 227) against a vehicle with the Ramshackle vehicle trait, roll 1d10 rather than 1d5. The vehicle takes twice the usual damage against itself when attempting a Ram! action against another vehicle, building, or something equally solid. Repairing a vehicle with the Ramshackle vehicle trait takes half the listed time, and tests to implement these repairs gain a +20 bonus. Damaged vehicles with the Ramshackle vehicle trait are always treated as Lightly Damaged, unless they are suffering from Critical damage.

Reinforced Armour

The vehicle's armour and vital locations have been internally reinforced with additional layers of ceramite and adamantine. Vehicles with the Reinforced Armour vehicle trait that receive Critical damage halve the total (rounding up) and then apply the result. This ability does not affect rolls on the Vehicle Critical Effects tables caused by Righteous Fury.

Rugged

Robust power systems, modular armour plates, and redundant fuel systems can make a vehicle far easier to repair, saving time and resources and allowing the vehicle to be put back into the field far more quickly than other designs. All Repair tests made to repair a vehicle with the Rugged trait gain a +20 bonus.

Skimmer

The following rules apply to a vehicle with the Skimmer trait:

- It moves roughly 2 metres above the ground at all times, in much the same way as people and creatures with the Hoverer trait, but can adjust that height slightly when moving over ground-based obstacles. Skimmers can also move to Low Altitude, as described in the rules for Flying on page 249.
- It ignores all forms of difficult terrain (except those deemed appropriate by the GM).
- It gains a +10 bonus on all tests involving Manoeuvrability.
- A Skimmer is not a true aircraft and therefore cannot fly at any significant altitude. Nevertheless, a sudden loss in motive power can be catastrophic as it ploughs into the ground, often at great speed. Skimmers follow special rules for Crashing, which are described on page 256.
- It can make use of the Ram! action (see page 252), but if the Operate test is failed, it is treated as having instead Crashed into its target (see page 255 for the full rules for Crashing).
- A Skimmer is often far more difficult to hit in melee combat than its ground-based counterparts, and thus all Weapon Skill tests made to attack it in melee suffer a –10 penalty.
- It can turn as many times as desired when moving, regardless of how far it moves.

Tracked Vehicle

The following rules apply to a Tracked vehicle:

- It suffers a –10 penalty to all tests involving Manoeuvrability.
- Vehicles with the Tracked vehicle trait gain a +10 bonus to all tests involving difficult terrain.
- To represent its more robust nature, whenever a vehicle with the Tracked vehicle trait suffers Critical damage to its Motive Systems that results in the vehicle being slowed, the result of the roll to determine how much Tactical Speed is lost is halved (rounded down).
- The motive systems of vehicles with this trait are often more complex than simple wheeled mechanisms, and therefore repairing Critical damage to the vehicle's Motive Systems, as well as any lasting Motive System damage (such as Motive Systems Damaged, Motive Systems Crippled, etc.) takes twice as long as normal (see **Repairing Vehicles** on page 257).

Walker

The following rules apply to a vehicle with the Walker trait:

- It is able to ignore many types of difficult terrain due to its sure-footed and agile limbs. It treats conditions such as rockslides, tank traps, fallen trees, and basic rubble and ruins as open ground. It is up to the GM to determine what other types of terrain a walker can ignore.
- It cannot make use of the Ram! action, but if it has a melee weapon, it can make a Charge action (using the operator's Weapon Skill) instead.
- Far more combat capable than most other vehicle types, a walker (or rather its pilot) is better able to turn to face its opponents in the midst of a melee. It can turn to face its melee opponents at the end of its turn as a Free Action (this does not count as a form of movement). It should always be clear to the GM and the players which direction it is facing for the purposes of working out which armour value its opponents must attempt to penetrate, as well as which direction the walker may make its attacks.
- It may turn as many times as it likes when moving, regardless of how far it moved.

Wheeled Vehicle

The following rules apply to a Wheeled vehicle:

- It suffers a –20 penalty to all tests involving difficult terrain.
- It gains a +10 bonus to all tests involving Manoeuvrability.
- Wheeled Vehicles are extremely difficult to control once they suffer serious damage to their motive systems; the loss of even one wheel can make even the most experienced of drivers struggle to keep the vehicle moving in a straight line, especially in the heat of combat. Vehicles with the Wheeled Vehicle trait suffer Motive Systems Critical damage as normal, but once any such damage has been taken, all forms of movement require Operate tests, and all tests related to the vehicle's Manoeuvrability, are made at a –10 penalty.
- Wheeled mechanisms are generally far less complex than those belonging to tracked vehicles. Repairing Critical damage to the vehicle's Motive Systems, as well as any lasting Motive System damage (such as Motive Systems Damaged, Motive Systems Crippled, etc.) takes half as long as normal (see page 259).

Sample Vehicles

There are endless types of vehicles in highly-mechanised areas within Hive Desoleum, and even more unconsecrated patterns found in its remote or unlawful regions as well. The wastelands surrounding the hive also host numerous riding beasts as well, in reaches where technology is scarce or unreliable. Below is a sampling of common forms found on Desoleum, though Acolytes are sure to find more in their adventures. Threat values (see page 382) are also included for use in NPC balancing; see page 380 for information on NPC profile presentation.

Glassteed

Found in the wastelands outside the Desoleum hives, glassteeds are tall, elegant quadrupeds that appear more crystalline than organic. Many scholars assume them to be mutated remainders of the ancient wars on the planet. They are well-adapted to the irradiated plains, and can survive for long periods with little or no food or water through unknown means. Though not as durable as other mounts, they are sure-footed and fast, and many archaeotech explorers favour them ahead of mechanical vehicles. Some can even be found in the hive itself, where they are ridden as part of elaborate bond-renewal rituals or serve as display creatures in exotic collections.

Glassteed	*Walker*	
Front: 8	**Side:** 8	**Rear:** 8
Cruising Speed: *30 Kph*	**Tactical Speed:** *5 m*	
Manoeuvrability: *+25*	**Size:** *Enormous*	**Avl:** *RA*
Carrying Capacity: *0*	**Integrity:** *20*	**Threat:** *3*
Crew: *Driver*		
Vehicle Traits: *Living, Open-Topped, Walker*		

Glassteed (Troop) 12

H 01-10	AR 11-20	AL 21-30	B 31-70	LR 71-85	LL 86-00
1 4	1 4	1 4	1 4	1 4	1 4

WS	BS	S
25	—	40
T	**Ag**	**Int**
35	42	16
Per	**WP**	**Fel**
36	12	04
Ifl		
—		

Half *8*	Full *16*	Charge *24*	Run *48*	Threat *3*

Dagger Teeth — Class *Melee*

Rng —	RoF —	Dmg *1d10 + 4SB (R)*	
Pen *1*	Clip —	Rld —	Wt —	Avl —
Special: —			

Traits: Natural Weapons (Dagger Teeth), Quadruped, Resistance (Poisons, Radiation)

Hectin Autocarriage

A somewhat common Desoleum civilian vehicle, the Hectin is often used to carry personages not suited to the normal transport methods, moving them across the lanes and habways of the hive levels in relative safety. Most have enclosed passenger areas, but some lesser-quality or converted models feature open areas in the rear. They are also seen outside the hives, racing to drop points or roaring away from pursuing Sanctionaries.

Hectin	*Wheeled*	
Front: 15	**Side:** 10	**Rear:** 8
Cruising Speed: *70 Kph*	**Tactical Speed:** *15 m*	
Manoeuvrability: *+10*	**Size:** *Enormous*	**Avl:** *RA*
Carrying Capacity: *5*	**Integrity:** *20*	**Threat:** *5*
Crew: *Driver*		
Vehicle Traits: *Enclosed, Rugged, Wheeled*		

Gang Wheels: Any Hectin can replace its Enclosed trait with Open-Topped, increasing the Carrying Capacity to 8.
Hectins from the Dawn: Ancient and rare Hectin models use anti-grav technology. This variant replaces the Wheeled trait with the Skimmer trait, and alters the Availability to Unique (–60).
Weapons: None. If Open-Topped, the Hectin can be upgraded to carry any separately acquired Basic weapon to be Pintle-mounted on the chassis.

Veloxic Bike

A common sight in the mid-levels of Hive Desoleum, the Veloxic features an oversized, roaring engine that heralds its arrival. It has excellent handling, a must in the hive's crowded areas. Many have made their way to lower levels, where gangs use them for sport or combat, often both.

Veloxic	*Wheeled*	
Front: 8	**Side:** 8	**Rear:** 8
Cruising Speed: *90 Kph*	**Tactical Speed:** *35 m*	
Manoeuvrability: *+20*	**Size:** *Hulking*	**Avl:** *AV*
Carrying Capacity: *0*	**Integrity:** *10*	**Threat:** *4*
Crew: *Driver*		
Vehicle Traits: *Bike, Wheeled*		

Passenger: A Veloxic can also carry 1 passenger, but while doing so the Manoeuvrability is decreased to +10.
Armed Bikers: Converted Veloxic bikes found in lower levels can mount a single autogun that can fire in the forward arc. This alters the Availability to Scarce.

Autogun			Class *Basic*	
Rng *100m*	**RoF** *S/3/–*		**Dmg** *1d10 + 3 (I)*	
Pen *0*	**Clip** *30*	**Rld** *1 full*	**Wt** *5 Kg*	**Avl** *AV*
Special: —				

Chimera Armoured Transport

A commonly-used military vehicle, the Chimera is found on battlefields across the galaxy, where it acts as the mainstay Imperial Guard personnel carrier. Each features a hull-mounted gun along with a turret-mounted weapon, both designed to soften up foes before the passengers attack. Its ancient design is versatile enough to act as the basic chassis for a number of other tanks, and many other Imperial agencies such as the Adeptus Arbites use it as well. The Desoleum Involute Cadres use them in combat training in the surrounding wastelands. In especially violent uprisings, Chimeras can also be found inside the hive, eradicating all those who would disturb the bonded order.

Chimera		Tracked
Front: 30	Side: 22	Rear 16
Cruising Speed: 70 Kph	Tactical Speed: 15 m	
Manoeuvrability: +0	Size: Massive	Avl: ER
Carrying Capacity: 12	Integrity: 35	Threat: 30
Crew: Commander (Turret), Driver, Gunner (Hull Weapon)		
Vehicle Traits: Amphibious, Enclosed, Rugged, Tracked		

Weapons

One turret-mounted weapon (choose one of the following):

Multilaser				Class Vehicle
Rng 150m	RoF –/–/5		Dmg 2d10 + 10 (E)	
Pen 2	Clip 100	Rld 2 full	Wt 35 Kg	Avl VR
Special: Reliable				

Heavy Bolter				Class Heavy
Rng 150m	RoF –/–/6		Dmg 1d10 + 8 (X)	
Pen 5	Clip 60	Rld 2 full	Wt 40 Kg	Avl VR
Special: Tearing				

Autocannon				Class Heavy
Rng 300m	RoF S/3/–		Dmg 3d10 + 8 (I)	
Pen 6	Clip 40	Rld 2 full	Wt 40 Kg	Avl VR
Special: Reliable				

Heavy Flamer				Class Heavy
Rng 90m	RoF S/2/4		Dmg 1d10 + 5 (E)	
Pen 4	Clip 20	Rld 2 full	Wt 45 Kg	Avl RA
Special: Flame, Spray				

One hull-mounted weapon (choose one of the following):

Heavy Bolter				Class Heavy
Rng 150m	RoF –/–/6		Dmg 1d10 + 8 (X)	
Pen 5	Clip 60	Rld 2 full	Wt 40 Kg	Avl VR
Special: Tearing				

Heavy Flamer				Class Heavy
Rng 90m	RoF S/2/4		Dmg 1d10 + 5 (E)	
Pen 4	Clip 20	Rld 2 full	Wt 45 Kg	Avl RA
Special: Flame, Spray				

The Chimera may take one Pintle-mounted weapon mounted atop the turret (choose one of the following):

Storm Bolter				Class Basic
Rng 90m	RoF S/2/4		Dmg 1d10 + 5 (X)	
Pen 4	Clip 60	Rld Full	Wt 9 Kg	Avl ER
Special: Storm, Tearing				

Heavy Stubber				Class Heavy
Rng 100m	RoF –/–/8		Dmg 1d10 + 4 (I)	
Pen 3	Clip 80	Rld 2 full	Wt 30 Kg	Avl ER
Special: –				

Passenger Weaponry: A Chimera has several firing ports running along its flanks (3 per side) through which passengers can fire personal weapons (Basic or Pistol only). These may be replaced with mounted lasguns, also for passenger use. Passengers can also use the large hatch on top of the hull as a method of entry and exit as well as a firing point (if the Chimera is stationary, Heavy weapons can also be used).

Lasgun				Class Basic
Rng 100m	RoF S/3/–		Dmg 1d10 + 3 (E)	
Pen 0	Clip 60	Rld 1 full	Wt 4 Kg	Avl CM
Special: Reliable				





Chapter VI: Psychic Powers

Certain humans are born with the innate ability to access the power of the Warp, drawing on it to achieve an array of impossible feats. These individuals, gifted or cursed, might be called witches, shamans, necromancers, wyrds, or any number of terms according to local custom, but are most commonly known as psykers.

Most psykers first exhibit their unnatural powers at a young age, but psychic ability can also reveal itself later in life. In many cases, they first manifest powers when under great duress or threat; this is particularly true for those who discover their abilities at a more advanced age.

Psykers evince a bewildering array of abilities, for the source of their power is bound to no law or rule. Indeed, the Warp-spawned powers of psykers can break the very laws of physics: defying gravity, creating flame from nothing, and halting bolter rounds in mid-air. This power does not come without a price, however. The Warp is unpredictable, and home to malign intelligences and beings drawn to the soul-light of a psyker, like ravenous moths to a luminous morsel.

Psykers in the Imperium

"Watch him carefully, and keep your pistol ready in case he goes wrong."

–Overheard near Keppler Jaq, Primaris Psyker

Psykers are both vital to the Imperium's survival and amongst its greatest threats. The Warp entities that are drawn to psykers are, without exception, hostile toward mankind and almost always extraordinarily dangerous as well. Many of these beings, including Daemons and the dreaded Enslavers, seek to use psykers to gain entrance to the material universe, from possessing the psyker to literally reshaping his body into a grotesque gateway to the hellish otherworld of the Warp. Even aside from these threats, psykers possess great powers that pose a terrible danger; a psyker who is not under the Imperium's control might turn his powers against it. Such rogue psykers can be extremely difficult for ordinary Enforcers—and even military forces—to contain. Even those of a seemingly benign nature can be overcome with their power and destroy all around them with uncontrolled Warp-energies.

To gaze into the Warp is to know true power and utter damnation.

The Roles of Psykers

Despite the risks, psykers are an invaluable asset to the Imperium, fulfilling a wide variety of functions. The Black Ships of the Adeptus Astra Telepathica endlessly trawl the Imperium, collecting psykers as an important component of each world's tithe, both to gather new subjects and remove potential dangers from the planet. Those psykers already corrupted by their abilities, or who are simply too dangerous to live, are summarily executed. Most of the rest go on to serve the Adeptus Astronomica and sustain the Astronomican, the Warp-beacon that guides all Imperial vessels through the seas of the Immaterium. Ten thousand souls fire this beacon, and hundreds perish each day to keep it lit. The few remaining serve in other ways, from interstellar communications and Administratum support, to actual combat roles fighting alongside the Imperial Guard or as part of the Adeptus Astartes. To survive testing by the Adeptus Astra Telepathica is to become sanctioned, and these psykers serve an Imperium that grudgingly tolerates their essential existence and is ever wary of their stability.

Astropaths

Astropaths are the only means of interstellar communication the Imperium possesses, and the most common type of sanctioned psyker. They lack sufficient will and strength to control their powers or withstand the Scholastica Psykana's rigorous training, and so undergo Soul Binding, whereby the Emperor shares with them a minuscule fraction of His power. This ritual allows them to serve the Imperium at the cost of their eyes, which are forever burned away in the process. They bind the Imperium together in a galactic web of communication, casting their thoughts into the Warp for fellow Astropaths to intercept and decipher. This is not to say, however, that astro-telepathic communication is simple, safe, or widely available, but it is essential for the Imperium to survive. For this reason, Astropaths are always in high demand by all branches of the Imperial hierarchy.

Primaris Psykers

Seen with Imperial Guard regiments across the galaxy, Primaris Psykers are rare psykers who are capable of wielding the power of the Warp as a weapon. Their comrades hold them in awe, fear, and suspicion because of the unnatural powers they command.

Unsanctioned Psykers

An unsanctioned psyker is one that has never undergone testing by the Adeptus Astra Telepathica, perhaps never realising his powers or carefully avoiding detection and capture. Those that remain unsanctioned are forever wary that one day they may be bound unto the Black Ships, often never to be seen again. A very rare few may find shelter in the service of a radically-inclined Inquisitor, relying on his authority for protection. Most, however, are a danger to the Imperium more terrible than any xenos invasion or heretical uprising, as each can become a portal through which the Ruinous Powers can breach reality.

Psykers and the Inquisition

Inquisitors often have especial need of psykers, for they are particularly suited to hunting others of their kind and even Daemons. Generally, Inquisitors employ psykers for a wide variety of purposes, from incinerating heretics en masse, to divining the location of a cult, to plucking secrets from the mind of a suspect. Indeed, an Inquisitor may himself be a psyker. As in all things, Inquisitors do not allow the bureaucracy of the Imperium to stifle their work; as such, an Inquisitor who discovers an individual with psychic potential in the course of his duties might take the fledgling psyker into service without recourse to Imperial testing and training. At the other extreme are the most ruthless of puritanical Inquisitors, such as those of the Monodominant belief, who see all psykers as witches and mutant abominations. Such Inquisitors never requisition the services of psykers, and barely condone their very existence.

Psykers in Dark Heresy

"You think you know of terror? You fear mortality, while I know of things far worse than mere death."

–Astropath Galatia Hox

Psykers are beings with the ability to manipulate the power of the Immaterium, bending the chaotic energy to their will to manifest potent psychic powers. In Dark Heresy, Acolytes can become psykers by taking the Psyker elite advance (see page 90). This grants them the ability to purchase psychic powers with experience points, and gives them access to a new resource: psy rating. Over the course of their adventures, warbands can encounter other beings that manifest powers using Warp energies. In all cases, the GM and players should use the rules presented here to represent a psyker's deadly gifts.

Psy Ratings

Psy rating (PR) is a raw measure of a psyker's power and his ability to draw power from the Warp. The higher a psyker's PR, the more powerful he will be. PR usually ranges from 1 (an untrained Imperial psyker or petty Warp-witch) to 10 (a monstrous Greater Daemon of Tzeentch or masterful Eldar Farseer), though in some extremely special cases it might go higher still. PR is used to determine the potency of all psychic powers, such as range, area effect, or damage. To have any access to psychic powers, a character must have a PR of at least 1.

Psy Rating Advances

A starting psyker has a psy rating of 1. Unlike other characteristics, however, psy rating is increased by spending experience points in a similar manner to gaining talents. Increasing a character's psy rating represents that character unlocking additional psychic potential, and becoming more and more powerful.

The farther along a psyker progresses, the harder it becomes for him to strain his limits and grow in power, however. To increase his psy rating, the Acolyte spends experience points equal to 200x the psy rating to which he wishes to advance. So, if a psyker with a psy rating of 2 wants to increase his psy rating to 3, he must pay 3 x 200 xp, a total of 600 experience points.

An Acolyte can advance his psy rating multiple times. Each time this is done, his psy rating increases by 1, to a maximum of 10. Note that an increase in psy rating does not provide additional psychic powers, only more control over them.

Psychic Disciplines

Psychic powers are divided into different disciplines, based on how they use the energies of the Warp. Each discipline corresponds to a tree that determines its availability to a character. This book covers the following five disciplines: Biomancy, Divination, Pyromancy, Telekinesis, and Telepathy.

Using Psychic Powers

When a psyker wishes to use a psychic power, he must first choose how much power he is pouring into the ability, and any other methods he is using to draw upon and focus the power of the Warp. Then he must make a Focus Power test (typically, but not always, a Willpower test, modified by the difficulty of the power and the character's effective psy rating), to see if it manifests. Finally, if the test is successful, the power takes effect.

Depending on how much energy the psyker used and what methods he used to bolster his efforts, there might be additional consequences. The step-by-step process for using a psychic power is described below:

Step 1: Determine Psychic Strength: The psyker decides how much of his base psy rating he wants to commit to the power. The amount of psy rating the psyker commits (the effective psy rating) affects the power's likelihood of success and final potency.

Step 2: Make Focus Power Test: The psyker makes a test to determine if the psychic power is successful. In most cases, this is a Willpower test, the difficulty of which depends on the power, and which is modified further based on the effective pay rating chosen. In some cases, determined by the specific power, the target can Oppose this test (see page 24 for Opposed tests).

Step 3: Resolve Power Results: Depending on the psyker's effective psy rating for the power, the power will have variable effects, such as increased range, area of effect, or damage. Depending on the factors described above, the power can also generate Psychic Phenomena or even terrifying Perils of the Warp.

Step 1: Determine Psychic Strength

Whenever a psyker uses a power, he is drawing energy from the Warp and channelling it into physical effects. However, opening such a conduit is always dangerous, and the psyker incurs a chance of causing disturbances in the Immaterium that have undesired side-effects. In extreme cases, these disturbances may even lead to the opening of an uncontrolled rift between reality and the Warp, with potentially fatal consequences.

By minimising the amount of power he draws, a psyker can reduce the chances of horrible side-effects such as Psychic Phenomena or Perils of the Warp (see page 195). When using a psychic power, the psyker must choose an effective psy rating for the power that is equal to or below his base psy rating. This value must be at least 1.

The psyker receives a +10 bonus to his Focus Power test for every point the chosen effective psy rating is below his base psy rating. Additionally, the effective psy rating of a psychic power determines how potent the effects of the power will be when used (see Step 3).

Pushing

The psyker can alternatively draw deeper from the depths of the Warp to boost his powers beyond his normal capabilities. Of course, such power always comes with greater risk of unleashing unintended effects or even summoning unwanted visitors from beyond.

When determining the effective psy rating of a psychic power, a psyker can choose to push. If he does so, he strains his own limits, and can set the effective psy rating of the psychic power up to 2 higher than his base psy rating. Certain types of psykers can increase this amount, as indicated in **Table 6–1: Psychic Strength** on page 195. Pushing is dangerous, however, for when a psyker draws from the Warp so deeply, he might be unable to control the energies released. When pushing a psychic power in this way, it triggers Psychic Phenomena on any Focus Power test roll that does not produce doubles, instead of under the normal conditions.

The psyker receives a –10 penalty to this test for every point the chosen effective psy rating is above his own psy rating.

Step 2: Make Focus Power Test

Any use of a psychic power begins with a Focus Power action (see page 221), which requires a Focus Power test to determine whether or not the power manifests successfully, and how potent its effects are. The amount of time this action takes is determined by the power being used, and may be a Free Action, Half Action, Full Action, or Reaction. In most cases, a Focus Power test is a Willpower test, modified by the difficulty of the power being used and the effective psy rating the psyker chose for the power.

The power being used determines what skill or characteristic the test uses. As mentioned earlier, this test receives a +10 bonus for each point the power's effective psy rating is under the psyker's base psy rating, or a –10 penalty for each point it is over that value. The GM can also apply situation modifiers as needed. In many cases, the number of degrees of success scored when passing the Focus Power test determines some of the effects of the power—when this is the case, it will be noted in the power's description.

If the Focus Power test succeeds, the psyker successfully manifests the power and applies the effects detailed in its description. Additionally, if he rolls doubles (that is, both the tens dice and the ones dice come up with the same number) on the Focus Power test, the power triggers Psychic Phenomena (see **Psychic Phenomena** on page 195). This can occur even if the test fails. If the psyker pushed when attempting the power, he instead triggers Psychic Phenomena on any result other than doubles. When it is triggered, roll to determine what phenomenon is to occur before resolving the power (as some phenomena can alter how or if the power manifests properly, and if so should be resolved first).

Example

Mikal Valento is an unsanctioned psyker with a Willpower of 56 and a base psy rating of 3. He attempts to employ a psychic power that uses Willpower, and decides use it at the Push level by adding +3 for an effective psy rating of 6. This means his Focus Power test (before being modified by the power) will succeed on 26 or less, as he suffers a –30 penalty for using the power at 3 higher than his normal psy rating. As an unsanctioned psyker, he also triggers Psychic Phenomena automatically when pushing, and adds +15 to the roll (5 times the +3 he added to his base psy rating).

Table 6–1: Psychic Strength

Class of Psyker	Normal Strength (Psy Rating or Lower)	Push (Psy Rating +2/3/4)	Sustaining Powers
Bound: Sanctioned psykers, Astropaths, sorcerers, Librarians, Chaos Space Marines, and xenos psykers	If the psyker rolls doubles during a Focus Power test, he must roll on Table 6–2: Psychic Phenomena (see page 196).	Can add up to +2 PR. If the psyker rolls anything but doubles during Focus Power test, roll on Table 6–2: Psychic Phenomena (see page 196).	+10 to all rolls on Table 6–2: Psychic Phenomena (see page 196), decrease psy rating by 1 per power.
Unbound: Wyrds, unsanctioned psykers, and mortal sorcerers	If the psyker rolls doubles during a Focus Power test, roll on Table 6–2: Psychic Phenomena (see page 196) adding +10 to the total.	Can add up to +4 to PR. Roll on Table 6–2: Psychic Phenomena (see page 196) at +5 per +1 PR added, up to a maximum of +20.	+10 to all rolls on Table 6–2: Psychic Phenomena (see page 196), decrease psy rating by 1 per power.
Daemonic: Psychic Daemons, Daemonhosts, and Daemon Princes	If the psyker rolls doubles during a Focus Power test, roll on Table 6–2: Psychic Phenomena (see page 196), adding +10 to the total. He is not affected unless it causes Perils of the Warp, though those around him might be.	Can add up to +3 to PR. Roll on Table 6–2: Psychic Phenomena (see page 196) at +10 per +1 PR added, up to a maximum of +30. He is not affected unless it causes Perils of the Warp, though those around him might be.	+10 to all rolls on Table 6–2: Psychic Phenomena (see page 196), decrease psy rating by 1 per power. He is not affected by the result unless the result causes Perils of the Warp, though those around him might be.

Opposed Focus Power Tests

When specifying what type of Focus Power test to make, some psychic powers call for an Opposed test (e.g., Opposed Willpower test). For these powers, the psyker and his target make an Opposed test (see page 24): the psyker using the specified skill or characteristic, and the target using a skill or characteristic specified in the psychic power's description. The psyker must successfully pass the test and gain more degrees of success than at least one of his opponents to activate the power. The psyker is still affected by all of the normal modifiers from the power's psy rating and can still trigger Psychic Phenomena as in a normal Focus Power test. Only the psyker's roll can trigger Psychic Phenomena.

Resisting Enemy Psychic Powers

If they are attacked by hostile psychic powers, psykers have better mental defences than "normal" people, using the power of the Warp to fight back. When making an Opposed Focus Power test to resist a psychic attack, a targeted psyker first decides if he will push or not, then adds double his resultant psy rating (including any bonus from pushing) to the Willpower test to resist the enemy power. As the target is a psyker, his Focus Power test can also cause Psychic Phenomena.

Step 3: Resolve Power Results

After the psyker successfully manifests a psychic power, he triggers the effects specified in the psychic power description and, if Psychic Phenomena were manifested by the Focus Power test, rolls for the effects of the Psychic Phenomena.

Range and Line of Sight

Unless noted in its description, a psychic power that directly targets an individual or thing requires a psyker to have line of sight to (or otherwise be "aware" of) the target. The target must also be within the power's stated range, but there are no modifiers for range (Short, Point Blank, etc.).

Cumulative Effects

Modifiers, characteristic increases, and other benefits generated by psychic powers do not stack with each other—only the highest applies. They do stack with non-psychic bonuses, such as those granted by specialised equipment and environmental conditions.

Detecting Psychic Powers

Psykers are especially attuned to the Warp around them, able to sense the currents and eddies caused by other psykers dipping into the flow of the Immaterium. When psychic powers are in effect nearby, a psyker can make a Psyniscience test in order to determine their source (see page 112 for details on the Psyniscience skill and its uses). Others can also attempt this but, lacking a psyker's abilities, are less likely to succeed.

Psychic Phenomena

When a psyker reaches into the Warp, there is always the chance of the Empyrean bleeding into reality. Sometimes this manifestation is unique to the psyker, but in general it is as unpredictable as the Warp itself. Some effects can include a drop in temperature, ghostly voices, feelings of unease, or nearby vegetation shrivelling and dying. In rare instances, even full-scale Warp breaches can occur.

The precise effects a vary based on the nature of the psyker: the Sanctioned Psykers of the Imperium, the Librarians of the Adeptus Astartes, and the traitorous Sorcerers of the Chaos Space Marines draw on less power but can use it more safely,. Unsanctioned psykers and mortal wyrds are subject to harsher effects, but can draw more deeply in return. Those who are not mortal (that is, those with the Daemonic trait) remain largely unperturbed by such trivial fluctuations of the Warp, and suffer far less severe phenomena. These varying effects are described on **Table 6–1: Psychic Strength**.

If the psyker rolled doubles (or if the power was pushed, any roll except doubles) during his Focus Power test, a phenomenon occurs and the psyker must roll on **Table 6–2: Psychic Phenomena** on page 196. Particularly high rolls on this table can result in the psyker having to also roll on **Table 6–3: Perils of the Warp** on page 197. A few powers, as noted in their descriptions, cause other effects upon the material world when they manifest.

Table 6–2: Psychic Phenomena

d100 Roll	Effect
01–03	Dark Foreboding: A faint breeze blows past the psyker and those near him, and everyone gets the feeling that somewhere in the galaxy something unfortunate just happened.
04–05	Warp Echo: For a few moments, all noises cause echoes, regardless of the surroundings.
06–08	Unholy Stench: The air around the psyker becomes permeated with a bizarre and foul smell.
09–11	Mind Warp: The psyker suffers a –5 penalty to Willpower tests until the start of his next turn as his own inherent phobias, suspicions, and hatreds surge to the surface of his mind in a wave of unbound emotion.
12–14	Hoarfrost: The temperature plummets for an instant, and a thin coating of frost forms to cover everything within 3d10 metres.
15–17	Aura of Taint: All animals within 1d100 metres become spooked and agitated; characters can use the Psyniscience skill to pinpoint the psyker as the cause.
18–20	Memory Worm: All people within line of sight of the psyker forget some trivial fact or minor personal memory.
21–23	Spoilage: Food and drink go bad in a 5d10 metre radius.
24–26	Haunting Breeze: Winds whip up around the psyker for a few moments, blowing light objects around and guttering fires within 3d10 metres.
27–29	Veil of Darkness: For a brief moment (effectively, until the end of the round), the area within 3d10 metres is plunged into immediate and impenetrable darkness.
30–32	Distorted Reflections: Mirrors and other reflective surfaces within a radius of 5d10 metres distort or shatter.
33–35	Breath Leech: Each character (including the psyker) within a 3d10 metre radius becomes short of breath for one round and cannot make any Run or Charge actions.
36–38	Daemonic Mask: For a fleeting moment, the psyker takes on a daemonic appearance and gains the Fear (1) trait until the start of the next turn. However, he also gains 1 Corruption point.
39–41	Unnatural Decay: All plant life within 3d10 metres of the psyker withers and dies.
42–44	Spectral Gale: Howling winds erupt around the psyker, requiring each character (including the psyker) within 4d10 metres to make an Easy (+30) Agility or Strength test to avoid being knocked Prone.
45–47	Bloody Tears: Blood weeps from stone and wood within 3d10 metres of the psyker. If there are any paintings, pict-displays, statues, or other representations of people inside this area, they appear to be crying blood.
48–50	The Earth Protests: The ground suddenly shakes, and each character (including the psyker) within a 5d10 metre radius must make an Ordinary (+10) Agility test or be knocked down.
51–53	Actinic Discharge: Static electricity fills the air within 5d10 metres causing hair to stand on end and unprotected electronics to short out, while the psyker is wreathed in eldritch lightning. The GM is free to resolve the specifics as needed, perhaps using **Table 5–4: Haywire Field Effects** (see page 147) to provide guidance.
54–56	Warp Ghosts: Ghostly apparitions fill the air within 3d10 metres around the psyker, flying about and howling in pain for a few brief moments. Each character in the radius (except the psyker himself) must test against Fear (1).
57–59	Falling Upwards: Everything within 2d10 metres of the psyker (including the psyker himself) rises 1d10 metres into the air as gravity briefly ceases. Almost immediately, everything crashes back to earth, suffering falling damage as appropriate for the distances fallen.
60–62	Banshee Howl: A shrill keening rings out across the immediate area, shattering glass and forcing each living creature able to hear it (including the psyker) to pass a Challenging (+0) Toughness test or be deafened for 1d10 rounds.
63–65	The Furies: The Psyker is assailed by unseen horrors. He is slammed to the ground and suffers 1d5 Impact damage (ignoring Armour, but not Toughness bonus) and he must test against Fear (2).
66–68	Shadow of the Warp: For a split second, the world changes in appearance, and everyone within 1d100 metres has a brief but horrific glimpse of the shadow of the Warp. Each character in the area (including the psyker) must make a Difficult (–10) Willpower test or gain 1d5 Corruption points.
69–71	Tech Scorn: The machine spirits reject these unnatural ways. All un-warded technology within 5d10 metres malfunctions momentarily, and all ranged weapons jam (see page 224). Each character (including the psyker) withing that range with cybernetic implants must pass an Ordinary (+10) Toughness test or suffer 1d5 Rending damage, ignoring Toughness bonus and Armour.
72–74	Warp Madness: A violent ripple of tainted discord causes all characters (except the psyker) within 2d10 metres to make a Difficult (–10) Willpower test; each character who fails gains 1d5 Corruption points and becomes Frenzied for 1 round (see page 127).
75+	Perils of the Warp: The Warp opens in a wild maelstrom of unnatural energy. Roll on Table 6–3: Perils of the Warp (page 197).

Table 6–3: Perils of the Warp

d100 Roll	Effect
01–05	The Gibbering: The psyker screams in pain as uncontrolled Warp energies surge through his unprepared mind. He must make a Challenging (+0) Willpower test or be Stunned for 1d5 rounds.
06–09	Warp Burn: A violent burst of energy from the Warp smashes into the psyker's mind, sending him reeling. He suffers 2d5 Energy damage, ignoring Toughness bonus and Armour, and is Stunned for 1d5 rounds.
10–13	Psychic Concussion: With a crack of energy, the psyker is knocked unconscious for 1d5 rounds, and everyone within 3d10 metres must make an Ordinary (+10) Willpower test or be Stunned for one round.
14–18	Psy Blast: There is an explosion of power and the psyker is thrown 3d10 metres into the air, plummeting to the ground moments later (see page 243 for rules concerning falling damage).
19–24	Soul Sear: Warp power courses through the psyker's body, scorching his soul. The psyker cannot use any psychic powers for the next hour, and gains 2d5 Corruption points.
25–30	Locked In: The power cages the psyker's mind in an ethereal prison, tormented by visions of the Warp. The psyker falls to the ground Prone and Unconscious. At the beginning of each of his turns until he breaks free, he must spend a Full Action to make a Difficult (–10) Willpower test. If he succeeds, his mind is freed and restored to his body, haunted by his experiences but otherwise unharmed.
31–38	Chronological Incontinence: Time warps around the psyker. He winks out of existence and reappears in 1d10 rounds (or one minute in narrative time) in the exact location. He suffers one point of permanent Toughness and Intelligence damage as his body and mind rebel against the experience, and gains 1d5 Corruption points.
39–46	Psychic Mirror: The psyker's power is turned back on him. Resolve the power's effects, but the power targets the psyker instead. If the power is beneficial, it deals 1d10+5 Energy damage (ignoring Armour) to the psyker's Body instead of having its normal effect.
47–55	Warp Whispers: The voices of Daemons fill the air within 4d10 metres of the psyker, whispering terrible secrets and shocking truths. Each character in range (including the psyker) must make a Hard (–20) Willpower test or gain 1d5 Corruption points and suffer an equal amount of Willpower damage. Whether or not the psyker passes the Willpower test, he suffers an additional 1d5+5 Willpower damage.
56–58	Vice Versa: The psyker's mind is thrown out of his body and into another nearby creature or person. The psyker and a random living creature (friend or foe, but not a Daemon, machine, or other "soulless" entity) within 50 metres swap consciousness for 1d10 rounds. Each creature retains its Weapon Skill, Ballistic Skill, Intelligence, Perception, Willpower, and Fellowship during the swap, but uses the other characteristics of the host body. If either body is slain, the effect ends immediately and both parties return to their original bodies. Both suffer 1d5 Intelligence damage from the experience. If there are no creatures within range, the psyker becomes catatonic for 1d5 rounds while his mind wanders the Warp. This journey inflicts 1d10 Willpower damage, 1d10 Intelligence damage, and 1d10 Corruption points.
59–67	Dark Summoning: The Empyrean buckles and tears at the arrogance of the psyker, and a Plaguebearer (see page 415) or another lesser Daemon at the GM's discretion rips its way into existence. The pestilent fiend appears within 3d10 metres of the psyker, for a number of rounds equal to 1d5 plus the psyker's Toughness bonus. The psyker's turn immediately ends, and the Daemon takes its turn immediately. It detests the psyker and focuses all of its attacks upon the fool who unwittingly summoned it. It does not attack anyone else, even if others attack it; if the psyker is slain, it returns back to the Warp, satisfied with its kill.
68–72	Rending the Veil: The air vibrates with images of cackling Daemons and the kaleidoscopic fabric of the Warp is rendered visible to mortal eyes. All sentient creatures within 1d100 metres must test against Fear (2). The psyker must test against Fear (4) instead. This effect lasts for 1d5 rounds.
73–78	Blood Rain: A psychic storm erupts, covering an area of 5d10 metres. Each character in range (including the psyker) must make a Challenging (+0) Strength test or be knocked Prone. In addition to howling winds and rains of blood, any psychic powers used in the area for 1d5 rounds automatically invoke Perils of the Warp, in addition to any Psychic Phenomena caused. The psyker gains 1d5+1 Corruption points.
79–82	Cataclysmic Blast: The psyker's power overloads, arcing out in great bolts of Warp energy. Each character within 1d10 metres (including the psyker) takes 1d10 Energy damage with a Pen of 5. The psyker may not Dodge this, or stop the attack with a force field (see page 168). In addition, all of the psyker's clothing, armour, and gear is destroyed, leaving him naked and smoking on the ground, and he cannot use further powers for 1d5 hours after the event.
83–86	Mass Incursion: Chaos Furies (page 417) emerge from the Warp, hungry for souls. Each character within 1d100 metres of the psyker (including himself) must make a Hard (–20) Willpower test or gain 1d10 Corruption and Insanity points, and suffer 1d10 Willpower damage. Each character who succeeds is attacked physically by a Fury, which departs after 1d5 rounds.
87–90	Reality Quake: Reality buckles around the psyker, and an area radiating out 3d10 metres from him is sundered: solid objects alternately rot, burn, and freeze, and everyone and everything in the area suffers a single hit for 2d10 Rending damage that ignores Armour and cannot be Dodged. Warded objects, Daemons, and Untouchables halve the damage they would suffer.
91–99	Grand Incursion: A great and terrible Warp entity takes an interest in the psyker's flesh. Use the profile for Putricifex, Herald of Nurgle from page 416 (or another suitably powerful Daemon) to represent the attacker, who instantly makes an Opposed Very Hard (–20) Willpower test against the psyker. If the Daemon wins, it possesses the psyker's body for 1 hour per degree by which it won the test. The psyker gains 2d10 Insanity and Corruption points and is controlled by the Daemon until the effect ends. If he dies while possessed, the Daemon physically manifests for the remainder of the effect's duration. If the psyker wins the test, he suffers 2d10 Toughness damage, and forever adds +10 to all rolls on Table 6–2: Psychic Phenomena and Table 6–3: Perils of the Warp, as his polluted body now serves as a Warp conduit.
100+	Annihilation: The psyker is immediately burned to ashes by the screaming fires of the Immaterium or dragged into the deepest maelstrom of the Warp. He cannot burn Fate to avert this death and is irrevocably destroyed. There is a chance that a daemonic entity of some sort appears in his place—the type of Daemon is determined by the GM, based on how powerful the psyker was, as more powerful psykers draw more powerful Daemons. The percentage chance that the Daemon appears is equal to the psyker's Willpower characteristic (roll a 1d100, if the result is equal to or under the characteristic, the Daemon appears).

Psy Ratings in Psychic Powers

Unless specifically stated otherwise, all references to psy rating in a power (such as for range or damage) are based on the final, effective psy rating used when manifesting the power. This means that if the psyker manifests a power at a value beneath his base psy rating, a power that has effects based on psy rating is going to do less than if he pushes.

Sustaining Psychic Powers

Some psychic powers can be sustained for a prolonged period of time, as noted in their description. A psyker may sustain such powers without the need to make further Focus Power tests, taking only a small amount of effort to sustain a single power. However, attempting to maintain multiple powers at once becomes increasingly taxing, dividing the psyker's attention between several simultaneous effects and requiring ever greater amounts of concentration.

Any power that can be sustained has a listed action which defines how much effort the power requires to sustain—for example, a power with a sustain requirement of Half Action requires a Half Action each turn to sustain its effects. If the psyker is only attempting to sustain a single power, this is enough to maintain the effects. Any power that does not have the required action spent to sustain it ends at the end of the psyker's turn.

Sustaining multiple powers is more difficult. Any character attempting to sustain two or more powers at once must spend the longest action from the sustain requirements of all the powers being sustained, and reduces the effective psy rating for each power by the number of powers being sustained. More perilous still, the amount of energy the psyker is attempting to wield becomes unstable, swiftly going out of control at the most minor slip of concentration. Should the psyker cause Psychic Phenomena while sustaining more than one power, he must add +10 to the result rolled on **Table 6–2: Psychic Phenomena** for every power after the first he is sustaining.

At the GM's discretion, PCs and particularly important NPCs can attempt to break free from powers being sustained against them. After a duration determined by the GM, such a character can attempt the same Opposed test to resist the power again; if the character wins the Opposed test, he breaks free of the power.

Psychic Bolts

A number of powers produce blasts or energy bolts that inflict harm in a manner not dissimilar to a weapon. These powers all follow the same basic rules. The psyker must nominate a single target within range and line of sight; if the Focus Power test is successful, then the target is hit. See page 226 to determine the Hit Location, using the Focus Power test as the attack test. There are three further variations on this: Psychic Barrages, Psychic Storms, and Psychic Blasts.

Psychic Bolts of all kinds can be dodged as if they were any other kind of ranged attack. A successful Dodge test is sufficient to avoid a normal Psychic Bolt. Dodging a Psychic Storm or Psychic Blast is resolved in the same way as dodging Auto-Fire or Area Effect attacks, respectively (see page 220).

Psychic Barrage

A Psychic Barrage is a cluster of bolts of energy, similar to a semi-automatic weapon. If the Focus Power test succeeds, then the psyker produces one Psychic Bolt for the initial degree of success, plus one for every two additional degrees of success. The number of hits scored in this manner cannot exceed the psyker's effective psy rating when using this power. The first hit must strike the initially chosen target, while any subsequent hits may strike either the initial target or any other targets within two metres, providing all of the targets are within range and line of sight.

Psychic Storm

A Psychic Storm comprises many bolts of energy, similar to fully automatic weapon fire. If the Focus Power test succeeds, then the psyker produces a number of Psychic Bolts equal to the number of degrees of success. The number of hits scored in this manner cannot exceed the psyker's effective psy rating when using this power. The first hit must strike the initially chosen target, while any subsequent hits may strike either the initial target or any other targets within two metres, providing all of the targets are within range and line of sight.

Psychic Blast

A Psychic Blast detonates to cover a wide area, affecting multiple targets simultaneously. The psyker must nominate a single point in space anywhere within range and line of sight. If the Focus Power test is successful, then every target within the radius of the Psychic Blast is hit by the power.

Psychic Powers

"Like I said, he had me dead in sights, then his stubber just exploded. I'm just lucky that way, I guess."

–Leelo Zol, unsanctioned psyker

Psychic powers work in much the same way as skills, and allow a psyker character to manifest unnatural effects and abilities. Psykers access their profound (some say blasphemous) power from the Warp, using an innate connection to this wellspring of energy to create effects capable of incredible greatness or ruinous destruction.

Sanctioned Psykers begin their servitude aboard the dreaded Black Ships of the Adeptus Astra Telepathica. Once on Terra, they are examined and tested to see what use they can be to the Emperor. Those with great telepathic ability, for example, could be trained as Astropaths. Others are given specialised combat training and seconded to the Imperial Guard where they serve alongside—but never a part of—battlefield regiments across the galaxy.

Other psykers, though, escape the notice of the Black Ships, either through ruse, disguise, or even the protection of an Inquisitor eager to utilise their powers for his own ends. Having never undergone the Sanctioning process, and lacking any formal training to protect their minds, each represents a huge danger to friend and foe. An unsanctioned psyker is sometimes capable of manifesting greater psychic powers, but without mental and spiritual rigour he is also easier prey to the ravenous entities of the Warp. The Ruinous Powers always thirst for souls, and few shine as brightly and are so easily devoured as an unsanctioned psyker.

Over several millennia the Adeptus Astra Telepathica has categorised psychic powers into disciplines. Psyker characters usually specialize in one discipline, but can freely pick and choose any powers, assuming they meet the requisite level of power and training. Psyker PCs can only gain powers between sessions, in the same way as purchasing new skills or talents.

Gaining Psychic Powers

A character can only use psychic powers he has purchased. Any character with a psy rating of 1 or higher can purchase powers by spending experience points gained during play. To purchase a psychic power, a character must have access to it in the appropriate discipline tree, and must meet all its prerequisites. The amount of experience points required to purchase a psychic power is listed in that power's entry.



Discipline Trees

All psychic powers fall under one of the many psychic disciplines, and are organised into discipline trees. Each tree consists of a collection of psychic powers linked by paths. When a character wishes to purchase a new power, he must first check if he has access to that power in its tree. To access a psychic power, the character must be able to trace a line along the paths of the tree from the top-most power down to the desired power without passing through a power he does not possess. Characters automatically have access to the top-most psychic power in every tree.

Power Format

Each psychic power is presented using the following format:

Name: The power's name.

Value: This number represents the amount of experience required to learn the power. Psychic powers are purchased with experience points.

Prerequisite: Some techniques require the psyker to have first learnt other ways to use his abilities. He must possess the powers (or other prerequisites) listed in order to learn the power.

Action: The Focus Power action (see page 221) required to activate the power. This is usually a Free Action, Half Action, Full Action, Reaction, or an Extended Action.

Focus Power: This states the characteristic used in Focus Power tests to activate this power (normally Willpower, but occasionally other characteristics are used), and whether the Focus Power test is Opposed. The difficulty of the power is also noted here.

Range: The range at which the power can be used is usually expressed in metres or kilometres, multiplied by the PR at which the power was used. If the range is a radius, this is always measured with the psyker at its centre. Radius applies to a sphere around the psyker and so will extend up, down, and in every other direction.

Sustained: This states whether the power can be sustained (see page 198), and what action is required to sustain the power. This entry will always be one of the following: No, Free Action, Half Action, or Full Action.

Subtype: This denotes the specific action subtypes for the Focus Power test of the power. For more information on action subtypes see page 218.

Effect: This details the power's rules, including variables that the psyker's effective psy rating, or the degrees of success from the Focus Power test, have on the power's final strength. Whenever a power's description refers to the psyker's psy rating, it means the psyker's effective psy rating for the power, not his base psy rating.

Psychic Phenomena: Some unusual powers cause alternate or additional Psychic Phenomena. If the power uses only the normal Psychic Phenomena rules, this section will be absent.

Biomancy

Artists of living flesh, Biomancers can push their own bodies beyond human limits, and even control the biological processes of others. These powers allow a psyker to enhance his own abilities and aid his allies, but can also be used stop a foe's heart with but a thought.

Enfeeble

The psyker lashes at his target with tendrils of Warp energy. The vile power quickly strips the victim of vitality, draining its spirit with every caress.
Value: 100 xp
Prerequisite: Toughness 35
Action: Half Action
Focus Power: Challenging (+0) Opposed Willpower test
Range: 20 metres x psy rating
Sustained: Half Action
Subtype: Attack, Concentration
Effect: The psyker nominates a single target in range and line of sight who opposes this power with a Toughness test. If the target fails to resist the power, it is Stunned for one round. In addition, as long as this power remains in effect, if the target rolls doubles on any test it makes, it suffers a number of levels of Fatigue equal to half the psyker's psy rating (rounded down). A single target can only be affected by one instance of the Enfeeble power at a time, with other usages on the same target having no further effect.



Endurance

Focussing his mind on the injured bodies of his allies, the psyker energises their biology, initiating rapid cell growth. In moments, shattered bones re-knit, gaping wounds close and heal, and the effects of combat damage disappear.
Value: 300 xp
Prerequisite: Toughness 30
Action: Half Action
Focus Power: Difficult (–10) Willpower test
Range: 3 metres x psy rating radius
Sustained: No
Subtype: Concentration
Effect: A number of allies in range equal to the psyker's psy rating, plus the psyker himself, recover wounds equal to half the psyker's psy rating, rounded up. They can also immediately overcome the effects of Pinning. This power is incredibly taxing and requires at least 12 hours of recovery before it may be used again.

Haemorrhage

Drawing on his mastery of the living body, the biomancer accelerates his victim's heart rate beyond the bounds of biological possibility. Betrayed by his own body, the target's blood boils over, flooding his brain and bursting his over-taxed veins. Those nearby have their own hearts caught in the unnatural rhythm, suffering the same fate.
Value: 400 xp
Prerequisite: Psy rating 4
Action: Half Action
Focus Power: Difficult (–10) Opposed Willpower test
Range: 10 metres x psy rating
Sustained: No
Subtype: Attack, Concentration
Effect: The psyker nominates a single target in range and line of sight who opposes this power with a Toughness test. If the target fails to resist the power, it suffers Energy damage equal to the psyker's psy rating, plus one additional damage per degree of failure on its Toughness test; this damage ignores Toughness bonus and Armour. If this damage successfully kills the target, the psyker may immediately recast this psychic power as a Free Action on any legal target within 5 metres of the original target.

Invigourate

The psyker draws upon the energies of the Warp to galvanise the flesh, a possibly hazardous endeavour but one that can be essential to continue the warband's efforts. Newly empowered, the Acolytes can continue afresh.
Value: 100 xp
Prerequisite: Toughness 30
Action: Half Action
Focus Power: Challenging (+0) Willpower test
Range: 1 metre
Sustained: No
Subtype: Concentration
Effect: The psyker can remove a number of levels of Fatigue from himself and allies within range. He can chose how many levels to reduce per character, but the sum of all levels removed from all characters cannot exceed his psy rating. This power is very taxing and requires at least 12 hours of recovery before it can be used again.

Iron Arm

The psyker's flesh transforms, hardening into a slick, living metal, weighing him down but also rendering him incredibly resistant. His new form allows him to shrug off small arms fire and crush his enemies with his bare hands.
Value: 400 xp
Prerequisites: Strength 35, Toughness 35
Action: Half Action
Focus Power: Hard (–20) Willpower test
Range: Self
Sustained: Free Action
Subtype: Concentration
Effect: While this power is in effect, the psyker gains the Unnatural Toughness and Unnatural Strength traits with ratings equal to half his psy rating, rounded up. However, his flesh's sturdier form weighs the psyker down, causing him to suffer a –10 penalty to his Agility characteristic while the power is in effect.

Biomancy Powers

Life Leech

The psyker latches on to his target's life force and tears it from the hapless victim's body. The psyker absorbs this stolen essence, using it to reinvigourate and bolster his own flesh.

Value: 400 xp
Prerequisite: Toughness 40
Action: Full Action
Focus Power: Opposed Difficult (–10) Willpower test
Range: 10 metres x psy rating
Sustained: Free Action
Subtype: Attack, Concentration

Effect: The psyker nominates a single target in range and line of sight who opposes this power with a Toughness test. If the target fails to resist the power, he suffers 1d10 + psy rating Toughness damage, and the psyker gains Unnatural Toughness (1) trait, with its value increased by 1 for every full 5 points of Toughness damage the power inflicts. This Unnatural Toughness trait remains for as long as the power's effect persists.

Shape Flesh

Powerful biomancers are able to bend the living body to their will with great finesse. At the heights of ability, a psyker can mould flesh with an expertise any sculptor would envy.

Value: 200 xp
Prerequisites: Perception 35, Toughness 30
Action: Full Action
Focus Power: Ordinary (+10) Willpower test
Range: 1 metre
Sustained: Free Action
Subtype: Concentration
Effect: The psyker chooses himself or an organic target that he can physically touch. The target's physical appearance changes to a new form of the psyker's choosing for the duration of the power. The amount and precision of the alterations depend on the final psy rating used. Following are some broad guidelines, but GMs can further alter the range of the power as needed.

- **PR 1–3:** The psyker can alter subtle flesh shapes, tones, and colours to distort the appearance of the target. He does not have direct control over what the end result looks like.
- **PR 4–6:** The psyker can alter flesh, hair, eyes, and any other physical features. He can choose how the features will be altered, but does not have the precision to mimic others.
- **PR 7–9:** The psyker can change any physical feature of the target to resemble another individual. However, the psyker must have a pic record of the individual, or have seen him before.
- **PR 10+:** The psyker can shape his target to exactly mimic another individual. Additionally, he can use the power to morph the target into a form that no longer appears human.

All tests to identify the target's true identity suffer a penalty equal to 5 x PR for the duration of the power. The effects of the power on a target other than the psyker remain in effect for the duration of the power, regardless of how far away from the psyker the target becomes.

Smite

Drawing on the electric field of his own body, the psyker projects crackling bolts of bio-lightning, transforming his very life force into destructive energy. Diviners often claim that one can tell much about the state of a biomancer's soul from the colour and appearance of this power.

Value: 200 xp
Prerequisite: Willpower 40
Action: Half Action
Focus Power: Challenging (+0) Willpower test
Range: 20 metres x psy rating
Sustained: No
Subtype: Attack, Concentration

Smite		Psychic Barrage
Rng *20m x PR*	Dmg *1d10+PR (E)*	Pen *4*
Special: –		

Warp Speed

Tapping into the power of the Empyrean, the psyker suffuses his body with energy, pushing himself beyond physical limits. While under the effects of this power, the psyker moves with unbelievable speed, ensuring that no heretic is swift enough to escape justice.

Value: 500 xp
Prerequisite: Psy rating 5
Action: Half Action
Focus Power: Difficult (–10) Willpower test
Range: Self
Sustained: Free Action
Subtype: Concentration
Effect: The psyker gains the Unnatural Weapon Skill, Unnatural Ballistic Skill, and Unnatural Agility traits, all at values equal to his psy rating.



Divination

Perhaps the most ancient of psychic disciplines, divination foretells the future. Though diviners may seek answers by scattering animal entrails or studying the movement of stars, it is in fact the timeless realm of the Warp to which they turn. The powers of divination are of inestimable use to an Inquisitor and his Acolytes in the pursuit of their duties, both in the frenzied arena of combat and while undertaking investigative pursuits.

Foreboding

The psyker gains an unnatural sixth sense. With this inexplicable insight, he knows how and where his enemies will attack, dodging blows and lasblasts with contemptuous and frightening ease.
Value: 200 xp
Prerequisite: Psyniscience rank 1
Action: Reaction
Focus Power: Difficult (–10) Perception test
Range: Self
Sustained: No
Subtype: Concentration
Effect: In any situation where the psyker would be called upon to make an Evasion test, he may instead attempt to use this power. If the power is successful, the psyker avoids the attack exactly as if he has passed an Evasion test with the number of degrees of success he scored on the Focus Power test.

Forewarning

Foreseeing his foes' intentions, the psyker taps into the Warp and, like dropping a small pebble into a pool, sends ripples to slightly shift the course of events. Without moving a muscle, the psyker saves his ally from certain injury and leaves his enemy baffled.
Value: 400 xp
Prerequisite: Perception 50
Action: Half Action
Focus Power: Challenging (+0) Psyniscience test
Range: 3 metres x psy rating radius
Sustained: Free Action
Subtype: Concentration
Effect: For the duration of this power, a number of allies within range equal to the psyker's psy rating, plus the psyker himself, gain a bonus to all Evasion tests equal to twice the psyker's psy rating. Allies affected by this power lose its benefits as soon as they move out of range.

Misfortune

Twisting fate, the psyker focuses his inner eye to ensure that his foe suffers every possible calamity that ill-fortune could provide. From embarrassing mishaps to life-and-death struggles, chance itself betrays the target at every turn.
Value: 300 xp
Prerequisite: Willpower 45
Action: Half Action
Focus Power: Difficult (–10) Opposed Willpower test
Range: 20 metres x psy rating
Sustained: Free Action
Subtype: Attack, Concentration
Effect: The psyker nominates a single target in range and line of sight who opposes this power with a Willpower test. If the target fails to resist the power, misfortune follows it wherever it goes. For the duration of this power, the target's Armour points are reduced in all locations by half the psyker's psy rating, rounded up. The target's weapons also jam on any attack in which they fail to hit their target.



Perfect Timing

So accurate are the diviner's premonitions, that he can predict the exact moment his foe will expose himself as a target. Further, the psyker can forge a link with his allies, momentarily intertwining their fortunes, so that they might fire in perfect unison, already squeezing their weapons' triggers before the foe is aware.
Value: 300 xp
Prerequisite: Perception 55
Action: Half Action
Focus Power: Difficult (–10) Psyniscience test
Range: 3 metres x psy rating radius
Sustained: Half Action
Subtype: Concentration
Effect: For the duration of this power, the psyker and a number of allies equal to his psy rating within range, ignore the effects of cover when firing on a target. If their attacks would strike a Hit Location on the enemy that would benefit from cover, that benefit is ignored. Allies affected by this power lose its benefits as soon as they move out of range.

Precognition

In one of the most viscerally intense applications of the Divination discipline, the psyker witnesses solid and perfectly lifelike visions of his own future. Peering into moments yet to come, he can use this information to ensure or avoid future fates.
Value: 400 xp
Prerequisites: Perception 45, Willpower 45
Action: Full Action
Focus Power: Hard (–20) Psyniscience test
Range: 5 metres x psy rating radius
Sustained: No
Subtype: Concentration
Effect: The psyker gains a number of re-rolls equal to his psy rating that last until the beginning of the his next turn. For the duration of that round, whenever the psyker or an ally in range makes a test or damage roll, the psyker may spend one of the re-rolls to allow that ally to re-roll all dice involved in the roll. If the psyker is killed or rendered Unconscious before the beginning of his next turn, all remaining re-rolls are lost.

GM Guidance: Divination

Some Divination powers allow a psyker to see visions of the past or future. Because these powers function primarily in a narrative fashion, their use could pose difficulties; no matter how well he prepares, no GM can be certain of how the events of the game will proceed. GMs have options when it comes to adjudicating players' use of these powers. It is helpful to first determine what the player is trying to accomplish through using the power. Depending on this it may not be necessary for the GM to describe the character's visions in detail. In some cases, it is sufficient to grant the psyker a bonus to any tests to which his vision is relevant.

Another difficulty comes from the very nature of divination. Investigations are a major part of Dark Heresy, and it would not do to allow an Acolyte to solve a mystery through the single use of a psychic power. Fortunately for the GM, the Warp and fate are fickle and mutable things. The GM can and should be vague in his descriptions of revealed visions; faces, environments, and other details can be hazy and indistinct. Bearing this in mind, the GM can provide enough information to assist the player, without giving away any plot-breaking details. The GM should also remember that the psyker does not necessarily see visions pertaining to his goal. However, GMs should take care to ensure that a player gains something through successful use of Divination powers. Any use of psychic ability includes an element of risk, though; visions are often devoid of context, which poses the danger of acting on incomplete information.

In the end, GMs should view players' use of Divination not as a problem, but as an opportunity. The GM has complete control, ultimately, over what information players obtain. By giving some thought to it, a GM can provide information to keep the players on the right track, or even introduce new plot seeds, without making things too easy.

Prescience

The psyker sees brief, fuzzy flashes into his immediate future, which he can use to guide the warband's aim against their enemies. Though the glimpses are short, such foretelling can mean the difference between life and death when in combat.

Value: 200 xp
Prerequisite: Psyniscience Rank 1
Action: Half Action
Focus Power: Challenging (+0) Psyniscience test
Range: 3 metres x psy rating radius
Sustained: Half Action
Subtype: Concentration
Effect: For the duration of this power, the psyker and a number of allies equal to his psy rating within range, gain a bonus to their Weapon Skill and Ballistic Skill tests equal to twice the psyker's psy rating. Allies affected by this power lose its benefit as soon as they move out of range.

Scrier's Gaze

The most accomplished diviners are not only able to see into the future, but also the present. Unbound by the limits of mere physical vision, his mind peers far and wide, with little able to hide from his sight.

Value: 200 xp
Prerequisite: Psyniscience rank 2
Action: Special
Focus Power: Challenging (+0) Psyniscience test
Range: Self
Sustained: No
Subtype: Concentration
Effect: To begin the ritual, the psyker must spend at least thirty minutes using assorted psychic foci to concentrate his vision—drawing Tarot cards, casting runes, gazing deep into fire, or other methods as varied as the stars of the Imperium. At the end of this time, he makes his Focus Power test to project his vision over the area, with the GM revealing information based on the degrees of success, as described on Table 6–4: Scrier's Gaze Results.

Table 6–4: Scrier's Gaze Results

DoS	Result
1	Single Threat: The psyker manages to focus his view on a single key action his foe is either planning or currently enacting. This could be launching an ambush, hiding a heretical tome, or enacting a blood-soaked sacrifice.
2	Enemy Movements: The psyker's visions stretches over a wide area, able to see all activity within an entire battlefield or hive level. However, he is unable to focus his vision enough to see the exact details at an individual level.
3	Enemy Numbers: The psyker controls the focus of his vision. He is aware of all previous effects and is also able to discern details as to individual activities and exact enemy numbers.
4+	Enemy Plans: The psyker breaks through the veil of time, seeing an area and the countless possible outcomes of conflicts within it. He is aware of all previous effects, and also knows details of the plots any enemy leaders are planning.

Warp Perception

The psyker opens his senses to the Warp, allowing unnatural tendrils of energy to augment his own perceptions. His flesh no longer limited, he casts his gaze wider and hungrily scents prey from farther afield.

Value: 100 xp
Prerequisite: Willpower 35
Action: Half Action
Focus Power: Challenging (+0) Psyniscience test
Range: Self
Sustained: Half Action
Subtype: Concentration
Effect: The psyker gains the Unnatural Senses (X) trait, where the X value is equal to the psy rating multiplied by 10.

Divination Powers



Winding Fate

By touching a character or item, the psyker sees visions into that subject's future and past. Though ghostly and laced with tendrils of Warp-smoke, these images reveal not only what was, but what is yet to be.

Value: 500 xp
Prerequisite: Perception 50
Action: Full Action
Focus Power: Difficult (–10) Psyniscience test
Range: Self
Sustained: No
Subtype: Concentration
Effect: The vision lasts for a number of seconds equal to the twice the psy rating, and can be from the subject's future or past a number of days equal to the psy rating. The higher the psy rating, the more the psyker can control what his flashes focus on (at the GM's discretion).

Pyromancy

The most destructive discipline, pyromancy allows a psyker to control and create flame using his mind. These powers focus on combat, from incinerating foes from within to summoning walls of flame to shield allies. Pyromancers are greatly feared, for their powers are often difficult to control once released, and can inflict great collateral damage.

Cauterise

With careful application of his powers, the psyker applies intense heat to a wound on his own flesh or to the flesh of an ally, quenching the flow of blood. The effect is quite painful, but certainly preferable to bleeding to death. The use of this power generates a focused and intense heat that rivals advanced medicae equipment, and certainly far exceeds the effects of ordinary battlefield cauterisations.



Value: 300 xp
Prerequisite: Willpower 45
Action: Half Action
Focus Power: Routine (+20) Willpower test
Range: 1 metre
Sustained: No
Subtype: Concentration
Effect: The psyker chooses himself or another character he can physically touch. If the target is suffering from Blood Loss, successfully using the power removes that condition.

Flame Breath

Using his body as a conduit for his Warp-drawn power, the psyker expels a torrent of flame from his mouth and eyes. Even his allies can find the sight terrifying as his foes are burned with his unnatural exhalations.
Value: 300 xp
Prerequisite: Psy rating 3
Action: Half Action
Focus Power: Challenging (+0) Willpower test
Range: 20 metres x psy rating
Sustained: No
Subtype: Attack

Flame Breath	Psychic Barrage	
Rng *20m x PR*	Dmg *1d10+2+2xPR (E)*	Pen *0*
Special: *Flame*		

Fiery Form

Unnatural flame engulfs the psyker's entire body. He is cloaked in sheets of fire that somehow do not harm him, but burns any nearby with horrifying results.
Value: 400 xp
Prerequisite: Psy rating 4
Action: Half Action
Focus Power: Difficult (–10) Willpower test
Range: Self
Sustained: Half Action
Subtype: Concentration
Effect: While this power is in effect, all of the psyker's melee attacks deal additional Energy damage equal to his psy rating and gain the Flame quality. In addition, at the end of each of the psyker's turns in which he sustains this power, he emits a Psychic Blast centred on his location. Each character within the area of the blast, with the exception of the psyker himself, are struck.

Fiery Form	Psychic Blast	
Rng *(Self)*	Dmg *1d10+PR (E)*	Pen *0*
Special: *Blast (PR), Flame*		

Fire Shield

With but a gesture, the psyker summons a wall of shimmering, unnatural fire in the air before him. Any who would strike the pyromancer must contend with fiery retribution, as flames leap outward, travelling in reverse down the path of the bullet or lasbolt to strike the psyker's assailant.
Value: 300 xp
Prerequisite: Agility 40
Action: Half Action
Focus Power: Challenging (+0) Willpower test
Range: 20 metres x psy rating
Sustained: Free Action
Subtype: Concentration
Effect: While this power is in effect, any character in range and line of sight that successfully strikes the psyker with an attack immediately suffers Energy damage equal to the psyker's psy rating. The degrees of success on this attack are equal to those from the Focus Power test, and the inflicted damage is not reduced by Armour or Toughness bonus.

Fire Shield	Psychic Bolt	
Rng *20m x PR*	Dmg *PR (E)*	Pen *0*
Special: *Flame*		

Pyromancy Powers



Inferno

Focussing his power, the psyker ignites the very atmosphere surrounding his target, placing his foe in the midst of a sudden and violent conflagration.

Value: 500 xp
Prerequisite: Psy rating 5
Action: Half Action
Focus Power: Difficult (–10) Willpower test
Range: 10 metres x psy rating
Sustained: No
Subtype: Attack, Concentration

Inferno		Psychic Blast
Rng 10m x PR	Dmg 2d10+3xPR (E)	Pen 0
Special: Blast (PR), Flame		

Manipulate Flame

Reaching out with his mind, the psyker grasps nearby flame and moulds it to his desire. The flames dance to his tune, moving to untouched areas or falling quiet at their master's command.

Value: 100 xp
Prerequisite: Willpower 35
Action: Half Action
Focus Power: Routine (+20) Willpower test
Range: 10 metres x psy rating
Sustained: Half Action
Subtype: Attack
Effect: The psyker chooses a patch of fire in range and line of sight with a radius no greater than PR metres. Each round, he can either extinguish or control the fire. If he extinguishes the fire, this power ends and the fire goes out. If he controls the fire, he can move it up to a number of metres equal to his psy rating per round along a flammable surface.

Molten Beam

The pyrokine projects from his hands a blindingly bright beam of sun-hot energy. At the touch of this blazing ray, plasteel liquefies and flesh bursts into ash.

Value: 400 xp
Prerequisite: Psy rating 4
Action: Half Action
Focus Power: Challenging (+0) Willpower test
Range: 5 metres x psy rating
Sustained: No
Subtype: Attack

Molten Beam	Psychic Bolt	
Rng *5m x PR*	Dmg *1d10+5+3xPR (E)*	Pen *2xPR*
Special: *Melta*		

Spontaneous Combustion

In one of the purest displays of his power, the psyker ignites his enemies, burning them alive. The target's blood boils and flesh smoulders, and as the psyker's rage reaches its pinnacle, the target's body begins to explode in blasts of ash and flame.

Value: 200 xp
Prerequisite: Willpower 40
Action: Half Action
Focus Power: Ordinary (+10) Willpower test
Range: 20 metres x psy rating
Sustained: No
Subtype: Attack

Spontaneous Combustion	Psychic Bolt	
Rng *20m x PR*	Dmg *1d10+2+2xPR (E)*	Pen *0*
Special: *Flame*		

Sunburst

The psyker releases a nova of fiery energy from his body. As the psyker focuses his power, a blazing aura coalesces around him, growing brighter and hotter before rapidly expanding outward in all directions. As the calm at the eye of the firestorm, the psyker is untouched, while all around him is reduced to ash and cinder.

Value: 400 xp
Prerequisite: Psy rating 4
Action: Half Action
Focus Power: Challenging (+0) Willpower test
Range: 20 metres x psy rating
Sustained: No
Subtype: Attack

Sunburst	Psychic Storm	
Rng *20m x PR*	Dmg *1d10+2+2xPR (E)*	Pen *0*
Special: *Flame*		



Telekinesis

Through the power of the Warp, telekines translate mental impulses into physical force. Powers from the telekinesis discipline can defy gravity, blast opponents with invisible bolts of force, and even tear holes in the very fabric of reality. Such powers offer great utility in a variety of situations, for they allow a psyker to affect the world around him without the constraints of his physical body.

Assail

The psyker reaches out with his mind to pluck up whatever objects are available and hurl them at his target. If there is nothing suitable nearby, the psyker can direct his mental energies directly at his foe, pounding him with bolts of invisible force.
Value: 200 xp
Prerequisite: Willpower 40
Action: Half Action
Focus Power: Ordinary (+10) Willpower test
Range: 20 metres x psy rating
Sustained: No
Subtype: Attack, Concentration
Effect: If the psyker scores at least three degrees of success on the Focus Power test for this attack, the target is also thrown 1d5 metres away and knocked Prone. Certain especially large targets such as battle tanks, Greater Daemons, and Titans are immune to this effect at the Game Master's discretion.

Assail	Psychic Bolt	
Rng *20m x PR*	Dmg *1d10+PR (I)*	Pen *2*
Special: –		

Crush

Rather than using his abilities to turn inanimate objects into weapons, the telekine focuses directly on his enemy to squeeze him in an invisible fist of power. Unless the target can repel the psychokinetic assault, he is bludgeoned horridly. Even should he survive, the overwhelming psychic force nonetheless pins him in place under a tremendous weight.
Value: 300 xp
Prerequisite: Willpower 45
Action: Half Action
Focus Power: Challenging (+0) Opposed Willpower test
Range: 10 metres x psy rating
Sustained: No
Subtype: Attack, Concentration
Effect: The psyker nominates a single target in range and line of sight who opposes this power with a Toughness test. If the target fails to resist the power, it suffers the attack below.

Crush	Psychic Bolt	
Rng *10m x PR*	Dmg *1d10+PR (I)*	Pen *2*
Special: *Snare (PR/2)*		

Gate of Infinity



Though it offers no physical attack, this power is nonetheless one of the most dangerous uses of the Telekinesis discipline. With it, the psyker tears open a hole in space so that he might pass through the Warp. Others might refuse to pass through the unreal pathway, however, fearful of any proximity to the Immaterium and its terrible denizens.
Value: 400 xp
Prerequisite: Psy rating 5
Action: Extended Action (3)
Focus Power: Hard (–20) Willpower test
Range: 1 kilometres x psy rating
Sustained: No
Subtype: Concentration
Effect: The psyker chooses a point anywhere within 5 metres times his psy rating, and opens a gate to the Immaterium at that point. He then chooses a point within range of the power, and opens an exit to the gate at that location. The psyker must be aware of the location in which he is opening the exit to the gate, either having visited it before, seen it from afar, or simply studied it on a map.

The gate lasts for a number of rounds equal to the psyker's psy rating, and has a radius in metres equal to the psyker's psy rating as well. For the duration of the power, the two sides of the gate are linked, and any person or objects may pass between them freely provided they can fit through the gate.

This power is incredibly taxing and requires at least 12 hours of recovery before it may be used again.

Objuration Mechanicum

With this power, the psyker reaches into and disrupts the inner workings of nearby machines, jamming gears, blowing fuses, and severing power couplings. Those who rely on technology find themselves bereft of their support and helpless.
Value: 300 xp
Prerequisite: Intelligence 40
Action: Half Action
Focus Power: Challenging (+0) Willpower test
Range: 10 metres x psy rating
Sustained: No
Subtype: Concentration
Effect: The psyker chooses a point anywhere within range and line of sight. This power creates a Haywire Field (see page 147) centred at this point, with a radius in metres equal to the psyker's psy rating.

Telekinesis Powers

Shockwave

The psyker uses his unnatural control of the physical world to amplify a sound to impossible levels. From clapping his hands together, stamping on a hab floor, or even shouting, the psyker creates a sound that transforms into a powerful shockwave, bursting eardrums and knocking people off their feet.

Value: 300 xp
Prerequisite: Willpower 50
Action: Half Action
Focus Power: Challenging (+0) Willpower test
Range: Self
Sustained: No
Subtype: Attack, Concentration
Effect: Each character in the area of effect (other than the psyker) suffers the damage below. He is also pushed directly away from the psyker a number of metres equal to the psyker's psy rating.

Shockwave		Psychic Blast
Rng *(Self)*	Dmg *1d10+PR (X)*	Pen *0*
Special: *Blast (PR)*		

Telekine Dome

The psyker shields himself and nearby allies with a dome of mental force, large enough to surround his group and protect them from harm. The protective shield deflects bullets and lasblasts, sending them ricocheting in all directions.

Value: 300 xp
Prerequisite: Psy rating 4
Action: Half Action
Focus Power: Challenging (+0) Willpower test
Range: 5 metres x psy rating
Sustained: Free Action
Subtype: Concentration
Effect: The psyker chooses a point in range and line of sight, and creates a dome of invisible energy centred on that point with a radius equal to half the psyker's psy rating, rounded up. Each ally (including the psyker, potentially) standing inside the dome gains a number of Armour points equal to the psy rating to all Hit Locations against any attack that originated outside of the dome's radius. However, characters may still physically pass through the dome at no penalty.

Telekine Shield

Using the energy of the Warp, the psyker erects a wall of tangible force that moves with him. The shimmering barrier stops bullets and deflects blades, but as more and more kinetic energy is directed at him, the psyker's mental shield wears down.

Value: 200 xp
Prerequisite: Intelligence 40
Action: Half Action
Focus Power: Routine (+20) Willpower test
Range: Self
Sustained: Free Action
Subtype: Concentration
Effect: For the duration of the power, all of the psyker's Hit Locations count as being protected by cover with an Armour Value equal to half this power's psy rating. This shield can be damaged just like normal cover by damage that exceeds the shield's Armour Value (see page 229). If the shield is reduced to 0 Armour points, the power stops, and is no longer sustained.

Telekinetic Control

The telekine calls on his powers to reach out farther than his flesh can extend, distorting reality to grasp objects with eldritch hands. With invisible fingers perhaps only betrayed with frosted rime or whispered breezes, few can notice his subtle manipulations.

Value: 100 xp
Prerequisite: Willpower 35
Action: Half Action
Focus Power: Routine (+20) Willpower test
Range: 10 metres x psy rating
Sustained: Half Action
Subtype: Concentration
Effect: The psyker chooses an object in range and line of sight with a weight no greater than 2 x PR kilograms. At the beginning of each of his turns, he can move the object in any direction up to a number of metres equal to twice his psy rating. If the object ever leaves the range of the power, the power ends.

Vortex of Doom

In perhaps the ultimate display of his mastery of both the physical world and the Warp, the psyker tears open a hole twixt the two. Around the roiling vortex, the laws of physical space are undone as the ravenous predations of Chaos devour all in the vicinity. This power is extraordinarily dangerous, and not only to the psyker's enemies. The Vortex of Doom feeds on itself and can sustain its power without need of the psyker.

Value: 400 xp
Prerequisite: Psy rating 5
Action: Half Action
Focus Power: Difficult (–10) Willpower test
Range: 5 metres x psy rating
Sustained: Half Action
Subtype: Attack, Concentration
Effect: The psyker chooses a point in range and line of sight, and creates a vortex of energy centred on that point that starts with a radius of 2 metres. Each character who is touching the vortex at the end of the psyker's turn suffers damage as detailed below.

Vortex of Doom	Psychic Blast	
Rng *5m x PR*	Dmg *2d10+2xPR (X)*	Pen †
Special: *Blast (2), †Pen=current Vortex radius*		

The psyker cannot voluntarily stop sustaining this power. Instead, at the beginning of each turn the psyker is sustaining the vortex, he must make a Challenging (+0) Willpower test with a –5 penalty for each metre in the vortex's current radius. If he passes the test, he may perform one of the following actions:

- Increase the vortex's radius by one metre.
- Decrease the vortex's radius by one metre.
- Move the vortex any direction a number of metres equal to the psyker's psy rating.

If the psyker fails the Willpower test to sustain the vortex, or if he is unable to make the test due to other circumstances, its radius increases by one metre and it moves a number of metres equal to the psyker's psy rating in a random direction (see the **Scatter Diagram** on page 230).

If the vortex's radius ever decreases to zero metres, the power ends and the vortex disappears. If the vortex's radius ever grows larger than the psyker's psy rating, it explodes, ending the power, and destroying the vortex. The psyker is hit by this damage regardless of his proximity to the exploding vortex as the energy of the Warp he was channelling lashes back into him.

Vortex Explosion	Psychic Blast	
Rng —	Dmg *2d10+4xPR (X)*	Pen †
Special: *Blast (2xPR), †Pen=current Vortex radius*		

Telepathy

Perhaps due to Astropaths being amongst the more common types of psyker, many individuals equate all psychic ability with telepathy. In fact, only certain psykers possess the talent to enter the minds of others, and even fewer the strength of will to maintain their own sanity in the face of constant exposure to others' thoughts. These powers may not inspire awe in the same way as other, less subtle, disciplines, but a skilled telepath can end a battle before a single shot is fired.

Dominate

Demonstrating the superiority of his mutant mind, the telepath subverts his foe's will and forces him to act against his every inclination. Few psychic abilities are so rightly feared.
Value: 200 xp
Prerequisite: Willpower 40
Action: Full Action
Focus Power: Challenging (+0) Opposed Willpower test
Range: 5 metres x psy rating
Sustained: No
Subtype: Concentration
Effect: The psyker nominates a number targets in range and line of sight up to half his psy rating (rounded up) who oppose this power with a Willpower test. Each target that fails to resist the power must follow a simple command given by the psyker. Some example orders include "Flee," "Fall," or "Attack your friend." If the command is a potentially suicidal act, each target receives a +20 to its Willpower test to Oppose the power. In all cases, the command must be achievable in a single round.

Erasure

With a surgeon's skill, the psyker opens up his target's mind and slices away a memory, removing it forever. This power is of immense utility to an Inquisitor's work, particularly one who wishes to operate discreetly, without the usual mess of an execution.
Value: 100 xp
Prerequisite: Fellowship 40
Action: Full Action
Focus Power: Challenging (+0) Opposed Willpower test
Range: 5 metres x psy rating
Sustained: No
Subtype: Concentration
Effect: The psyker chooses a single foe in range and line of sight who opposes this power with a Willpower test. If he fails, the psyker removes a memory of a recent event from the target's mind. The psyker can only remove an amount of time from the target's memory up to 10 x PR minutes, and the event removed cannot have occurred more than PR hours prior to the use of this power. The enemy is left with a gap in his memory, with no recollection of what occurred during that time.

Hallucination

The human mind's grasp on reality is fragile and easily manipulated with sufficient power. With his own psychic senses, the telepath touches the psyche of his target and severs its connection to normal existence.
Value: 200 xp
Prerequisite: Fellowship 40
Action: Half Action
Focus Power: Challenging (+0) Opposed Willpower test
Range: 10 metres x psy rating
Sustained: No
Subtype: Concentration
Effect: The psyker nominates a single target in range and line of sight who opposes this power with a Willpower test. If the target fails to resist the power, it must roll on **Table 5–3: Hallucinogenic Effects** on page 146, and immediately apply the effects. The effect rolled on the table lasts for a number of rounds equal to half the psyker's psy rating, rounded up.

Invisibility

Clouding enemy minds, the psyker obscures his allies from their foes' senses. Though eyes and other senses detect them as normal, their minds do not perceive them, save for a slight distortion in their vision.
Value: 400 xp
Prerequisites: Agility 30, psy rating 4
Action: Half Action
Focus Power: Difficult (–10) Willpower test
Range: 10 metres x psy rating
Sustained: Free Action
Subtype: Concentration
Effect: The psyker nominates a single target within range and line of sight (this can be the psyker himself). For the duration of the power, the target counts having the Stealth skill at Known (rank 1), and gains a bonus to Stealth tests equal to +5 times the psyker's psy rating. Additionally, all ranged attacks made against the target suffer a penalty equal to –5 times the psyker's psy rating. If the target moves beyond the power's range, he loses this power's benefits.

Mental Fortitude

Drawing from the limitless potential of the Warp, the psyker augments the mental abilities of his targets, providing defence against the stresses of combat and the terrors of the galaxy.
Value: 300 xp
Prerequisite: Adamantium Faith
Action: Half Action
Focus Power: Difficult (–10) Willpower test
Range: 3 metres x psy rating radius
Sustained: Free Action
Subtype: Concentration
Effect: For the duration of this power, a number of allies up to the psyker's psy rating within range count as having the Adamantium Faith talent. Allies affected by this power lose its benefits as soon as they move out of range.

Telepathy Powers



Psychic Shriek

Drawing a deep soul-breath, the psyker unleashes a rippling Warp tide that sears the souls and blasts the minds of those in its path. The violent psychic wave is enough to overwhelm and shut down the minds of those it strikes, while those not slain outright are left reeling and dazed.

Value: 300 xp
Prerequisite: Psy rating 3
Action: Half Action
Focus Power: Challenging (+0) Willpower test
Range: 10 metres x psy rating
Sustained: No
Subtype: Attack

Psychic Shriek		Psychic Bolt
Rng *10m x PR*	Dmg *1d10+2+2xPR (X)*	Pen *0*
Special: *Concussive (1)*		

Puppet Master

In the ultimate expression of telepathic power, the psyker utterly crushes his target's will, locking him away in a dark corner of his own mind and taking complete control of his body. After recovering their wits, those subjected to this power are often struck with bouts of insecurity, never certain again if their actions are truly their own.

Value: 400 xp
Prerequisite: Fellowship 55
Action: Full Action
Focus Power: Difficult (–10) Opposed Willpower test
Range: 10 metres x psy rating
Sustained: Special
Subtype: Concentration
Effect: The psyker nominates a single target in range and line of sight with total wounds no greater than 3 times the psyker's psy rating, who opposes this power with a Willpower test. If the target fails to resist the power, it is controlled by the psyker like a puppet. For the duration of the power, the psyker can divide his Actions between himself and the target. The dominated target uses its own Characteristics, but at –10 due to the crudity of the control. If at any point the psyker would make the target perform a potentially suicidal action, the target can attempt a Challenging (+0) Opposed Willpower test to try to break free of the power. Additionally, the power breaks as soon as the target moves out of range.



Telepathic Link

In this, the simplest yet purest expression of his powers, the telepath establishes a mental connection to another, linking their minds and allowing him to receive or transmit thoughts. When stealth is essential, such silent communication is ideal.

Value: 100 xp
Prerequisite: Willpower 35
Action: Half Action
Focus Power: Difficult (–10) Opposed Willpower test
Range: 20 metres x psy rating
Sustained: No
Subtype: Concentration
Effect: The psyker chooses a person in range and line of sight who opposes this power with a Willpower test. If the target fails, the psyker can either read the person's thoughts or send him a brief mental message.

- **Thought Reading:** The psyker reads the target's thoughts, with the GM determining the nature of the information gained. The more degrees of success scored on the Focus Power test, the more information is gained overall. The higher the PR of the power, the more secretive the information gained.
- **Thought Sending:** The psyker causes a message to appear in the target's mind as if he has just heard it spoken aloud. The message can be no longer than 5 x PR seconds long.

If the target of this power is aware of what the psyker is trying to do, he can voluntarily fail the opposed Willpower test, counting as having rolled a 100.

Terrify

Turning an eldritch key, the psyker unlocks his target's deepest and strongest fears, exposing him to the worst recesses of his own psyche. These nightmarish visions are enough to drive even the strongest helplessly mad.

Value: 400 xp
Prerequisite: Fellowship 45
Action: Half Action
Focus Power: Difficult (–10) Opposed Willpower test
Range: 10 metres x psy rating
Sustained: No
Subtype: Concentration
Effect: Slithering deep into the mind of his victim, the psyker unearths their greatest failings, greatest weaknesses, and greatest fears. Using these as tools against his opponent, the psyker can turn even the most courageous warriors into pathetic, whimpering cowards before him.

The psyker nominates a single target in range and line of sight who opposes this power with a Willpower test. If the target fails to resist the power, it must roll on **Table 8–11: Shock** on page 287, adding +10 times the psyker's psy rating to the roll in place of the normal addition for degrees of failure, and immediately apply the effects.



Chapter VII: Combat

Life in the Imperium is filled with brutal violence, especially for those devoted to the preservation of Mankind. The galaxy abounds with threats ranging from heretical thugs, to antagonistic xenos races, to Daemons of Chaos eager to devour the souls of every human alive. Acolytes seeking to eradicate them must be ready to fight. Combat is an ever-present part of their duties, and even the least warlike of Acolytes must always be ready for battle. Cultists frequently spring out in ambush during what was hoped to be a secretive investigation, loyal Enforcers might turn on the Acolytes they are escorting, and heretical powers are always ready to eliminate Acolytes should their true identities be uncovered. To fight is to survive, and characters who master combat stay alive far longer than those who do not.

This chapter presents the rules for fighting in Dark Heresy, including conflicts involving vehicles. It covers actions, environmental combat effects, damage, wounds, and the many conditions that violent struggles can impart on an Acolyte. Players can also find full rules for movement and carrying objects, as these are important factors whenever in combat. It also covers how differing gravitational levels can affect movement. A warband can often find itself on worlds, voidships, and installations in the black of space that do not necessarily comply with the gravity of Holy Terra, so Acolytes must always be prepared to fight in these possibly unfamiliar settings.

Structured Time

"The candles are burning low. We must act quickly before the ritual grows deeper."

–Tech-Adept Mu Grentille

Combat takes place in structured time, as opposed to narrative time, which covers situations where time and the precise order of actions is less of a factor. Narrative time presents an abstracted version approach to situations, suitable when time can flow for days or even weeks such as travel across worlds or between stars. This aspect of the game is covered in **Chapter VIII: Narrative Tools**, while game play during the heat of conflict or whenever a moment's decision can decide life or death is presented here.

Combat Encounters

In combat or during other time-sensitive tasks, every second counts, and the order in which things happen is crucial. While the members of a warband actually spend most of their time in investigation and other non-combat pursuits, the time spent fighting a xenos cult or chasing escaped heretics often defines (or can even end) their existence. These periods of exploding grenades

and reality-tearing Warp intrusions are mad scrambles, where the Acolytes' training and practice come to the fore, and where their teamwork is tested to the extreme.

To help maintain order in the chaos of battle and other events where time is of the essence, a combat encounter is broken down into rounds, turns, and actions.

Rounds

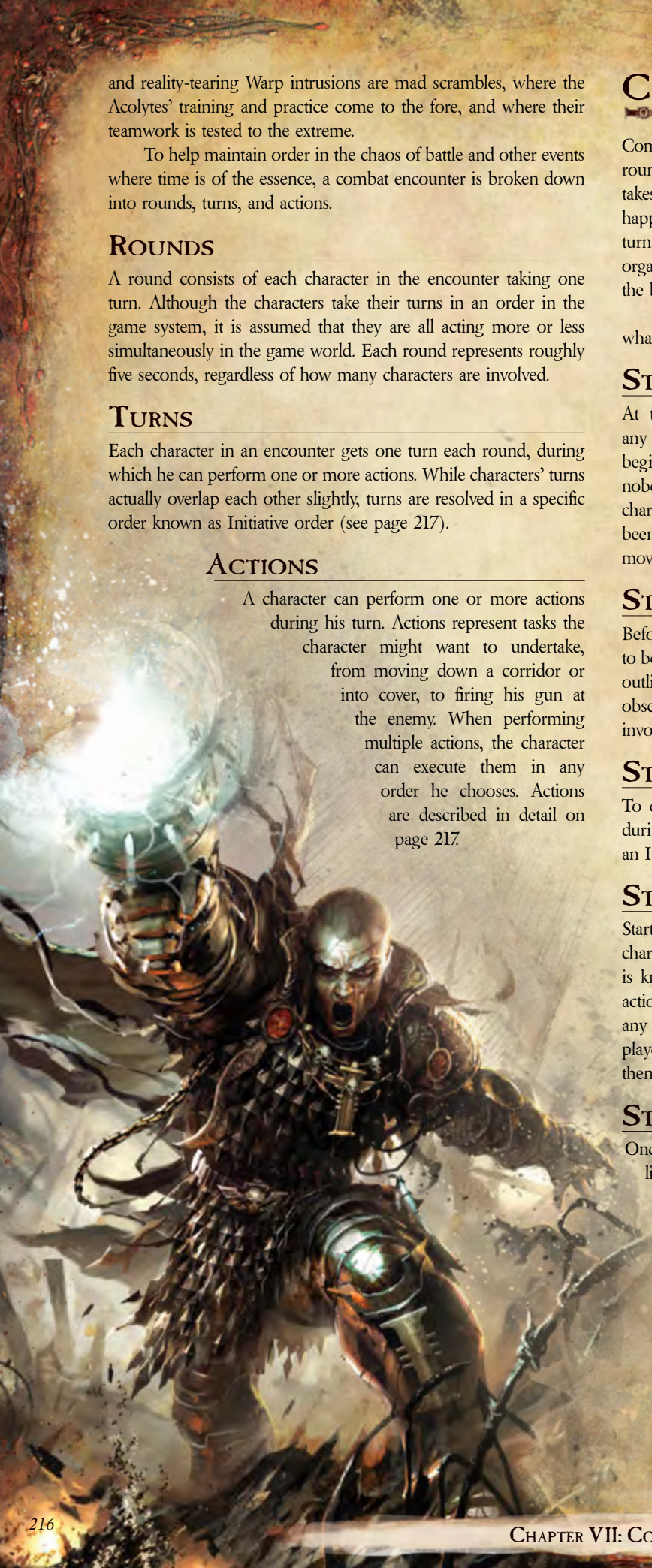
A round consists of each character in the encounter taking one turn. Although the characters take their turns in an order in the game system, it is assumed that they are all acting more or less simultaneously in the game world. Each round represents roughly five seconds, regardless of how many characters are involved.

Turns

Each character in an encounter gets one turn each round, during which he can perform one or more actions. While characters' turns actually overlap each other slightly, turns are resolved in a specific order known as Initiative order (see page 217).

Actions

A character can perform one or more actions during his turn. Actions represent tasks the character might want to undertake, from moving down a corridor or into cover, to firing his gun at the enemy. When performing multiple actions, the character can execute them in any order he chooses. Actions are described in detail on page 217.



Combat Overview

Combat is usually resolved using structured time divided into rounds, turn, and actions. Each character (including NPCs), takes one turn each round. Although the action during combat is happening nearly simultaneously in the game world, the different turns during a round are taken in a specific order to keep things organised. The order of these turns is determined by Initiative at the beginning of a combat encounter.

When a new combat begins, follow these steps to determine what happens:

Step 1: Surprise

At the beginning of a combat, the GM determines whether any characters are Surprised. This can only happen once, at the beginning of a combat, and there will be many combats wherein nobody is Surprised. During the first round of combat, a Surprised character loses his turn and cannot use Reactions because he has been caught unawares by his enemies. If no one is Surprised, move immediately to the next step.

Step 2: Set the Scene

Before the characters can begin taking their turns, the players need to be aware of everything going on in the scene. The Game Master outlines the scenario (or at least the parts that the characters can observe): the combatants they face, the relative positions of everyone involved in the combat, and their surrounding environment.

Step 3: Determine Initiative

To determine the order in which the characters take their turns during each round, each character involved in the combat makes an Initiative roll. The GM rolls for all Non-Player Characters.

Step 4: Combatants Take Turns

Starting with the character at the top of the Initiative order, each character takes a turn. The character currently taking his turn is known as the active character, and can perform one or more actions. Once his actions have been resolved, his turn ends and any lingering effects that specify a duration of "until the end of the player's turn" now end. The next character in the Initiative order then becomes the active character and takes his turn, and so forth.

Step 5: Round Ends

Once each character has taken a turn, the round is over. Any lingering effects that specify a duration of "until the end of the round" now end.

Step 6: Encounter Ends

Continue to repeat Steps 4 and 5 until the combat is finished, or until the non-combat event (the discovery of an explosive ready to detonate, for example) that triggered the switch into structured time is resolved.

Initiative

Initiative is rolled once at the beginning of each combat encounter, and determines the order in which all characters take turns each round during that encounter. To determine the Initiative order, each character rolls 1d10 and adds his Agility bonus to the result. The GM rolls Initiative for all NPCs involved in the encounter. To keep things simple, it is recommended that the GM make one Initiative roll for each group of similar enemy characters.

After each character has determined his Initiative, the GM makes a list, placing them in order from highest to lowest. This list is known as the Initiative order, which is the order in which characters take turns each round, until the end of the combat.

If more than one character has the same Initiative score, the one with the higher Agility characteristic is placed higher in the Initiative order. If they also have the same Agility characteristic, they both roll 1d10, and the character with the higher roll is placed higher in the Initiative order.

Once the Initiative order has been established, it usually remains the same from round to round. If new combatants join in the middle of the fight, simply determine their Initiatives normally and insert them into the Initiative order. The GM can choose to re-establish the Initiative order during an encounter if the events of the story demand it, and this can involve additional Surprised rounds. Generally speaking though, events such as this should be rare, and should be used to heighten tension and introduce unique or interesting new elements to the combat, rather than just when more enemy forces show up.

Surprise

When a combat begins, some of the characters involved might be unaware of their opponents' presence or hostile intentions. Usually, a character is allowed an Awareness skill test to attempt to avoid this. There are some situations, however, where almost any character would be hard-pressed to see the threat coming. Examples of this include:

- Heavy rainstorms, nearby artillery barrages, void-ship launchings, and other sustained durations of loud noises.
- Carefully constructed ambushes (gained from successful Stealth tests to sneak up on the Acolytes, or Concealment skills that were used to hide attackers from easy view).
- Settings that cause the Acolytes to let their guard down, such as a governor's reception or Ministorum service.
- A sudden appearance of torch-wielding fanatics, mass hysteria in a crowded hab tavern, or other distracting events.

If there is at least one Surprised combatant, the first round of combat is referred to as a Surprised round. During a Surprised round, all combatants roll for Initiative as normal, but any Surprised combatants lose their turn during the Surprised round. All the non-Surprised combatants take actions using the standard Initiative order. The Surprised combatant (or group of combatants) can do nothing except remain in whatever state they were when combat started (which in most cases means they simply stand still) either because they are in shock or because they are simply unaware that they are under attack. Surprised combatants cannot use Reactions during a Surprised round. Furthermore, a non-Surprised attacker receives a +30 bonus to Weapon Skill and Ballistic Skill tests made to attack a Surprised target. After the Surprised round completely resolves, all Surprised characters recover their wits and can act normally, joining the Initiative order at whatever place they rolled at the start of the Surprised round.

The Turn

"Round loaded and blessed. I have the shot. Emperor guide my aim."

–Intercepted vox-communication before the assassination of Governor Flavioux I

Acolytes are exceptional individuals, and are expected to perform exceptional deeds in their defence of Mankind. They are faced with foes no other humans could sanely imagine, and in combat or other stressful situations each must strive to his utmost lest the Emperor judge him lacking. Each act must be taken not only for himself, but also for his fellow Acolytes and the success of their mission, or failure will surely follow.

When the Initiative order reaches a character, it is time for him to take his turn and perform actions and other activities. Each turn is broken into three distinct parts: the start of the turn, performing actions, and the end of the turn. An Acolyte spends most of his turn performing actions, and these actions usually have the greatest impact on combats and adventures.

Actions

During each normal round, every character gets a turn to act. On his turn, a character can take one or more actions. Actions represent everything a character does over the course of a combat: running down a dark corridor, firing a lasgun at an enemy, fixing a piece of arcane technology before it explodes, or even channelling the dangerous powers of the Warp. There are five types of actions in Dark Heresy, and every action also has one or more subtypes.

Full Actions

A Full Action requires a character's complete attention to accomplish. A character can take one Full Action on his turn and cannot take any Half Actions. Running towards an opponent is an example of a Full Action.

Half Actions

A Half Action is fairly simple; it requires some effort or concentration, but not so much that it consumes a character's entire turn. A character can take two different Half Actions on his turn instead of taking one Full Action. Readying a weapon or making a Standard Attack are both examples of Half Actions.

Reactions

A Reaction is a special action made in response to some event, such as an attack. A character receives one Reaction each round, which he can only use when it is not his turn. Examples include making an Evasion test to avoid an attack.

Free Actions

Free Actions take only a moment to complete and usually require no real effort. A character can perform Free Actions in addition to any other actions on his turn. Although there is no formal limit on the number of Free Actions a character can take during a single turn, the GM should use common sense to set reasonable limits on what can be accomplished in a few seconds. Examples of Free Actions include calling out a short warning to a fellow Acolyte, removing a vision-restricting hat, or dropping an unneeded item.

Extended Actions

Some actions require longer than a single round to complete. These could include repairing a damaged cogitator, reloading a bulky weapon, or translating a dead race's language. Extended Actions are initiated on the character's turn, and are the only type of action that can be undertaken across multiple rounds. Once a character commits to completing an Extended Action, he is considered to be working towards completing it as long as necessary. If the character abandons the Extended Action, or is interrupted, all progress towards completing the action is lost.

Action Subtypes

In addition to its type, every action is also categorised into one or more subtypes. Action subtypes do not do anything in and of themselves, but they are used to clarify what a character is and is not allowed to do in a variety of special circumstances. For example, a character who is Immobilised cannot perform any actions with the Movement subtype.

Using Actions

During his turn, a character may perform one Full Action or two different Half Actions. A character could, for example, make a Charge action (Full Action) or make an Aim action and a Standard Attack action, such as shooting (two Half Actions). It is important to remember that a round is only a few seconds long, so the character's turn within that round is but a few moments.

Any action can be combined with talking, banter, battle cries, and other short verbal expressions—these are considered Free Actions—but it is left to the GM to decide what a player might be able to say in that amount of time. A wry aside to a companion or a terse insult of an enemy is always reasonable, but recounting the intimate details of one's legendary seven duels to the death between swings of a power sword should probably count as something more than just a Free Action.

Most actions are started and completed within the active character's same turn. For example, a character does not begin a Charge on one turn and finish it on a later turn in a later round; he performs the entire Charge (which is a Full Action) at once during his turn. However, there are two broad exceptions: Reactions can only be performed when it is not the reacting character's turn, and Extended Actions always take more than one round to complete.

Characters can only take one action with the Attack subtype and one action with the Concentration subtype during their turn. They can still take Reactions with the Concentration or Attack subtype during the same round, since this does not happen during their turn. Note that sustaining psychic powers (most of which have the Concentration subtype) does not count as taking actions.

Action Descriptions

These actions provide players with options in structured time.

Aim

Type: Half Action *or* Full Action
Subtype: Concentration
The active character takes extra time to make a more precise attack. Aiming as a Half Action grants a +10 bonus to the character's Weapon Skill or Ballistic Skill test for his next attack, while aiming as a Full Action grants a +20 bonus to the character's next attack. The next action the Aiming character performs must be an attack (Standard Attack, Semi-Auto Burst, Lightning Attack, and so on) or the benefits of Aiming are lost. Aiming benefits are also lost if the character performs a Reaction before making his attack. Aiming can be used with both melee and ranged attacks, but not with attacks made with psychic powers.

All Out Attack

Type: Full Action
Subtypes: Attack, Melee
The character makes a furious melee attack at the expense of personal safety. He attacks by making an Easy (+30) Weapon Skill test, and if he succeeds, the character inflicts 1 hit on his target. However, whether he succeeds or fails, the character cannot attempt Evasion reactions until the beginning of his next turn. A character cannot combine an Aim action with an All Out Attack.



Table 7–1: Combat Actions

Action	Type	Subtype(s)	Description
Aim	Varies	Concentration	+10 (Half) *or* +20 (Full) bonus to character's next attack.
All Out Attack	Full	Attack, Melee	Give up that round's Evasion reaction to gain +30 WS.
Brace Heavy Weapon	Half	Miscellaneous	Support a Heavy weapon for proper firing.
Called Shot	Full	Attack, Concentration, Melee *or* Ranged	Attack a specific location on a target with a –20 to WS or BS.
Charge	Full	Attack, Melee, Movement	Must move at least 4 metres, +20 to WS.
Defensive Stance	Full	Concentration, Melee	Gain an additional Reaction. Opponents suffer –20 WS.
Delay	Full	Miscellaneous	May take any Half Action before character's next turn.
Disengage	Full	Movement	Break from melee without incurring a free attack.
Evasion	Reaction	Movement *or* Melee	Used with either the Dodge (Movement) *or* Parry (Melee) skill to avoid incoming attacks.
Feint	Half	Melee	Opposed WS test; if character wins his next attack cannot be Dodged or Parried.
Focus Power	Varies	Varies	Use a Psychic Power.
Full Auto Burst	Half	Attack, Ranged	–10 BS, one hit for every degree of success.
Grapple	Varies	Attack, Melee	Affect a Grappled opponent or escape from a Grapple.
Guarded Action	Half	Concentration, Melee/Ranged	–10 to WS or BS, +10 to all Evasion tests until start of next turn.
Jump or Leap	Full	Movement	Jump vertically or leap horizontally.
Knock Down	Half	Attack, Melee	Try to knock an opponent to the ground.
Lightning Attack	Half	Attack, Melee	–10 WS, one hit for every degree of success.
Manoeuvre	Half	Melee, Movement	Opposed WS test; if character wins, move enemy 1 metre.
Move	Varies	Movement	Move up to AgB as Half Action *or* twice AgB as Full Action.
Overwatch	Full	Attack, Concentration, Ranged	Shoot targets coming into a set kill zone.
Ready	Half	Miscellaneous	Ready a weapon or an item.
Reload	Varies	Miscellaneous	Reload a ranged weapon.
Run	Full	Movement	Move six times AgB, enemies gain –20 BS and +20 WS to hit.
Semi-Auto Burst	Half	Attack, Ranged	+0 BS, additional hit for every two additional degrees of success.
Stand/Mount/ Dismount	Half	Movement	Stand up from being Prone, mount or dismount a riding beast, enter or leave a vehicle, or move within a vehicle.
Standard Attack	Half	Attack, Melee *or* Ranged	+10 to WS or BS, make one melee or ranged attack.
Stun	Full	Attack, Melee	Try to Stun an opponent.
Suppressing Fire	Full	Attack, Ranged	–20 BS against targets entering Semi- or Full Auto fire arc.
Swift Attack	Half	Attack, Melee	+0 WS, additional hit for every two additional degrees of success.
Tactical Advance	Full	Concentration, Movement	Move from cover to cover.
Use a Skill	Varies	Concentration, Miscellaneous	Character may use a skill.

Brace Heavy Weapon

Type: Half Action
Subtype: Miscellaneous
Heavy weapons must be braced before they can be fired accurately. This can involve using a bipod or tripod, propping the weapon up, or simply assuming a wide stance or kneeling. When a character fires an unbraced Heavy weapon, he suffers a –30 penalty to his Ballistic Skill test. He can use this action to secure the weapon in place, after which point it is braced and remains so until it is moved. Once it has been braced, it cannot be moved without losing the benefit of bracing. However, the user can still pivot it 45° (or sometimes more) depending on the type of bracing. For example, a weapon braced in the notch of a broken wall would have a limited field of fire, while one on a full tripod could potentially pivot up to 180°. Note that a character can leave a braced weapon behind, assuming that he was bracing the weapon against something other than himself—it only ceases being braced when relocated.

Called Shot

Type: Full Action
Subtypes: Attack, Concentration, Melee *or* Ranged
The active character attempts to attack a specific or vulnerable area on his target. The attacker declares a location on his target (e.g. Head, Body, Left Arm, Right Arm, Left Leg, or Right Leg) and makes an attack following all the rules for Standard Attacks, except the test is either a Hard (–20) Weapon Skill or Ballistic Skill test (depending on whether the attack is melee or ranged). If he succeeds, he skips the Determine Hit Location step of the attack and instead inflicts one hit on the declared location. At the GM's discretion, this attack can be used to aim at specific locations on creatures or within the environment, such as shooting a door lock from across the room or disabling a wall-mounted vid-recorder. This attack does not gain the usual +10 bonus for Standard Attacks.

Charge

Type: Full Action
Subtypes: Attack, Melee, Movement
The character rushes at his foe and delivers a single melee attack. The target must be at least four metres away, but still within the attacker's Charge Move (see **Table 7–23: Structured Time Movement** on page 245). The last four metres of the Charge must be in a straight line so the attacker can build speed and line up with his target. Once the attacker reaches his target, he makes a single melee attack by making a Routine (+20) Weapon Skill test. Success inflicts one hit on the target. If the Charging character has no weapons or other items currently readied, he can attempt to Grapple his opponent instead of inflicting damage (see page 228) or to knock him down (see **Knock Down** on page 222).

Defensive Stance

Type: Full Action
Subtypes: Concentration, Melee
The character makes no attacks and instead concentrates entirely on self-defence. Until the start of his next turn, the character can only use his Reactions to make the Evasion Reaction, but may make one additional Reaction, and all opponents suffer a –20 penalty to Weapon Skill tests made to attack him.

Delay

Type: Full Action
Subtype: Miscellaneous
Instead of acting hastily, the character waits for a better opportunity. When he chooses Delay, his turn immediately ends. Any time before the start of his next turn, the character can perform a Half Action of his choice—even though it is not currently his turn. This later action counts as being part of his turn, though—so, for example, he cannot use it to make another action with the Attack or Concentration subtype if he made one before taking the Delay action. The later Half Action cannot interrupt another character's turn already in progress, and if it is not used before the start of the character's next turn, it is lost. If two or more characters both attempt to perform a Half Action gained from Delay at the same time, they must make an Opposed Agility test to see who acts first.

Disengage

Type: Full Action
Subtype: Movement
The character breaks off from melee combat and may take a Half Move. Opponents that were engaged with the character cannot make the usual immediate Standard Attack actions against the withdrawing character as a result of this movement (see the **Fleeing and Leaving Melee** sidebar for more details).

Evasion

Type: Reaction
Subtype: Movement (Dodge) *or* Melee (Parry)
After a character is hit from an attack, but before damage is rolled, he can attempt to negate the hit by making a Dodge or Parry test. A character must be aware of the attack in order to make the test (and cannot be Surprised). If he succeeds on the test, he gets out of the way at the last moment; the hit is negated and the attack is considered to have missed (and thus no damage is rolled). If the Evasion test fails, the attack connects and deals damage normally.

If the attack is a ranged attack, he must test his Dodge skill. If the attack is a melee attack, he may test either his Dodge or his Parry skill. The default difficulty for this test is Challenging (+0) before any applicable modifiers (see pages 104 and 112 for common test modifiers). Reactions cannot be used during the his own turn, so he cannot Dodge/Parry attacks made via Overwatch or when he flees from combat during his own turn, and so on.

Evading Auto-Fire, Multiple Attacks, and Area Effect Attacks

Some attacks—such as those made with grenades, flamers, or guns firing semi-automatic or fully-automatic bursts—are especially difficult to avoid. When Dodging an area effect weapon (such as a weapon with the Blast or Spray qualities), a successful Dodge test moves the character to the edge of the area of effect, as long as it is no further away than the character's Agility bonus in metres. If the character would need to move further than this to avoid the attack, or is unable to be moved out of the way due to an obstruction of some sort (such as the confines of a tight corridor), then he automatically fails the test. When Evading Swift Attacks, Lightning Attacks, Full Auto Bursts, Semi-Auto Bursts, attacks from weapons with the Twin-Linked quality, or any other attacks that would inflict multiple hits, each degree of success on the Evasion test negates one additional hit. When Evading attacks from weapons with the Storm quality, each degree of success on the test negates two hits. If the character cancels all of the hits an attack would inflict, the attack is considered a miss.

Feint

Type: Half Action
Subtype: Melee
The character attempts to use guile and combat training to trick his opponent into a mistake. The character and his target make an Opposed Weapon Skill test. If the character wins, his next melee Standard Attack action against that same target during this turn cannot be Evaded. If the character's next action is any other action, the advantage of Feinting is lost.

Fleeing and Leaving Melee

Sometimes the best course of action in combat is to get away from danger by any means necessary. A character can voluntarily flee from an opponent or be forced to flee because of Fear, a psychic power, or some other effect. When a character flees under his own control, he can take any action with the Movement subtype. When a character flees against his will, he must Run.

Leaving Melee

If a character is engaged in melee with one or more opponents and undertakes an action with a Movement subtype to leave combat with them (such as fleeing or moving to another target) other than the Disengage Action, each of his opponents may immediately make a Standard Attack action against him as a Free Action.

Focus Power

Type: Varies by Power
Subtype: Varies by Power
This action is used to manifest psychic powers in combat. Every psychic power specifies an action type and one or more subtypes. For more information, see page 194.

Full Auto Burst

Type: Half Action
Subtypes: Attack, Ranged
The character grips his gun tightly and unleashes a furious burst of fully automatic gunfire at his enemies. The attacker must be wielding a ranged weapon capable of fully automatic fire to take this action. If the character has such a weapon in each hand, both capable of fully automatic fire, he can fire both with this action (see **Two-Weapon Fighting**, page 228). If he is wielding a Heavy weapon, it must be braced as normal.

The attacker makes a Ballistic Skill test with a –10 penalty to his attack; a dice result of 94 or higher indicates the weapon has jammed (see the **Weapon Jams** sidebar on page 224). If he succeeds, he scores one hit with his weapon per degree of success. The number of total hits scored in this manner cannot exceed the weapon's fully automatic rate of fire. Extra hits can either be allocated to the original target or any other targets within two metres, provided none of the new targets would have been harder to hit than the original target. If extra hits are allocated to the same target, use **Table 7–2: Multiple Hits** to determine the extra Hit Locations. Remember, the first hit is always determined by reversing the numbers of the dice result made to perform the test (see **The Attack**, page 226).

If the character is armed with two weapons, and has the appropriate talents, he can make a secondary attack with his other weapon as part of this action. See **Two-Weapon Fighting** on page 228 for further details.

Grapple

Type: Half *or* Full Action
Subtype: Attack, Melee
This action is only used when a character is already engaged in a Grapple (see page 228 for full rules on starting a Grapple). If the active character is controlling the Grapple, the first thing he must do on his turn is declare Grapple as a Full Action in order to maintain the Grapple; if he does not declare Grapple as his Full Action, the Grapple immediately ends. After that, he can choose one of the following Controller Grapple Options:

- **Damage Opponent:** The controller of the Grapple can attempt to damage his opponent with brute force by making an Opposed Strength test with the Grappled opponent. If the active character wins, he inflicts unarmed damage (1d5–3+SB) to his opponent's Body location and one level of Fatigue. If the grappled opponent wins the Opposed Strength test, no damage is dealt, but he remains Grappled. This test can benefit from Assistance.
- **Throw Down Opponent:** The controller of the Grapple can attempt to wrestle his Grappled opponent to the ground by making an Opposed Strength test. This test can benefit from Assistance. If the active character wins, the Grappled opponent becomes Prone. The controller can choose to end the Grapple at this point as a Free Action, or may continue to Grapple the Prone opponent, gaining a +10 to all further Opposed tests made during this Grapple until the Prone opponent manages to stand (assuming he is able to). This bonus is in addition to the standard +10 gained when attacking Prone opponents.
- **Push Opponent:** The controller can attempt to force his Grappled opponent to move. This is resolved with an Opposed Strength test, which can benefit from Assistance. If the active character succeeds, he pushes his opponent one metre in a direction of his choice, plus one additional metre for each degree of success. This pushed distance cannot exceed the active character's Half Move distance. The active character must move with his Grappled opponent in order to maintain the Grapple, or he can choose to let go of his opponent as a Free Action, which ends the Grapple, but allows the active character to keep his ground.



- **Ready:** The controller of the Grapple can ready one of his own items. Or if the GM allows, he can use the Ready action to grab an item belonging to his Grappled opponent.
- **Stand:** If both participants are on the ground, the controller of the Grapple can regain his feet with this action. He can also attempt to drag his opponent up with him by making an Opposed Strength test. This test can benefit from Assistance. If the controller of the Grapple wins, both participants stand.
- **Use Item:** The controller can use a readied item if desired.

Grappled Target Options

If the active character is the target of the Grapple, the first thing he must do on his turn is declare Grapple as a Half Action—this is part of the penalty for being Grappled. After that, he can choose one of the following Grappled Target Options:

- **Break Free:** The Grappled target can attempt to break free of the Grapple by making an Opposed Strength test against the controller of the Grapple. This test can benefit from Assistance. If the active character wins, he breaks free and may perform any Half Action.
- **Slip Free:** The Grappled target can attempt to wriggle out of the Grapple by making a Challenging (+0) Acrobatics test. If he succeeds, he slips free and may perform any Half Action.
- **Take Control:** The Grappled target can attempt to take control of the Grapple by making an Opposed Strength test against his Grappling opponent. This test can benefit from Assistance. If the active character wins, he becomes the controller of the Grapple and his opponent becomes the Grappled target. The active character may then immediately perform one of the Controller Grapple Options, but he cannot take any other Half Actions.

Grappling Size Differences

If one character is larger than the other (see the **Size** trait on page 138), the larger scores one extra degree of success on successful Opposed tests performed as part of the Grapple for every point by which the value of his Size trait exceeds his opponent's Size trait.

Guarded Action

Type: Half Action
Subtypes: Concentration, Melee (Parry), Ranged (Dodge)
The character's next steps are careful and guarded, making sure he remains well poised to defend himself. This action must be the first action in the character's turn. He suffers a –10 penalty to any Weapon Skill tests or Ballistic Skill tests made this turn, but gains a +10 bonus to all Evasion tests until the start of his next turn.

Jump or Leap

Type: Full Action
Subtype: Movement
The character can Jump vertically, or Leap horizontally. See page 247 for details on jumping and leaping.

Knock Down

Type: Half Action
Subtypes: Attack, Melee
The attacker smashes his opponent in the hopes of knocking him off his feet. The active character makes an Opposed Strength test against the target, with a +10 bonus if he is using this action as part of a Charge action or immediately after making a Half Move action. If the attacker wins, the target is knocked Prone and must use a Stand action in his turn to regain his feet. If the attacker succeeds by two or more degrees of success, he can choose to inflict 1d5–3+SB Impact damage and one level of Fatigue on the target. If the target wins the test, he keeps his footing. If the target wins by two or more degrees of success, the attacker is knocked Prone instead.

Lightning Attack

Type: Half Action
Subtypes: Attack, Melee
This action can only be taken if the attacker has the Lightning Attack talent. With fury and precision, the attacker strikes his target multiple times in close combat. The attacker must be armed with a melee weapon or be able to make unarmed attacks to take this action. If he is armed with two melee weapons, he can attack with both as per the rules for **Two-Weapon Fighting** (page 228). Unbalanced or Unwieldy melee weapons cannot be used to make a Lightning Attack.

The attacker makes a Difficult (–10) Weapon Skill test. If he succeeds on the test, he inflicts one hit on his target with his melee weapon for every degree of success he scored on the test. The number of hits scored cannot exceed the attacker's Weapon Skill bonus. Extra hits can either be allocated to the original target or any other targets the character is engaged in melee with, provided none of the new targets would have been harder to hit than the original target. If extra hits are allocated to the same target, use **Table 7–2: Multiple Hits** to determine the extra Hit Locations. Remember, the first hit is always determined by reversing the numbers of the dice result made to perform the test (see **The Attack**, page 226).

If the character is armed with two weapons, and has the appropriate talents, he may make a secondary attack with his other weapon as part of this action.

Manoeuvre

Type: Half Action
Subtypes: Melee, Movement
By using superior footwork and aggression, the attacker can force his opponent to move by making an Opposed Weapon Skill test with his opponent. If he succeeds, the opponent must move one metre in the direction of the attacker's choice. If desired, the attacker can advance one metre as well. The opponent cannot be forced into another character or some other obstacle (such as wall), but can be pushed off ledges.



Table 7–2: Multiple Hits

First Hit	Second Hit	Third Hit	Fourth Hit	Fifth Hit	Each Additional Hit
Head	Head	Arm	Body	Arm	Body
Arm	Arm	Body	Head	Body	Arm
Body	Body	Arm	Head	Arm	Body
Leg	Leg	Body	Arm	Head	Body

Move

Type: Half *or* Full Action
Subtype: Movement
The active character can spend a Half Action to move a number of metres up to his Agility bonus. As a Full Action, he can move up to twice that distance as per **Table 7–23: Structured Time Movement** on page 245. If the active character ends his movement adjacent to an opponent, he may engage that opponent in melee. If the active character moves away from an opponent with whom he is engaged, that opponent can immediately make a free Standard Attack action against him as per the rules for the **Fleeing and Leaving Melee** sidebar on page 220.

Overwatch

Type: Full Action
Subtypes: Attack, Concentration, Ranged
The active character guards a specific area or target, poised to shoot at an opportune moment. When Overwatch is declared, the active character establishes a kill zone consisting of any general area, such as a corridor or tree line, which encompasses a 45° arc in the direction that the active character is facing. The active character then specifies Standard Attack, Full Auto Burst, or Semi-Auto Burst, along with the conditions under which he will perform the chosen attack. Each any time the specified conditions are met before the start of the character's next turn, he can perform that attack (so long as he is otherwise eligible to do so). This attack occurs the moment the condition is met, such as an enemy entering the kill zone. If it occurs at the same time as another character's action, the character with the higher Agility acts first. If both characters have the same Agility, they make an Opposed Agility test to see who acts first. After the attack is resolved, even if it does not succeed, targets must immediately make a Challenging (+0) Pinning test or become Pinned (see page 230) where they entered the kill zone. If a character on Overwatch performs any actions or Reactions, such as Evasion, his Overwatch immediately ends. Note this does not include Free Actions, such as speech.

Ready

Type: Half Action
Subtype: Miscellaneous
The active character draws a weapon or retrieves an object stowed in a pouch or pocket. A weapon or item can also be properly stowed away with this action (but note that simply dropping an item is considered a Free Action). This action can also be used to do things such as apply a medi-patch, inject stimm or some other kind of drug, coat a blade with poison, and so forth. The Ready action can be declared twice in the same turn if it is used on two different weapons or items.

Reload

Type: Half, Full, *or* Extended Action (Varies by Weapon)
Subtype: Miscellaneous
The active character can reload a ranged weapon. The amount of time the Reload action takes depends on the weapon (see page 144). Note that any Reload action that is spread across more than one round is an Extended action (see page 24).

Run

Type: Full Action
Subtype: Movement
The active character runs, covering a distance up to his Run movement (see page 245, **Table 7–23: Structured Time Movement**). This makes the character harder to hit with ranged weapons, but easier prey for melee attacks. Until the beginning of the character's next turn, ranged attack made against him suffer a –20 penalty to Ballistic Skill tests, but melee attacks against him gain a +20 bonus to Weapon Skill tests.

Semi-Auto Burst

Type: Half Action
Subtypes: Attack, Ranged
With precision and discipline, the active character fires a short, controlled burst of semi-automatic gunfire at his enemies. The attacker must be wielding a ranged weapon capable of semi-automatic fire to take this action. If the character has such a weapon in each hand, both capable of semi-automatic fire, he can fire both with this action (see **Two-Weapon Fighting** on page 228). If he is wielding a Heavy weapon, it must be braced as normal.

The attacker makes a Challenging (+0) Ballistic Skill test. A dice result of 94 or higher indicates the weapon has jammed (see the sidebar on page 224). If he hits, he scores a hit for the initial degree of success plus an additional hit for every two additional degrees of success. The number of total hits scored in this manner cannot exceed the weapon's semi-automatic rate of fire. Extra hits can either be allocated to the original target or any other targets within two metres, provided none of the new targets would have been harder to hit than the original target. If extra hits are allocated to the same target, use **Table 7–2: Multiple Hits** above to determine the extra Hit Locations. Remember, the first hit is always determined by reversing the numbers of the dice result made to perform the test (see **The Attack** on page 226).

If the character is armed with two weapons, and has the appropriate talents, he can make a secondary attack with his other weapon as part of this action. This follows the standard rules for **Two-Weapon Fighting** on page 228.

Spray and Pray

Situations might arise where a character is aware of a danger stalking him, but is unable to see it. In these cases, a character can use his attack for the turn to wildly fire or strike out in hopes of hitting his hidden antagonist. In these cases, it is up to the Game Master to determine a number between 1 and 100 that represents the character's percentage chance of hitting his target, or if the character is even firing in the correct direction at all. Then, during Step Two of the attack, the Game Master rolls 1d100 and compares the result to the percentage chance. If he rolls equal to or under the number, the attack proceeds as normal. If he rolls over the number, the attack misses the hidden opponent, and has no effect other than perhaps drawing even more unwanted attention to the unfortunate character and his actions.

Stand/Mount/Dismount

Type: Half Action
Subtype: Movement
If the active character is lying or sitting on the ground, he can stand. If he is already standing, he can mount a riding beast or enter a vehicle. If he is already atop a riding beast or is already within a vehicle, he can dismount the riding beast or leave the vehicle and end the Dismount action standing. This action can also be used to move within a vehicle as needed.

Standard Attack

Type: Half Action
Subtypes: Attack, Melee *or* Ranged
The active character makes either one melee attack by making an Ordinary (+10) Weapon Skill test or one ranged attack by making an Ordinary (+10) Ballistic Skill test. Success inflicts one hit on the target. For more information on making an attack, see page 226. If the attacking character is unarmed and engaged in melee, he can attempt to Grapple his opponent instead of inflicting damage (as per page 228).

If the character is armed with two weapons, and has the appropriate talents, he can make a secondary attack with his other weapon as part of this action (see the rules for **Two-Weapon Fighting** on page 228).

Stun

Type: Full Action
Subtypes: Attack, Melee
If the active character is unarmed or armed with a melee weapon, he can strike to Stun instead of attempting to land a deadly blow. He makes a Hard (–20) Weapon Skill test targeting an enemy with whom he is engaged in melee. If he succeeds, roll 1d10 and add the attacker's Strength bonus. This result is compared to the target's total of his Toughness bonus +1 per Armour point protecting his head. If the attacker's roll is equal to or higher than this value, the target is Stunned for a number of rounds equal to the difference between the two values and gains one level of Fatigue.

Suppressing Fire

Type: Full Action
Subtypes: Attack, Ranged
The active character unleashes a hail of firepower to force his opponents to take cover. This action requires a weapon capable of semi-automatic or fully automatic fire (see page 144, **Rate of Fire**). When Suppressing Fire is declared, the active character establishes a kill zone, which is any general area, such as a corridor or tree line, that encompasses a 30° (if the weapon is fired in semi-automatic mode) or 45° arc (if full automatic firing is used) in the direction the active character is facing. Then, as part of the Action the character fires a Full Auto or Semi-Auto Burst (as per the Full Auto and Semi-Auto Burst actions) and expends the appropriate ammo. All targets within the kill zone must make a Difficult (–10) Pinning test or become Pinned as per page 230. If the attacker fired a Full Auto burst, the Pinning test is Hard (–20) instead.

The character does not roll to hit following the usual penalties or bonuses of the Full Auto and Semi-Auto Burst actions. Instead the character makes a Hard (–20) Ballistic Skill test to see if his gunfire has hit anything. A roll of 94–100 on the test indicates the weapon has jammed (see **Weapon Jams** below). If the Ballistic Skill test succeeds, the GM assigns the hit to a random target within the kill zone, with every extra two degrees of success scoring an extra hit against another random victim. The number of hits scored cannot exceed the weapon's semi-automatic or fully automatic rate of fire, and use **Table 7–2: Multiple Hits** on page 223 to determine Hit Locations against the same target. The active character cannot choose to fail this Ballistic Skill test.

Weapon Jams

Weapons can jam through extreme age, maltreatment of their machine spirit, or just plain poor design. An unmodified result of 96–100 on a Ranged attack indicates the weapon has jammed. This means the attack automatically misses, and the weapon cannot be fired until the jam is cleared. Clearing a jam is a Full Action that requires a Ballistic Skill test. If the character attempting to clear the jam succeeds on the test, then the jam has been cleared, though the weapon needs to be reloaded and any ammo in it is lost. If he fails on the test, the weapon is still jammed, though he can attempt to clear it again next round.

Some weapons, such as plasma guns, grenades, and missiles, carry extra risks associated with jamming. For these weapons, refer to their descriptions and weapon special qualities (see **Chapter V: Armoury**). Semi-automatic and fully automatic fire also increases the likelihood of jamming; this is described within the Semi-Auto Burst, Full Auto Burst, and Suppressing Fire actions.



Swift Attack

Type: Half Action
Subtypes: Attack, Melee
This action may only be taken if the attacker has the Swift Attack talent. With fury and precision, the attacker strikes his target multiple times in close combat. He must be armed with a melee weapon or be able to make unarmed attacks to take this action. If he is armed with two melee weapons, he can attack with both as per the rules for **Two-Weapon Fighting** (page 228).

The attacker makes a Challenging (+0) Weapon Skill test. If he succeeds on the test, he inflicts one hit on his target with his melee weapon for the initial degree of success, plus one hit for every two additional degree of success. The number of hits scored cannot exceed the attacker's Weapon Skill bonus. Extra hits can either be allocated to the original target or any other targets the character is in melee with, provided none of the new targets would have been harder to hit than the original target. If extra hits are allocated to the same target, use **Table 7–2: Multiple Hits** on page 223 to determine the additional Hit Locations used after the first.

If the character is armed with two weapons, and has the appropriate talents, he can make a secondary attack with his other weapon as part of this action (see the rules for **Two-Weapon Fighting** on page 228).

Tactical Advance

Type: Full Action
Subtypes: Concentration, Movement
The active character carefully moves from one position of cover to another position of cover. In so doing, he can move a number of metres up to his Half Move distance. For the duration of the move, he is considered to benefit from the cover he left, even though he is moving in the open for a brief time.

Use a Skill

Type: Half, Full, *or* Extended Action (varies by circumstance)
Subtypes: Concentration, Miscellaneous
The active character may use a skill. This usually involves making a skill test. This can be an Extended action, depending on the skill and the circumstances.

Other Actions

If a player wants to do something not covered by the usual actions, the GM should make a judgement call about how long something might take and what type of action it would be. Generally, most actions should be resolved with some sort of test: a characteristic test, skill test, or Opposed test. The GM should keep in mind that a round is only about five seconds long, which is a very limited amount of time to accomplish a task.

The Attack

The most common action in combat is the attack—the characters are fighting, after all. Whether armed with a melee or ranged weapon, the process is the same. Before an attack is made, the GM should verify that the attack is even possible by checking the basic requirements for the attack. Melee attacks require the attacker to be engaged in melee combat with his target. Ranged attacks cannot be made if the attacker is engaged in melee, unless he is firing a Pistol-class weapon. In either case, the attacker must be aware of his target; see the **Spray and Pray** sidebar (page 224) for additional information. Assuming the attack is possible, follow these steps:

- Step One: Apply Modifiers to Attacker's Characteristic
- Step Two: Attacker Makes a Test
- Step Three: Attacker Determines Hit Location
- Step Four: Attacker Determines Damage
- Step Five: Target Applies Damage

Step One: Apply Modifiers to Attacker's Characteristic

A melee attack requires the attacker to make a Weapon Skill test. A ranged attack requires the attacker to make a Ballistic Skill test. There are many instances where one or more factors make performing an attack easier or more difficult than normal. For example, using the Full Auto Burst attack action imposes a –10 penalty on the attacker's Ballistic Skill test, whereas a Standard Attack grants a +10 bonus whether the attack is melee or ranged. The GM can also impose additional penalties or bonuses to the test if the situation warrants it. If a situation calls for two or more bonuses or penalties, simply combine all modifiers together and apply the total to the appropriate characteristic. The maximum total bonus that can be applied to a test is +60. Conversely, the maximum total penalty that can be applied to a test is –60. When adjudicating difficulty, common sense should prevail. Regardless of the usual limits on test penalties, some actions are simply impossible, and no test is permissible.

Example

Arbitrator Kol Merlow wants to use a Standard Attack action to shoot his autogun at a suspected cultist. Merlow's Ballistic Skill is 45 and he is at Short range, which grants him a +10 bonus. Merlow spends a Half Action to Aim, granting him another +10 bonus. In addition, the Standard Attack confers a +10 bonus to the attack roll. However, there is a very heavy mist in the underhive area, so Merlow suffers a –20 penalty as he tries to spot his target through the fog. After all bonuses and penalties have been combined, Merlow needs to roll 55 or less on his Ballistic Skill test to hit the cultist (45 + 10 + 10 + 10 – 20 = 55).

Step Two: Attacker Makes a Test

After the modified characteristic has been determined, the attacker makes a Weapon Skill test if he is performing a melee attack, or a Ballistic Skill test if performing a ranged attack. Either of these is resolved like any other test. If the roll is equal to or less than the modified characteristic, the attack hits.

Example

Arbitrator Merlow makes a Ballistic Skill test by rolling percentile dice and gets 14, which is less than his modified Ballistic Skill of 55. His attack hits the despicable cultist!

Evasion Reactions

When a target is hit by an attack, it can have a chance to negate the hit with an Evasion reaction (see **Action Descriptions**, page 218, for details on resolving each of these reactions). If it succeeds at its Evasion reaction and manages to negate all hits, the attack fails and no damage is dealt.

Example

After the Arbitrator's shot hits the cultist, the GM rules that the traitor will attempt to Dodge the attack. The cultists' Agility is 30, and has Dodge as a known skill, so he must roll under a 30 to avoid the autogun shot. The GM rolls for the cultist and gets a 56. The fickle Chaos Gods are not with him, and the cultist fails to evade the attack!

Step Three: Attacker Determines Hit Location

On a successful hit, the attacker needs to determine where the hit landed. Using the percentile dice result from the attacker's Weapon Skill or Ballistic Skill test (or the Focus Power test, in the case of psychic attacks), reverse the order of the digits (e.g., a roll of 32 becomes 23, a roll of 20 becomes 02, and so on) and compare this number to **Table 7–3: Hit Locations**. Each NPC has a Hit Location chart built into its profile block, which should instead be used when it is hit (see **NPC Types** on page 380).

Example

Merlow's Ballistic Skill test to hit the Cultist resulted in a percentile dice roll of 14. He reverses these digits and gets 41. The GM consults the NPC's profile for the corresponding Hit Location, and determines the attack hits the cultist's body.

Table 7–3: Hit Locations

d100 Roll	Location
01–10	Head
11–20	Right Arm
21–30	Left Arm
31–70	Body
71–85	Right Leg
86–100	Left Leg

Step Four: Attacker Determines Damage

After the Hit Location has been determined, the attacker determines the damage dealt by each hit the attack inflicted. Each weapon has a damage listing, which is usually a die roll, plus or minus a number. Roll the appropriate die and apply any indicated modifiers for each hit. Finally, if the attack involved a melee weapon, add the attacker's Strength bonus. The result is the damage total.

For all attack rolls, count the degrees of success. The attacker can replace the result on a single damage die with the number of degrees of success from his attack roll. If the attack inflicts more than one hit or more than one die of damage, the attacker can replace the result on one die of his choice with the degrees of success from the attack roll. If a natural 10 is rolled any damage die for a given hit, the hit inflicts Righteous Fury.

Righteous Fury

When rolling damage after a successful hit, if any die rolled results in a natural 10 (rolling the 10 result on a 10 sided die), a particularly bloody and spectacular hit might be inflicted. This also includes a result of 10 when rolling 1d5 for damage. After resolving the effects of the hit, one of two things can happen.

If the hit dealt damage after being reduced by Armour and Toughness bonus (see **Step Five: Target Applies Damage** later on this page), then the hit becomes more severe. The attacker then rolls 1d5 and consults the Critical Effects table appropriate to the damage type and location of the original attack. The target suffers all effects listed. However, the target does not count as having suffered Critical damage. In other words, if he takes damage during later turns, it affects his wounds, not directly stacking onto worsening Critical Effects. Talents that modify Critical damage (such as Deathdealer and True Grit) do not modify the critical effects generated by Righteous Fury, and these effects do not stack if a target suffers Righteous Fury multiple times. Each roll is applied as a separate effect.

Alternatively, if the hit does not deal any damage once reduced by Armour and Toughness bonus, then the hit deals 1 point of damage, not reduced by Armour or Toughness. This is the extent of the Righteous Fury effect for this hit; the victim does not suffer a roll on a Critical Effect table. This represents some weapons simply not being potent enough to deal major damage, but still able to do harm through a "lucky shot."

Righteous Fury for Player Characters and NPCs

In Dark Heresy, Righteous Fury is something that both Player Characters and major NPCs can inflict and suffer. This means if a cult magos shoots a Player Character and rolls a 10 for damage, then the Player Character suffers a 1d5 Critical Effect result. This makes combat gritty, dangerous, and more dynamic, as the characters can suffer from flavourful (and often awful) Critical damage, and can leave combat with interesting new scars. However, in order to ensure that combat does not bog down too much, when a low level NPC (a faceless soldier or minion, usually an unnamed NPC not central to the story plot) suffers Righteous Fury, he is simply slain instead. These Troop level NPCs also usually cannot benefit from this rule when inflicting damage on the Acolytes. See page 380 for more on NPC Types and their special rules.

Stray Shots

GMs keen on reinforcing the merciless nature of the 41st Millennium can rule that if a character shooting into a melee combat misses his target by a small margin (one degree of failure), the attack instead hits another target engaged in the same melee. The GM might also rule that anyone shooting into a melee combat with a Semi-Auto Burst or Full Auto Burst must allocate multiple hits to different targets engaged in the melee.

These rules makes for faster game play, but if all players agree, then all types of NPCs including low-level Troops can use the Righteous Fury rules. This might slow down gameplay, but it also allows for the PCs to truly prove their skills in combat. After all, the Emperor knows an Acolyte's worth by his scars, and when playing in this manner, the Acolytes are certain to gain quite a few.

Example

Arbitrator Merlow has hit the cultist with his autogun and proceeds to make his damage roll. A lasgun deals 1d10+3 points of damage. Merlow rolls 1d10 and gets an 8, a good hit! He adds this to the 3 for a total of 11 damage dealt to the foul cultist. If Merlow had been lucky enough to roll a 10 instead of the 8, he would have scored a Righteous Fury hit, and have also been able to roll 1d5 on Table 7–16: Impact Critical Effects – Body, and applied those effects to the cultist as well.

Step Five: Target Applies Damage

From the damage total, the target subtracts his Toughness bonus and any Armour points that protect the location that the attack struck. If this reduces the damage to zero or less, the target shrugs off the hit. The target records any remaining damage, adding it to any previously suffered, and then compares this total to his total amount of wounds. If the target's damage equals or exceeds his wounds, he notes any excess damage as Critical damage, and the GM consults the appropriate table based on the type of damage, the location hit, and the amount of Critical damage accumulated. See **Critical Damage** on page 232 for more information.

Example

Merlow's autogun shot has struck the cultist's body for 11 total Damage. The GM notes the target's Toughness bonus is 3 and he is wearing a Mesh Combat Cloak, which provides 4 points of Armour. The autogun has no Pen value, so the cultist can apply 7 total damage reduction to the attack. This means he suffers only 4 damage, and since he has 10 wounds, he could suffer 6 more damage before being in serious danger. Screaming a curse and beseeching his terrible gods, the cultist draws his rune-encrusted axe and charges the Arbitrator, seeking bloody retribution!

Unarmed Combat

Not every fight in Dark Heresy requires lasguns and chainswords. Some conflicts can be settled the old-fashioned way, with fists or even teeth. Unarmed attacks are treated just like those from any other melee weapon, and successful hits inflict 1d5–3+SB Impact damage with no penetration. If this inflicts damage equal to or greater than the target's Toughness bonus, it also inflicts one level of Fatigue. Whenever an unarmed character attempts to strike an armed foe (one currently wielding a Melee or Pistol weapon), or Parry an armed foe's attacks, he suffers a –20 penalty on his Weapon Skill tests..

Grappling

Instead of inflicting damage with an unarmed attack, a character can attempt to Grapple (see page 221) his opponent. Attempting a Grapple is a melee attack that uses either a Charge action or a Standard Attack action. The attacker makes a Weapon Skill test as normal. The target of the Grapple may use a Reaction, if able, to avoid the attack. If the attack is successful, the attacker and the target start to Grapple, with the attacker controlling the Grapple.

In a Grapple, all of the following apply:

- Participants in a Grapple cannot use Reactions.
- Participants in a Grapple are considered to be engaged in melee combat.
- Participants in a Grapple can only use the Grapple action.
- The controller of the Grapple can voluntarily end the Grapple at any point during his turn as a Free Action.
- Other attackers gain a +20 bonus to Weapon Skill tests to hit any target engaged in a Grapple.
- Only two characters can be engaged in the same Grapple, but up to two other characters can lend Assistance to each Grappler in certain situations.

Two-Weapon Fighting

Many warriors fight with a weapon in either hand, and there are advantages and disadvantages to this style of fighting. While it offers some improved opportunities to make attacks, it also reduces the chances of successfully striking a target. The character can use any melee weapons or ranged weapons that can be reasonably used in one hand. These are generally Pistol class ranged weapons (though some Basic class weapons can have modifications that allow them to be used with one hand, or simply used with a penalty as per page 144), and melee weapons that note they are one-handed weapons in their descriptions.

- The character can use either hand to make an attack.
- If the character has the Two-Weapon Wielder talent, he can attack with both weapons, but each attack suffers a –20 penalty to the Weapon Skill or Ballistic Skill test.
- If the character has the Ambidextrous talent, the penalty to the attack is lessened. His penalty for fighting with two weapons drops to –10, but note that other talents or situational modifiers can possibly further affect these modifiers.
- If the character is wielding at least one melee weapon, he may use the Parry skill to perform an Evasion reaction once each round as normal with this weapon, though he still cannot Evade more than once in a round.
- If a character with the Two-Weapon Wielder (Melee) talent is armed with two melee weapons, he can perform a melee Attack action (either a Standard Attack, Swift Attack, or Lightning Attack) with one of these weapons. He can then perform a melee Attack action (either a Standard Attack, Swift Attack, or Lightning Attack) with the other weapon, with any applicable modifiers to the test. These attacks can be made against any target in melee.
- If a character with the Two-Weapon Wielder (Ballistic) talent is armed with two Pistols (or other ranged weapons that can reasonably be wielded in one hand), he can perform a ranged Attack action (either a Standard Attack, Semi-Auto Burst, or Full-Auto Burst) with one of these weapons. If he does so, he can then perform another ranged Attack action (either a Standard Attack, Semi-Auto Burst, or Full Auto Burst) with his second weapon.
- When firing a ranged weapon with each hand, the character may fire each weapon on a different mode, for example, one on full automatic and one on semi-automatic. When firing a full automatic weapon in each hand, the character can only lay down one area of suppressive fire.
- If a character with the Two-Weapon Wielder (Melee) and Two Weapon Wielder (Ballistic) talent is armed with a Melee weapon in one hand and a one-handed ranged weapon in the other, he may perform a melee attack action (either a Standard Attack, Swift Attack, or Lightning Attack) or ranged attack action (such as Standard Attack, Semi-Auto Burst, or Full Auto Burst) with one weapon. He may then make a second melee attack action or ranged attack action with his secondary weapon. Any ranged weapon hits must be inflicted upon targets in melee. Resolve each attack separately by testing Weapon Skill for the melee weapon and Ballistic Skill for the ranged weapon.
- The character can fire two weapons at different targets, though the targets must be within 10 metres of each other.

Tactical Combat Maps (Optional)

During large combats, some players might want visual references to help keep track of enemy positions, as well as their own. The GM can accomplish this by sketching out simple overhead maps on paper, or using pre-made terrain mats that can be drawn on with dry-erase markers. Tactical combat maps can be created in any scale, and some roleplayers like to combine large-scale maps with miniatures where each map square represents one square metre. While tactical maps can be very useful, they are not necessary to play Dark Heresy. Many roleplayers prefer to use rich narrative descriptions to allow fellow players to simply imagine all the action. This requires players to keep a snapshot of the relative positions of all combatants in their heads, but it also allows for greater freedom in detailing the events of a combat. There is no one "right" method, though; any method that works best for the entire group is the best one for that group.

Combat Circumstances

No two combats ever unfold in the same way; each one is a unique experience with different terrain, environments, weather, and a variety of other factors. Combat circumstances cover any situational effects that have an impact on combat outside of the actions the characters are performing.

Many circumstances offer modifications to tests, making them easier or harder to achieve, and often there can be multiple modifications such as fighting in a night-time rainstorm, or a muddy field on a high-grav world. When these combinations occur, simply add the modifiers together (remembering that positive and negative modifiers cancel each other out). This might bring the overall modifier to a very high number, making the test ridiculously easy or essentially impossible, and in these cases the GM can simply declare the test succeeds or fails with no dice roll needed. The following circumstances are some of the most common ones encountered in combat. For situations not covered here, use these as a guide. Remember, the GM has the final say about the difficulty of any particular test, or the outcome of any unusual situation.

Cover

Given the extreme lethality of weapons in the 41st Millennium, taking cover in combat is often an excellent way to survive. When a character hides behind cover in a fire-fight, he conceals a portion of his body, protecting it from enemy fire. There are no penalties to Ballistic Skill tests made to attack targets standing behind cover. However, there is a chance that the shot can hit the cover rather than the target. It is up to the Acolyte to decide which parts of his form he is exposing when behind cover, but as a general rule, a character firing around or over cover will have his Body and Legs concealed. If the shot would hit a location that is concealed behind cover, work out the damage against the Armour points of the cover instead, with any excess being applied to the target as normal (see Table 7–4: Cover Examples for a guide to the Armour points of different kinds of cover).

If a Hit Location would benefit from multiple cover bonuses, the character chooses which one he would like to use, and only gains the benefits from that one source.

Damaging Cover

As attacks strike cover, they can wear it down, reduce its effectiveness, and eventually even destroy it. Whenever a hit strikes a piece of cover and deals damage that exceeds the cover's Armour points, that piece of cover has its Armour points reduced by 1. Cover that has its Armour points reduced to 0 is destroyed and offers no further protection.

Darkness

Weapon Skill tests made in darkness suffer a –20 penalty, while Ballistic Skill tests suffer a –30 penalty. While a character is concealed by darkness, he gains a +20 bonus to Stealth skill tests.

Table 7–4: Cover Examples

Cover Type	Armour Points
Armour-glass, genatorium pipes, thin metal, wooden planks	4
Flakboard, storage crates, sandbags, thick ice, trees	8
Cogitator banks, stasis pods, standard barricades	12
Rockcrete, hatchways, thick iron, stone	16
Armaplas, voidship bulkheads, plasteel	32

Difficult Terrain

Weapon Skill and Evasion tests made whilst standing in difficult terrain, such as mud, suffer a –10 penalty. Tests made whilst standing in arduous terrain, such as deep snow or slick ice, instead suffer a –30 penalty, or an even greater one if the GM sees fit.

Engaged in Melee

If an attacking character is adjacent to his target, both the character and his target are considered to be engaged in melee.

Shooting into Melee Combat

Ballistic Skill tests made to hit a target engaged in melee combat suffer a –20 penalty. If one or more characters engaged in the melee are Stunned, Helpless, or Unaware, this penalty is ignored.

Extreme Range

Targets that are at a distance of more than three times the range of a character's weapon are at Extreme Range. Ballistic Skill tests made to hit targets at Extreme Range are suffer a –30 penalty.

Fog, Mist, Shadow, or Smoke

Ballistic Skill tests made to attack targets concealed by fog, mist, shadow, or smoke suffer a –20 penalty. While concealed by fog, mist, or shadow, a character gains a +10 bonus on Stealth skill tests.

Ganging Up

A character has an advantage when he and his allies engage the same foe in melee combat. If a group of characters outnumber their opponent two to one, their Weapon Skill tests against those foes gain a +10 bonus. If a group of characters outnumber their opponent by three to one or more, their Weapon Skill tests against those foes gain a +20 bonus instead.

Helpless Targets

Weapon Skill tests made to hit unconscious or otherwise helpless targets automatically succeed with a number of degrees of success equal to the attacker's Weapon Skill bonus. When rolling damage against such a target, roll the dice for damage twice and add the results. Prone and Stunned targets are not automatically considered Helpless Targets.

Higher Ground

Characters standing on higher ground, such as on a table, hill, or mound of dead heretics, have an advantage in melee. Weapon Skill tests made by these characters with the high ground gain a +10 bonus.

Long Range

Targets that are at a distance of more than double the range of a character's weapon are at Long range. Ballistic Skill tests made to hit targets at Long range are suffer a –10 penalty.

Missing and Scattering

Sometimes, when flinging a thrown weapon, it is important to know where the weapon lands should the attacker fail his Ballistic Skill test. When a character fails this test, the GM rolls 1d10 and consults the Scatter Diagram. Roll 1d5 to determine the number of metres the item travels in the indicated direction. This is also used with weapons with the Blast quality. These affect a wide enough area that if the shot goes awry, it might still damage something, even if what is struck is not the original target.

Scattering in zero gravity

The consequences of throwing dangerous objects in a zero gravity environment can be both amusing and deadly. One way of determining exactly where an errant krak grenade floats after it bounces off the bulkhead is to roll twice on the Scatter Diagram, once for the X-axis and once for the Y-axis. If the GM desires, he can make a third roll for the Z-axis when a scatter occurs in huge areas with expansive ceilings or multiple open decks, for example.

Pinning

Being shot at is a terrifying experience at the best of times, and even the most inexperienced Acolytes know to keep their heads down when the bullets and bolt shells start flying. Pinning represents a character's survival instincts telling him to stay in cover. Certain combat actions or other circumstances call on their targets to test for Pinning; this is a Challenging (+0) Willpower test. If the character succeeds, he can act normally. If he fails, he instead becomes Pinned.

Being Pinned

A Pinned character is busy trying to avoid getting shot, so may only take a single Half Action each turn, though he can take Free Actions and Reactions as normal. Additionally, he suffers a –20 penalty to all Ballistic Skill tests. If a Pinned character is in cover relative to the attacker that Pinned him, he may not leave it except to retreat (provided he can remain in cover while doing so). If he is not in cover when Pinned, he must use his next turn to reach cover. If there is no cover nearby, he must move away from the attacker that Pinned him. A character can make a Challenging (+0) Willpower test at the end of his turn to escape Pinning, in which case he may act as normal on his next turn. If the character has not been shot at since his last turn or is under cover, he gains a +30 bonus on this test. A character engaged in melee combat automatically escapes Pinning. Characters cannot initiate melee combat in an attempt to escape Pinning.

Scatter Diagram



Point-Blank Range

When a character makes a ranged attack against a target that is two metres away or closer, that target is at Point-Blank range. Ballistic Skill tests made to attack a target at this range gain a +30 bonus. This bonus does not apply when the attacker and the target are engaged in melee combat with each other. For weapons with a Short range of less than three metres, Point-Blank range is one metre less than the weapon's Short range.

Prone

A character is considered Prone any time he is lying on the ground. Weapon Skill tests made to attack Prone targets gain a +10 bonus, but Ballistic Skill tests made to hit Prone targets suffer a –10 penalty unless the attacker is at Point Blank range. A character who is Prone suffers a –10 penalty to Weapon Skill tests and a –20 penalty to Evasion tests.

Short Range

Targets that are at a distance of less than half the range of a character's weapon are at Short range. Ballistic Skill tests made to attack targets at Short range gain a +10 bonus.

Size

Size is an important factor when attacking foes because it is usually easier to hit a larger target. All characters and creatures in Dark Heresy have a defined Size trait, and it should be relatively easy as well for the GM to assign an appropriate Size trait to objects as needed. Use **Table 4–6: Size** (see page 138) for determining bonuses and penalties based on a target's Size trait.

Stunned Targets

Weapon Skill and Ballistic Skill tests to attack Stunned targets gain a +20 bonus.

Table 7–5: Combat Circumstances Summary

Difficulty	Skill Modifier	Example
Easy	+30 Bonus	Attacking a Surprised or Unaware target. Attacking a Massive (Size [7]) target. Shooting a target at Point Blank range. Evading an attack that has been anticipated for at least one round.
Routine	+20 Bonus	Melee attacks against a foe that is outnumbered three to one or more. Attacking a Stunned opponent. Attacking an Enormous (Size [6]) target. Evading an attack whilst in full cover from the attacker.
Ordinary	+10 Bonus	Attacking a Prone opponent with a melee weapon. Attacking from higher ground. Attacking a Hulking (Size [5]) target. Shooting a target at Short range. Making a Standard Attack action. Melee attacks against a foe who is outnumbered two to one. Evading an attack whilst in partial cover from the attacker.
Challenging	+0 Bonus	Attacking an Average (Size [4]) target. Making a Swift Attack action.
Difficult	–10 Penalty	Shooting at a target at Long range. Shooting a Prone target. Attacking a Scrawny (Size [3]) target. Attacking an enemy in melee whist Prone. Making a Lightning Attack action. Making a Full-Auto ranged action.
Hard	–20 Penalty	Shooting into melee combat. Performing a Called Shot action. Dodging whilst Prone. Making an unarmed attack against an armed opponent. Melee attacks in the darkness. Shooting at a target in fog, mist, or shadow. Attacking a Puny (Size [2]) target. Using a weapon without the correct Weapon Training talent.
Very Hard	–30 Penalty	Attacking or Dodging in deep snow. Firing a heavy weapon that has not been Braced. Attacking a Miniscule (Size [1]) target. Shooting a target at Extreme range. Shooting a completely concealed target. Evading an attack whilst unable to see its source. Shooting at a target in darkness.

Unaware Targets

When a character has no idea that he about to be attacked, he is considered an Unaware Target. Usually, this happens at the beginning of a combat when one or more characters are Surprised (see page 216). Weapon Skill or Ballistic Skill tests made to attack Unaware targets gain a +30 bonus.

Weather and Unnatural Conditions

Weapon Skill and Ballistic Skill tests made to attack whilst enduring harsh weather or unnatural conditions, such as heavy rain, an ash storm, or standing knee-deep in waves of fungus, suffer a –20 penalty unless stated otherwise for that situation.

Injury

The life of an Acolyte is filled with physical stress. Devastating weapons effects, horrid creature attacks, baleful mental tortures, and more can reduce a character to a bleeding lump of flesh in desperate need of medicae assistance. Other actions, such as sprinting across a minefield, can also lessen a character's effectiveness. Common physical injuries to Acolytes are represented by damage and Fatigue. Additionally, characters can also experience several types of conditions and special damage such as fire, suffocation, and limb loss. In Dark Heresy, it is important to know how much physical abuse a character can take, and a key measurement of this is how many wounds he possesses.

Wounds

Wounds are a measurement of how much punishment a character can take before suffering debilitating effects and ultimately death. Every character in Dark Heresy has a specified number of wounds. Wounds do not normally deplete. Even when a character is injured, that injury does not decrease his wounds. Instead, a character's wounds simply serve as a threshold, and the injury is recorded on his character sheet as damage. When a character's damage exceeds his wounds, however, his life is put at risk.

Damage

Damage is physical trauma dealt to a character. Acolytes can suffer damage a number ways, including being shot by an autogun, stabbed by an rusted cultist blade, run over by a tank, exposed to the hard vacuum of space, and so forth. When a Player Character suffers damage, record the amount on his character sheet. That damage remains with the character until it is removed over time by natural healing, or the character receives medical attention (see page 244). Damage is cumulative; each time a character suffers damage, the amount is added to any previous damage he had.

Each time a character is dealt damage, there are factors that might allow him to reduce it before it is applied to his total. By default, a character reduces incoming damage from each hit by an amount equal to his Toughness bonus. Armour can also help further reduce damage. If the source of the damage struck a location protected by armour, the incoming damage is reduced by an amount equal to the Armour points provided by the armour. It is important to note that some sources of damage ignore Armour and/or Toughness; such cases are always detailed in the description of the damage source. As long as a character's total damage is equal to or less than his wounds, his body still functions normally. If a character's damage ever exceeds his wounds, he begins to take Critical damage.

Damage Types

All damage is divided up into four types:

- Energy (lasers, fire, plasma)
- Explosive (grenades, bolt rounds)
- Impact (clubs, bullets, falling)
- Rending (swords, blades, claws)

If a source of damage does not specify a type, treat it as Impact. The type of damage inflicted is usually only important for determining Critical Effects resulting from Critical damage.

Critical Damage

Whenever a character's total damage exceeds his wounds, he begins to take Critical damage. Each time a character suffers Critical damage, he also suffers one or more Critical Effects. These are determined by consulting the appropriate Critical Effect table based on the affected location (Arm, Body, Head, or Leg) and the damage type (Energy, Explosive, Impact, or Rending). As with normal damage, Critical damage is cumulative and remains with the character until he either heals naturally over time or receives medical attention (see page 244). Each Critical Effect also has its own duration (sometimes permanent). If a Critically damaged character suffers more damage, the amount is added to his existing Critical damage and a new set of Critical Effects are applied based on his total Critical damage (assuming he is still alive). Note that this new Critical damage does not override or negate the previous Critical damage effects unless the two effects are mutually exclusive, in which case, use the most recent Critical damage effect.



Removing Damage

Characters automatically remove damage (both ordinary and Critical) over time through natural healing. Medical attention and some psychic powers can also remove damage. The rate of damage removal depends on several factors and is fully explained in **Healing** (page 244).

Fatigue

Not all injuries in Dark Heresy are lethal. Exhaustion, combat trauma, or swapping licks with bare fists can all leave a character battered but more or less intact. Fatigue represents the amount of non-lethal injury a character can take over the course of game play. Characters suffer Fatigue from certain types of attacks, Grappling, some Critical Effects, and other actions that push them beyond safe limits. Fatigue is measured in levels.

Any time a character gains or loses a level of Fatigue, he compares his new Fatigue level to his characteristic bonuses. Any characteristic with a bonus lower than the character's current Fatigue level becomes "fatigued." Fatigued characteristics affect the character is different ways depending on if the game is currently in narrative time or structured time:

- **Structured Time:** A fatigued characteristic counts as half its normal value (rounded up) when the character wishes to perform an action that includes a test that calls on that characteristic, or any other uses of that characteristic.
- **Narrative Time:** Any time the character performs a task that includes a test of a fatigued characteristic, that task takes twice the normal time to attempt.

Fatigue Threshold

A character's Fatigue threshold is equal to his Toughness bonus and Willpower bonus added together. If a character's levels of Fatigue ever exceeds this threshold, the character passes out and is Unconscious for 10–TB minutes; at the end of that time, he awakens with his levels of Fatigue reverted to a number equal to his Toughness bonus. If a character's Fatigue ever exceeds double the amount of his Fatigue threshold, the character dies.

Removing Fatigue

Fatigue goes away with time. Each hour of normal rest (but not time spent Unconscious) without any combat, use of psychic powers, or other strenuous activity, removes one level of Fatigue. Six consecutive hours of rest removes all Fatigue.

Characteristic Damage

Some psychic powers, poisons, diseases and other hazards circumvent a character's wounds and deal damage directly to a characteristic. Characteristic damage cannot reduce a characteristic below zero. It can also affect the corresponding characteristic bonus. **Table 7–6: Effects of Zero Characteristic** summarises what happens when a particular characteristic is reduced to zero.

Removing Characteristic Damage

Unless otherwise specified, characteristic damage is never permanent. A character automatically removes one point of characteristic damage each hour, regardless of his activity level. The GM can allow certain types of medical attention to remove characteristic damage at a faster rate.

Table 7–6: Effects of Zero Characteristic

Characteristic	Effect
Zero Weapon Skill	The character cannot make tests based on this characteristic.
Zero Ballistic Skill	The character cannot make tests based on this characteristic.
Zero Strength	The character collapses to the ground and is Unconscious.
Zero Toughness	The character dies.
Zero Agility	The character is paralysed, Helpless, and can take no actions.
Zero Intelligence	The character slips quietly into a dreamless coma, and is now treated as Helpless.
Zero Perception	The character is bereft of his senses and suffers a –30 penalty to all tests (except Toughness) until he recovers.
Zero Willpower	The character falls into a nightmare-filled sleep and is Unconscious.
Zero Fellowship	The character withdraws into a blank, catatonic state. He cannot communicate or make tests based on this characteristic.

Narrative Effects of Wounds

In addition to the mechanical effects of receiving a wound, some players might want to play out the narrative effects of some of their character's more brutal injuries. Perhaps a vicious wound to an Acolyte's leg from a chainsword leaves him with a slight limp, or a scorching blast of fire to the head burns off half of his hair. Adding details like this can add to a character's personality, and make important encounters much more memorable.

Table 7–7: Energy Critical Effects – Arm

Critical Damage	Critical Effect
1	The attack grazes the target's arm, causing it to spasm uncontrollably with pain. All tests involving that arm suffer a –30 penalty for 1d5 rounds.
2	The attack smashes into the arm, sending currents of energy crackling down to the fingers and up to the shoulder. The target suffers 1 level of Fatigue, and that arm is Useless for 1d5 rounds.
3	The arm suffers superficial burns inflicting no small amount of pain on the target. The target suffers 1d5 levels of Fatigue, and can take only a Half Action during his next turn.
4	The shock of the attack causes the character to temporarily lose control of his autonomous functions. He is Stunned for 1 round and is knocked Prone. The arm is Useless for 1d10 rounds.
5	The attack causes energy to course through the target's arm. He is Stunned for 1 round, and the arm is Useless until the target receives medical treatment.
6	The attack wreathes the arm in flame, scorching clothing and armour, and temporarily fusing together the target's fingers. The target suffers 1d5 levels of Fatigue and 1d5 Weapon Skill and Ballistic Skill damage, and he must make a Challenging (+0) Toughness test or suffer the Lost Hand condition (see page 242).
7	With a terrible snapping sound, the heat of the attack boils the marrow in the target's arm, causing it to crack or even shatter. The target suffers 1d5 levels of Fatigue and is Stunned for 1 round. His arm is Useless until it is repaired.
8	Energy ripples across the target's arm, causing skin and muscle to slough disgustingly from the target's limb, revealing a sticky red mess of sinew and bone. The target suffers 1d10 levels of Fatigue and must make a Challenging (+0) Toughness test or be Stunned for 1d5 rounds. He now suffers from the Lost Arm condition (see page 242).
9	Fire consumes the target's arm, burning the flesh to a crisp right down to the bone. The target must make an immediate Challenging (+0) Toughness test or die from shock. If he survives, the target suffers 1d10 levels of Fatigue and is Stunned for 1 round. The target now suffers from the Lost Arm condition (see page 242).
10+	The attack reduces the arm to a cloud of crimson ash and sends the target crumbling to the ground. He immediately dies from shock, clutching his smoking stump.

Table 7–8: Energy Critical Effects – Body

Critical Damage	Critical Effect
1	A blow to the target's body steals the air from his lungs. The target can take only a Half Action on his next turn.
2	The blast punches the air from the target's body. He must make a Challenging (+0) Toughness test or be knocked Prone.
3	The attack cooks the flesh on the chest and abdomen. He suffers 2 levels of Fatigue and 1d5 Toughness damage.
4	The energy ripples all over the character, scorching his body with horrid third-degree burns. The target suffers 1d10 levels of Fatigue, and can only take a Half Action on his next turn.
5	The fury of the attack forces the target to the ground, helplessly covering his face and keening in agony. The target is knocked Prone and must make a Challenging (+0) Agility test or catch fire (see page 243). The target must also make a Challenging (+0) Toughness test or be Stunned for 1 round.
6	Struck by the full force of the attack, the target is sent reeling to the ground; smoke spiraling out from the wound. The target suffers 1d5 levels of Fatigue, is knocked Prone, and is Stunned for 1d10 rounds. In addition, he must make a Challenging (+0) Agility test or catch fire (see page 243).
7	The intense power of the energy attack cooks the target's organs, burning his lungs and heart with intense heat. The target is Stunned for 2d10 rounds, and his Toughness characteristic is permanently reduced by 1d10.
8	As the attack washes over the target, his skin turns black and peels off, while melted fat seeps from his clothing and armour. The target is Stunned for 2d10 rounds. His Strength, Toughness, and Agility characteristics are reduced by half (rounding up) until he receives medical treatment. Permanently reduce the character's Fellowship characteristic by 2d5.
9	The target is completely encased in fire, melting his skin and bursting his eyes like superheated eggs. He falls to the ground a lifeless corpse, blackened and charred with horrid burns.
10+	As above, but if the target is carrying any ammunition, roll 1d10: on a result of 6 or higher, it explodes. Each target within 1d5 metres suffers a single hit for 1d10+5 Explosive damage to a randomly determined Hit Location. If the target carried any grenades or missiles, these detonate on the character's corpse with their normal effects one round after his demise.

Table 7–9: Energy Critical Effects – Head

Critical Damage	Critical Effect
1	A grazing blow to the head disorientates the target. He suffers a –10 penalty to all tests (except Toughness tests) for 1 round.
2	The blast of energy dazzles the target. He is Blinded for 1 round.
3	The attack cooks off the target's ear, leaving him with a partially burned stump of cartilage. He is Deafened for 1d5 hours (or until he receives medical attention).
4	The energy attack burns away all of the hairs on the target's head, as well as leaving him reeling from the injury. The target suffers 2 levels of Fatigue and the target is Blinded for 1d5 rounds.
5	A blast of energy envelops the target's head, burning his face and hair, crisping his skin, and causing him to scream like a stuck grox. In addition to losing all hair on his scalp and face, he is Blinded for 1d10 rounds and Stunned for 1 round. Permanently reduce the target's Fellowship characteristic by 1.
6	The attack cooks the target's face, melting his features and damaging his eyes. The target suffers 1d5 levels of Fatigue and is Blinded for 1d10 hours. Permanently reduce his Fellowship and Perception characteristics by 1d5.
7	In a gruesome display, the flesh is burned from the target's head, exposing charred bone and muscle underneath. The target suffers 1d10 levels of Fatigue. He is Blinded permanently. Roll 1d10; this is the target's new Fellowship characteristic value. If his Fellowship value is already 10 or lower, this can be skipped as no one would notice any difference in his behaviour and demeanour.
8	The target's head is destroyed in a conflagration of fiery death. He does not survive.
9	Superheated by the attack, the target's brain explodes, tearing apart his skull and sending flaming chunks of meat flying at those nearby. The target is very, very dead.
10+	As above, except the target's entire body catches fire and runs off headless 2d10 metres in a random direction (use the Scatter Diagram on page 230). Anything flammable it passes, including characters, must make a Challenging (+0) Agility test or catch fire (see page 243).

Table 7–10: Energy Critical Effects – Leg

Critical Damage	Critical Effect
1	The blast of energy sears the flesh and bone of the target's leg, leaving a nasty burn scar. The target cannot use the Run or Charge actions for 2 rounds.
2	The attack flash-fries the target's leg, cooking chunks of flesh into char. The target must pass a Challenging (+0) Toughness test or suffer 1 level of Fatigue.
3	A solid blow to the leg sends currents of agony coursing through the target. The target suffers 1 level of Fatigue and is knocked Prone. Reduce his Movement by half (rounding up) for 1d10 rounds.
4	The blast causes a nasty compound fracture in the target's leg. Until the target receives medical attention, reduce his Movement by half (rounding up), and he cannot use the Run or Charge actions.
5	The target's leg endures horrific burn damage, fusing clothing and armour with flesh and bone. The target suffers 1 level of Fatigue and is knocked Prone. Reduce his Movement by half (rounding up) for 2d10 rounds.
6	The attack burns the target's foot, charring the flesh and emitting a foul aroma. The target suffers 2 levels of Fatigue. He must also make a Challenging (+0) Toughness test. If he succeeds, reduce his Movement by half (rounding up) until he receives medical attention; if he fails, he suffers the Lost Foot condition (see page 243).
7	The energy attack fries the leg, leaving it a mess of blackened flesh. The leg is broken and until repaired, the target counts as having lost the leg. He suffers 1d5 levels of Fatigue. He must also make a Challenging (+0) Toughness test or be Stunned for 1 round. He now suffers the Lost Leg condition (see page 243).
8	Energy sears through the bone, causing the leg to be severed. The target suffers 1d10 levels of Fatigue and suffers Blood Loss. He must also make a Challenging (+0) Toughness test or be Stunned for 1 round. He now suffers the Lost Leg condition (see page 243).
9	The force of the attack reduces the leg to little more than a chunk of sizzling gristle. The target must make a Challenging (+0) Toughness test or die from shock. He now suffers the Lost Leg condition (see page 243).
10+	In a terrifying display of power, the leg immolates and thick fire consumes the target completely. He dies in a matter of agonising seconds, his scorched corpse surrounded with smoke and flames.

Table 7–11: Explosive Critical Effects – Arm

Critical Damage	Critical Effect
1	The attack throws the limb backwards, painfully jerking it away from the body. The target suffers 1 level of Fatigue.
2	The force of the blast snaps the bones of the arm in half. The target drops anything held in that hand and must pass a Challenging (+0) Toughness test or be Stunned for 1 round.
3	The explosion removes 1 finger (and the tips from up to 1d5 others) from the target's hand. The target suffers 1d10 Weapon Skill and 1d10 Ballistic Skill damage, and anything he was carrying in that hand is destroyed. If this is an explosive such as a grenade, it detonates; immediately resolve the 9 effect on this table upon the target.
4	The blast rips the sinew of the arm straight from the bone. The target is Stunned for 1 round and must make a Challenging (+0) Toughness test or suffer Blood Loss. The limb is Useless until the target receives medical attention.
5	Fragments from the explosion tear into the target's hand, ripping away flesh and muscle alike. He must immediately make an Ordinary (+10) Toughness test. If he succeeds, permanently reduce his Weapon Skill and Ballistic Skill characteristics by 1; if he fails, he suffers the Lost Hand condition (see page 242).
6	The explosive attack shatters the bone and mangles the flesh, turning the target's arm into a red ruin. The target suffers Blood Loss and 1d5 levels of Fatigue. The arm is Useless until he receives medical attention
7	In a violent hail of flesh, the arm is blown apart. The target must immediately make a Challenging (+0) Toughness test or die from shock. If he survives, he suffers 1d10 levels of Fatigue, is Stunned for 1d10 rounds, and suffers Blood Loss. The target now suffers from the Lost Arm condition (see page 242).
8	The arm disintegrates under the force of the explosion, taking a good portion of the shoulder and chest with it. The target is sent screaming to the ground, where he dies in a pool of his own blood and organs.
9	With a mighty bang the arm is blasted from the target's body, killing the target instantly in a rain of blood droplets. In addition, if the target was carrying a weapon with a power source in his hand (such as a power sword or chainsword), then it violently explodes, inflicting a single hit for 1d10+5 Impact damage to a randomly determined Hit Location upon each target to anyone within two metres.
10+	As above, except if the target is carrying any ammunition it explodes, inflicting a single hit for 1d10+5 Impact damage to a randomly determined Hit Location upon each target within 1d10 metres (in addition to the hit noted above). If the target is carrying any grenades or missiles, these also detonate immediately with their normal effects.

Table 7–12: Explosive Critical Effects – Body

Critical Damage	Critical Effect
1	The explosion flings the target backwards 1d5 metres. The target is knocked Prone.
2	The target is blown backwards 1d5 metres by a terrific explosion, suffering 1 level of Fatigue per metre travelled. The target is knocked Prone.
3	The force of the blast sends the target sprawling to the ground. The target is knocked backwards 1d5 metres, Stunned for 1 round, and is knocked Prone.
4	The power of the explosion rends flesh and bone with horrific results. The target must make a Challenging (+0) Toughness test or suffer from Blood Loss and be Stunned for 1 round.
5	Concussion from the explosion knocks the target to the ground and turns his innards into so much ground meat. The target suffers 1d5 levels of Fatigue and is knocked Prone. He must immediately make a Challenging (+0) Toughness test; if he fails, he suffers Blood Loss and his Toughness characteristic is permanently reduced by 1.
6	Chunks of the target's flesh are ripped free by the force of the attack leaving large, weeping wounds. The target is Stunned for 1 round and suffers Blood Loss.
7	The explosive force of the attack ruptures the target's flesh and scrambles his nervous system, knocking him to the ground. The target is Stunned for 1d10 rounds and is knocked Prone He also suffers Blood Loss, and must make a Challenging (+0) Toughness test or fall Unconscious.
8	The target's chest explodes outward, disgorging a river of partially cooked organs onto the ground, killing him instantly.
9	Pieces of the target's body fly in all directions as he is torn into bloody gobbets. If the target is carrying any ammunition, it explodes, inflicting a single hit for 1d10+5 Impact damage to a randomly determined Hit Location upon each target within 1d10 metres. If the target is carrying any grenades or missiles, these detonate immediately.
10+	As above, except anyone within 1d10 metres of the target is drenched in gore. Each affected character must make a Challenging (+0) Agility test or suffer a –10 penalty to Weapon Skill and Ballistic Skill tests for 1 round, as blood fouls his sight.

Table 7–13: Explosive Critical Effects – Head

Critical Damage	Critical Effect
1	The explosion leaves the target confused. He can take only a Half Action on his next turn as he recovers his senses.
2	The flash and noise leaves the target Blinded and Deafened for 1 round.
3	The detonation leaves the target's face a bloody ruin from scores of cuts. Permanent scarring is very likely. The target suffers 2 levels of Fatigue and must make a Challenging (+0) Toughness test or suffer 1d10 points of Perception and Fellowship damage.
4	The force of the blast knocks the target to the ground and leaves him senseless. The target suffers 1d10 Intelligence damage and is knocked Prone. He must also pass a Challenging (+0) Toughness test; if he fails, he is Stunned for 2 rounds and his Intelligence characteristic is permanently reduced by 1.
5	The explosion flays the flesh from the target's face and bursts his eardrums with its force. The target is Stunned for 1d10 rounds and is permanently Deafened. Permanently reduce his Fellowship characteristic by 1d5.
6	The target's head explodes under the force of the attack, leaving his headless corpse to spurt blood from the neck for the next few minutes. Needless to say, this is instantly and messily fatal.
7	Both head and body are blown into a mangled mess, instantly killing the target. If he is carrying any ammunition, it explodes, inflicting a single hit for 1d10+5 Impact damage to a randomly determined Hit Location on each target within 1d5 metres. If the target was carrying any grenades or missiles, these also detonate immediately with their normal effects.
8	In a series of unpleasant explosions the target's head and torso peel apart, leaving a gory mess on the ground. For the rest of the fight, anyone moving over this spot must make a Challenging (+0) Agility test or fall Prone.
9	The target ceases to exist in any tangible way, entirely turning into a kind of bright red mist that spreads through the surrounding area. He cannot get much deader than this, except...
10+	As above, except such is the unspeakably appalling manner in which the target was killed that each of the target's allies within two metres of where the target stood must make an immediate Challenging (+0) Willpower test. If an ally fails the test, he must spend his next turn fleeing from the attacker.

Table 7–14: Explosive Critical Effects – Leg

Critical Damage	Critical Effect
1	A glancing blast sends the character backwards one metre. The target must make a Challenging (+0) Toughness test or be knocked Prone.
2	The force of the explosion takes the target's feet out from under him. He is knocked Prone and cannot use any Movement action except for the Half Move action for 1d5 rounds.
3	The concussion causes the target's leg to fracture. The target suffers 2d10 Agility damage.
4	The explosion sends the target spinning through the air. He is flung 1d5 metres away in a random direction using the Scatter Diagram. It takes the target a Full Action to regain his feet, and his Movement is reduced by half (rounding up) for 1d10 rounds.
5	Explosive force removes part of the target's foot and scatters the ragged remnants over a wide area. The target must make a Difficult (–10) Toughness test or suffer 1d5 levels of Fatigue. Permanently reduce his Agility characteristic by 1d5.
6	The concussive force of the blast shatters the target's leg bones and splits apart flesh. The target suffers 1d10 levels of Fatigue. The leg is Useless until he receives medical attention. The target must make a Challenging (+0) Toughness test; if he fails, he suffers the Lost Foot condition (see page 198).
7	The explosion reduces the target's leg into a hunk of smoking meat. The target must immediately make a Challenging (+0) Toughness test or die from shock. If he survives, he suffers 1d10 levels of Fatigue, is Stunned for 1d10 rounds, and suffers Blood Loss. He now suffers the Lost Leg condition (see page 198).
8	The blast tears the leg from the body in a geyser of gore, sending him crashing to the ground, blood pumping from the ragged stump. This grievous wound is instantly fatal.
9	The leg explodes in an eruption of blood, killing the target immediately and sending tiny fragments of bone, clothing, and armour hurtling off in all directions. Each target within 2 metres suffers a single hit for 1d10+2 Impact damage to a randomly determined Hit Location.
10+	As above, but if the target is carrying any ammunition it detonates, inflicting a single hit for 1d10+5 Impact damage to a randomly determined Hit Location upon each target within 1d10 metres (in addition to the hit noted above). If the target is carrying any grenades or missiles, these detonate immediately with their normal effects.

Table 7–15: Impact Critical Effects – Arm

Critical Damage	Critical Effect
1	The attack strikes the target's limb with a powerful blow. He drops anything he was holding in that hand.
2	The strike leaves a deep bruise, possibly causing minor fractures in the arm. The target suffers 1 level of Fatigue.
3	The impact smashes into the arm or whatever the target is holding, ripping it away and leaving the target reeling from the pain. He is Stunned for 1 round and drops anything he was holding in that hand. Roll 1d10; on a result of 1, anything the target was holding in that hand is badly damaged and unusable until repaired.
4	The impact crushes flesh and bone. The target drops anything he was holding in that hand, and must make a Challenging (+0) Toughness test or suffer 1d10 Weapon Skill and 1d10 Ballistic Skill damage.
5	Muscle and bone take a pounding as the attack rips into the arm. The limb is Useless until the target receives medical attention.
6	The attack pulverises the target's hand, crushing and breaking 1d5 fingers. The target suffers 1 level of Fatigue. He must make a Challenging (+0) Toughness test; if he fails, permanently reduce his Weapon Skill and Ballistic Skill characteristics by 2.
7	With a loud snap, the arm bone is shattered and left hanging limply at the target's side, dribbling blood onto the ground. The target suffers Blood Loss. The arm is Useless until the target receives medical attention.
8	The force of the attack takes the arm off just below the shoulder, showering blood and gore across the ground. The target must immediately make a Challenging (+0) Toughness test or die from shock. If he survives, he suffers 1d5 levels of Fatigue, is Stunned for 1d10 rounds, and suffers Blood Loss. He also now suffers from the Lost Arm condition (see page 242).
9	In a rain of blood, gore, and meat, the target's arm is removed from his body. Screaming incoherently, he twists about in agony for a few seconds before collapsing to the ground and dying.
10+	As per the effect directly above, except as the arm is removed by the force of the attack, bone, chunks of flesh, clothing, and armour fragments fly about like blood-soaked shrapnel. Each target within 2 metres suffers a single hit for 1d5—3 Impact damage to a randomly determined Hit Location.

Table 7–16: Impact Critical Effects – Body

Critical Damage	Critical Effect
1	A blow to the target's body steals the breath from his lungs. The target can take only a Half Action on his next turn.
2	The impact punches the air from the target's body. He suffers 1 level of Fatigue and is knocked Prone.
3	The attack breaks a rib with a resounding crunch. The target is Stunned for 1 round and knocked Prone.
4	The blow batters the target, shattering a rib. The target suffers 1d10 Toughness damage and must make a Challenging (+0) Agility test or be knocked Prone.
5	A solid blow to the chest pulverises the target's innards, and he momentarily doubles over in pain, clutching himself and crying in agony. The target is Stunned for 2 rounds and must make a Challenging (+0) Toughness test or suffer 1d5 levels of Fatigue.
6	The attack knocks the target sprawling on the ground. The target suffers 1d5 levels of Fatigue, is flung 1d5 metres away from the attacker (stopping if he hits a solid object), and falls Prone. He is Stunned for 2 rounds.
7	With an audible crack, 1d5 of the target's ribs break. Permanently reduce the target's Toughness characteristic by 1d5. Until he receives medical attention, at the end of each round in which this character took an action, roll 1d10. On a result of 1 or 2, the character dies instantly as a shattered rib pierces a vital organ.
8	The force of the attack ruptures several of the target's organs and knocks him down, gasping in wretched pain. The target suffers Blood Loss. Permanently reduce his Toughness characteristic by 1d10.
9	The target jerks back from the force of the attack, throwing back his head and spewing out a jet of blood before crumpling to the ground dead.
10+	As per the effect directly above, except the target's lifeless form is thrown 1d10 metres directly away from the attack. Any target in the corpse's path must make a Challenging (+0) Agility test or be knocked Prone.

Table 7–17: Impact Critical Effects – Head

Critical Damage	Critical Effect
1	The impact fills the target's head with a terrible ringing noise. The target must make a Challenging (+0) Toughness test or suffer 1 level of Fatigue.
2	The hit causes the target's sight to blur and his head to spin. The target suffers a –10 penalty to Perception and Intelligence tests for 1d5 rounds.
3	The target's nose breaks in a torrent of blood, blinding him for 1 round. The target must make a Challenging (+0) Toughness test or be Stunned for 1 round.
4	The concussive strike staggers the target. The target must make a Challenging (+0) Toughness test or be Stunned for 1 round and knocked Prone.
5	The force of the blow sends the target reeling in pain. The target suffers 1 level of Fatigue, is Stunned for 1 round, and staggers backwards 1d5 metres. Permanently reduce his Intelligence characteristic by 1.
6	The target's head is snapped back by the attack, leaving him staggering around trying to control mind-numbing pain. The target is Stunned for 1d5 rounds, is knocked backwards 1d5 metres, and must make a Challenging (+0) Agility test or be knocked Prone.
7	The attack slams into the target's head, fracturing his skull and opening a long tear in his scalp. The target is Stunned for 1d10 rounds. His Movement is halved (rounding up) for 1d10 hours.
8	With a sickening crunch, the target's head snaps around to face the opposite direction. The twisted vertebrae immediately sever every connection within the target's neck, and his death is instantaneous.
9	The target's head bursts like an overripe fruit and sprays blood, bone, and brains in all directions. Each target within 4 metres of the deceased must make a Challenging (+0) Agility test or suffer a –10 penalty to his Weapon Skill and Ballistic Skill tests on his next turn, as gore gets in his eyes or obscures his visor.
10+	As above, except that the attack was so powerful that it passes through the target and strikes another target nearby. If the hit was from a melee weapon, the attacker may immediately make another attack (with the same weapon) against any other target he can reach without moving. If the hit was from a ranged weapon, he may immediately make another attack (with the same weapon) against any target standing directly behind the original target and within range of his weapon.

Table 7–18: Impact Critical Effects – Leg

Critical Damage	Critical Effect
1	A blow to the leg results in deep bruises and teeth-clenching pain. The target suffers 1 level of Fatigue.
2	A grazing strike against the leg slows the target. The target's Movement is reduced by half (rounding up) for 1 round. He must make a Challenging (+0) Toughness test or be Stunned for 1 round and fall Prone.
3	A solid blow to the leg sends lightning agony coursing through the target. He is knocked Prone and suffers 1d10 Agility damage.
4	A powerful impact causes micro-fractures in the target's bones, inflicting considerable agony. The target is knocked Prone and suffers 2d10 Agility damage.
5	The blow breaks the target's leg with an agonising snap. He is Stunned for 1 round and knocked Prone. Reduce his Movement to 1 metre until he receives medical attention.
6	With a sharp cracking noise, several of the tiny bones in the target's foot snap like twigs. The target suffers 2 levels of Fatigue, and his Movement is halved (rounded up) until he receives medical attention. He must make a Challenging (+0) Toughness test or suffer the Lost Foot condition (see page 243).
7	With a nasty crunch, the leg is broken and the target is left mewling in pain. He is Stunned for 2 round and falls Prone. The leg is Useless until the target receives medical attention.
8	The force of the attack rips the lower half of the leg away in a stream of blood. The target must immediately make a Challenging (+0) Toughness test or die from shock. If he survives, he suffers Blood Loss and suffers the Lost Leg condition (see page 243). Permanently reduce his Agility Characteristic by 1d5.
9	The hit rips apart the flesh of the leg, causing blood to spray out in all directions. Even as the target tries futilely to stop the sudden flood of vital fluid, he falls to the ground and dies in a spreading pool of gore.
10+	As above, but such is the agony of the target's death that his terrible screams drown out all conversation within 2d10 metres for the rest of the round.

Table 7–19: Rending Critical Effects – Arm

Critical Damage	Critical Effect
1	The slashing attack tears free whatever the target was carrying. He drops anything he was holding in that hand.
2	Deep cuts cause the target to drop his arm. He suffers 1 level of Fatigue and releases anything he was holding in that hand.
3	The attack shreds the target's arm into ribbons, causing the target to scream in pain. He drops anything he was holding in that hand, and must make a successful Challenging (+0) Toughness test or suffer Blood Loss.
4	The attack flays the skin from the limb, filling the air with blood and the sounds of his screaming. The target suffers 2 levels of Fatigue and falls Prone. The arm is Useless for 1d10 rounds.
5	A bloody and very painful-looking furrow is opened up in the target's arm. He suffers Blood Loss and drops anything he was holding in that hand. The arm is Useless until the target receives medical attention.
6	The blow mangles flesh and muscle as it hacks into the target's hand, liberating 1d5 fingers in the process (a roll of a 5 means that the thumb has been sheared off as well). The target is Stunned for 1 round and must immediately make a Challenging (+0) Toughness test or suffers the Lost Hand condition (see page 242).
7	The attack rips apart skin, muscle, bone, and sinew with ease, turning the target's arm into a dangling ruin of severed veins and spurting blood. He suffers Blood Loss and 1d10 Strength damage. The arm is Useless until the target receives medical attention.
8	With an assortment of unnatural, wet, ripping sounds, the arm flies free of the body trailing blood behind it in a crimson arc. The target must immediately make a Challenging (+0) Toughness test or die from shock. If he survives, he is Stunned for 1d10 rounds and suffers Blood Loss. He suffers from the Lost Arm condition (see page 242).
9	The attack slices clean through the arm and into the torso, drenching the ground in blood and gore. The target is killed instantly, leaving a ruined corpse on the ground.
10+	As above, but as the arm falls to the ground its fingers spasm uncontrollably, pulling the trigger of any held weapon. If the target was carrying a ranged weapon, roll 1d100. On a result of 96 or higher, a single randomly determined target within 2d10 metres is hit struck by a single hit from that weapon on a randomly determined Hit Location.

Table 7–20: Rending Critical Effects – Body

Critical Damage	Critical Effect
1	If the target is not wearing armour on this location, he suffers 1 level of Fatigue from a painful laceration. If he is wearing armour, there is no effect, and he thanks the Emperor for his foresight.
2	A powerful slash opens a painful rent in the target's body. He suffers 1 level of Fatigue and must make a Challenging (+0) Toughness test or be Stunned for 1 round.
3	The attack rips a large patch of skin from the target's torso, leaving him gasping in pain. The target is Stunned for 1 round and must make a Challenging (+0) Toughness test or suffer Blood Loss.
4	The blow opens up a long wound in the target's torso, causing him to double over in terrible pain. The target is Stunned for 1 round and suffers Blood Loss.
5	A torrent of blood spills from the deep cuts, making the ground slick with gore. The target suffers Blood Loss and suffers 1d10 Toughness damage. Any character attempting to move through this pool of blood must make a Challenging (+0) Agility test or fall Prone.
6	The mighty attack takes a sizeable chunk out of the target and knocks him to the ground as he clutches the oozing wound, shrieking in pain. The target is knocked Prone, suffers Blood Loss, and suffers 1d10 Toughness damage.
7	The attack cuts open the target's abdomen, threatening to expose his entrails. The target suffers Blood Loss. Permanently reduce his Toughness characteristic by 1d5. Until he receives medical attention, at the end of each round, if he took any actions (besides holding his guts in and waiting for a medic), roll 1d10. On a result of 1 or 2, he suffers an additional 2d10 Rending damage.
8	With a vile tearing noise, the skin on the target's chest comes away revealing a red ruin of muscle. He must succeed on a Challenging (+0) Toughness test or perish. If he survives, he is Stunned for 1 round and suffers Blood Loss. Permanently reduce his Toughness characteristic by 1d10.
9	The powerful blow cleaves the target from gullet to groin, revealing his internal organs and spilling them on to the ground before him. The target is now quite dead.
10+	As above, except that the area and the target are awash with slippery gore. For the rest of the fight, any character who moves within four metres of the target's corpse must make a Challenging (+0) Agility test or fall Prone.

Table 7–21: Rending Critical Effects – Head

Critical Damage	Critical Effect
1	The attack tears a painful rent in the target's face. If he is wearing a helmet, he suffers no ill effects; otherwise, he suffers 1 level of Fatigue.
2	The attack slices open the target's scalp, which immediately begins to bleed profusely, spilling into his eyes. The target suffers a –10 penalty to Weapon Skill and Ballistic Skill tests for the next 1d10 rounds. He must pass a Challenging (+0) Toughness test or suffer Blood Loss.
3	The attack rips open the target's face with a vicious shredding sound. He is Stunned for 1 round and suffers Blood Loss. If he is wearing a helmet, it is torn off.
4	The attack slices across one of the target's eye sockets, possibly scooping out the eye. The target suffers 1d10 Perception damage. He must make a Routine (+20) Toughness; test if he fails, he suffers the Lost Eye condition (see page 242).
5	The attack tears the target's helmet from his head. If he is not wearing a helmet, the target instead loses an ear and is Deafened until he receives medical attention. If he loses an ear, he must also must pass a Challenging (+0) Toughness test or have his Fellowship characteristic permanently reduced by 1. The target is Stunned for 1d5 rounds.
6	The blow rips violently across the target's face, taking with it an important feature. He suffers 1d5 levels of Fatigue and suffers Blood Loss. Roll 1d10 to see what the target has lost. 1–3: Eye (see the Lost Eye condition on page 242). 4–7: Nose (permanently reduce his Fellowship characteristic by 1d10). 8–10: Ear (the target is Deafened until he receives medical attention).
7	In a splatter of skin and teeth, the attack removes most of the target's face. The strike might not have slain him, but the target's words are forever slurred as a result of this vicious injury. The target is Stunned for 1 round and suffers Blood Loss. He is permanently Blinded. Permanently reduce his Fellowship characteristic by 1d10.
8	The blow slices into the side of the target's head causing his eyes to pop out and his brain to ooze down his cheek like spilled jelly. He is dead before he hits the ground.
9	With a sound not unlike a wet sponge being torn in half, the target's head flies free of its body and sails through the air, landing harmlessly 2d10 metres away with a soggy thud. The target is instantly slain.
10+	As above, except the target's neck spews blood in a torrent, drenching all those within 1d5 metres and forcing each effected target to make a Challenging (+0) Agility test. Each character who fails the Test suffers a –10 penalty to Weapon Skill and Ballistic Skill tests for 1 round, as gore fills his eyes or fouls his visor.

Table 7–22: Rending Critical Effects – Leg

Critical Damage	Critical Effect
1	The attack knocks the limb backwards, painfully twisting it awkwardly. The target suffers 1 level of Fatigue.
2	The target's kneecap splits open. He must make a Challenging (+0) Agility test or fall Prone and suffer Blood Loss as the injured extremity hits the ground.
3	The attack rips a length of flesh from the leg. The target suffers Blood Loss and suffers 1d5 Agility damage.
4	The attack rips the kneecap free from the target's leg, and he collapses to the ground. The target is knocked Prone and suffers 1d10 Agility Damage. His Movement values are halved (rounding up) until he receives medical attention.
5	In a spray of blood, the target's leg is deeply slashed, exposing bone, sinew, and muscle. The target suffers Blood Loss. He must make a Challenging (+0) Toughness test; if he fails, permanently reduce his Agility characteristic by 1.
6	The blow slices a couple of centimetres off the end of the target's foot. The target suffers Blood Loss. He must make a Challenging (+0) Toughness test. If he succeeds, his Movement is halved (rounding up) until he receives medical attention. If he fails, he suffers the Lost Foot condition (see page 243).
7	The force of the blow cuts deep into the leg, grinding against bone and tearing ligaments apart. The target is Stunned for 1 round, is knocked Prone, and suffers Blood Loss. The leg is Useless until the target receives medical attention.
8	In a single bloody hack the target's leg is lopped off, spurting its vital fluids across the ground. The target must immediately make a Challenging (+0) Toughness test or die from shock. If he survives, he is Stunned for 1d10 rounds and suffers Blood Loss. He suffers the Lost Leg condition (see page 243).
9	With a meaty chop, the leg comes away at the hip. The target pitches to the ground howling in agony before dying.
10+	As above, except that the tide of blood is so intense that, for the remainder of the encounter, any character who makes a Run or Charge action within 6 metres of the corpse must make a Challenging (+0) Agility test or be knocked Prone.

Conditions and Special Damage

Common injuries are far from the only forms of bodily harm facing those who fight to preserve Mankind across the scarred battlefields or dark underhives of the galaxy. Acolytes can find themselves set on fire, or suffering from horribly bleeding wounds, broken bones, or permanent loss of limbs. All of these, and more, are collectively known as conditions and special damage.

Amputated Limbs

Whenever a character loses a limb (besides his head, as that usually means instant death), he also suffers Blood Loss. If he survives the experience, he (or another character) must treat the stump. This does not require a test, but the character performing it must have training in the Medicae skill. If he succeeds, it heals properly and he is no longer in direct danger. If he does not receive treatment, however, roll 1d10; on a result of 8 or lower, he dies a horrible death from infection over the next 1d10 days. After losing a limb, a character does not remove damage through natural healing for 1d10+2 days.

Lost Hand

The character suffers a –20 penalty on all skill and characteristic tests that rely on the use of two hands, and he cannot wield two-handed weapons. He can, however, strap a shield to the injured arm to offer some use in combat.

Lost Arm

As with a lost hand, but a character cannot strap a shield to the arm since he no longer has it. Unless he acquires a bionic replacement, his ability to serve the Emperor is greatly reduced.

Lost Eye

Losing one eye permanently reduces a character's Ballistic Skill by 10. In addition, he suffers a –20 penalty to all skill and characteristics tests that rely on sight. Should a character have the misfortune to lose both eyes, he becomes Blinded.



Lost Foot

The character permanently reduces all his Movement by half (rounded up) and suffers a –20 penalty on all tests for Movement actions, as well as skill and characteristic tests that could rely on mobility, such as Stealth.

Lost Leg

Treat this as a lost foot, but the character cannot use the Dodge skill. Losing both legs means the character cannot walk unless he has suitable cybernetic replacements installed.

Blinded

A Blinded character automatically fails all tests based on vision, and automatically fails all Ballistic Skill tests. He also suffers a –30 penalty to Weapon Skill tests and most other tests that ordinarily benefit from vision. Luckily, bionic eyes are a relatively commonplace cybernetic replacement in the Imperium.

Blood Loss

Blood Loss is a condition that can result from Critical damage. At the start of his turn, an affected character suffers 1 level of Fatigue. Once per round as a Free Action, he (or another character who can reach him) can attempt a Difficult (–10) Medicae test to remove this condition. The GM should modify the test as needed if the character is performing a strenuous activity or under attack, or if the subject is not in active combat or using more actions. Note that multiple Blood Loss conditions do not stack.

Deafened

The character cannot hear at all, or at least not well enough to communicate with others. Until he recovers or has the damage repaired, he automatically fails any skill or characteristic test that relies on hearing. Apart from having trouble communicating with his fellow Acolytes, the GM is free to decide what effects the character's deafness has on the game.

Falling

Acolytes can fall off things for all manner of reasons, though the results are usually the same. When a character falls a dangerous distance (as determined by the GM), he suffers falling damage. The falling character suffers 1d10 Impact damage, plus 1 additional damage per metre he fell, to a randomly determined Hit Location. Damage from a fall ignores Armour (but not Toughness). The GM can adjust the damage depending on the type of surface landed upon, abnormal gravity conditions, and other factors.

Fire

A character can be set on fire in several different ways (none of them pleasant). First, weapons with the Flame quality and certain Energy Critical Effects can set a character on fire. Alternatively, a character can be ignited by fire in the environment; for this second case, at the beginning of each round after the first in which the character is exposed to the same source of flames, he must make a Challenging (+0) Agility test or catch on fire.

Once a character is on fire, he suffers 1d10 Energy damage (ignoring Armour) and suffers 1 level of Fatigue each round until the fire is extinguished. If the location is not otherwise specified, this applies to the Body location. While on fire, he must make a Challenging (+0) Willpower test at the beginning of each of his turns in order to be able to take actions normally; otherwise, he may only flail in agony and scream, which counts as a Full Action. A character who is on fire can try to extinguish the flames by dropping Prone and making a Hard (–20) Agility test as a Full Action. The GM can make this test easier or harder depending on environmental conditions and whether the blazing character is able to receive any help from nearby allies.

Stunned

In addition to damage and Fatigue, characters can also become Stunned due to certain attacks or effects. Weapon Skill and Ballistic Skill tests to hit Stunned characters gain a +20 bonus. Stunned characters cannot take actions or Reactions such as Evasion, but are not considered a Helpless or Unaware targets.

Suffocation

There are many ways to suffocate, including drowning, smoke inhalation, and exposure to certain toxins. The rate of suffocation depends on the character's activity level. If a character is actively trying to conserve oxygen, he can hold his breath for a number of minutes equal to his Toughness bonus. If a character is instead engaged in strenuous activity (combat, swimming, and so forth) he can hold his breath for a number of rounds equal to twice his Toughness bonus. While holding his breath, a character must make a Challenging (+0) Toughness test each minute (if conserving oxygen) or each round (if engaged in strenuous activity). If he fails, he suffers one level of Fatigue (see page 233). If the character has not gained a fresh source of oxygen by the end of the allotted time, he automatically falls Unconscious regardless of his levels of Fatigue. If a character is both Unconscious and deprived of a fresh source of oxygen, he dies after a number of rounds equal to his Toughness bonus.

Unconsciousness

Unconsciousness is usually a temporary state that typically results from excessive levels of Fatigue or Critical damage. The duration of a state of Unconsciousness is usually included in the description of the effect that caused it, but if no other duration is given, Unconsciousness lasts for 10 minutes. An Unconscious character is completely unaware of his surroundings and cannot take any actions. He is also treated as a Helpless target (see page 229). If a character falls into Unconsciousness due to excessive levels of Fatigue, he recovers some of that Fatigue when he awakens (as per the rules on page 233).

Useless Limbs

Though the human form has many vulnerabilities, human limbs can often be snapped, shattered, and shredded before they are lost completely. Limbs can be rendered Useless by certain Critical Effects. While a limb is Useless, its owner suffers all of the penalties associated with having lost that limb (see the Lost Hand, Lost Arm, Lost Eye, Lost Foot, and Lost Leg conditions starting on page 242). The limb is not actually severed, however, so its owner does not suffer Blood Loss and the other effects that accompany an Amputated Limb (as described on page 242).



Vacuum

There is nothing pleasant about being exposed to vacuum. There are two main ways this unfortunate event could occur:

- A character can be suddenly thrust into an airless, unpressurised environment (such as being unexpectedly expelled from an airlock into space).
- A character can be slowly affected (such as being on a damaged voidship as atmosphere is vented into space).

A character exposed to vacuum can survive unharmed for a number of rounds equal to his Toughness bonus. At the end of each round after this, he suffers 1d10 Explosive damage (ignoring Armour and Toughness bonus). Since vacuums are airless by definition, a character in a vacuum also begins suffering the effects of Suffocation unless he has an oxygen source. If a character is in the vacuum of space, at the end of each round he must make a Challenging (+0) Toughness test or suffer 1d10 Energy damage from the extreme cold (ignoring Armour and Toughness bonus). If a character dies in space, it takes five rounds for his corpse to freeze. If a frozen corpse suffers any damage, it shatters into thousands of blood-red ice shards. If a character is trapped in a gradually worsening atmosphere, he can survive unharmed for a number of rounds equal to twice his Toughness bonus. At the end of this time, he begins to experience Suffocation and depressurisation (as detailed above). However, the damage for the decompression is only 1d5 instead of 1d10.

Healing

A character inevitably suffers damage during his battles in the name of the Emperor. As a character accumulates damage, he progresses through three different states: Lightly Damaged, Heavily Damaged, and Critically Damaged.

Lightly Damaged

A character is considered Lightly Damaged if he has taken damage equal to or less than twice his Toughness bonus. A Lightly Damaged character removes 1 point of damage per day through natural healing. If a Lightly Damaged character devotes an entire day to bed rest, he removes an amount of damage equal to his Toughness bonus. Once he removes all damage, a character ceases to be Lightly Damaged.

Heavily Damaged

A character is Heavily Damaged whenever he has taken more damage than twice his Toughness bonus. A Heavily Damaged character does not remove damage unless he devotes himself to complete rest (such as when receiving extended care, as per the Medicae skill on page 109). If he does so, the character removes 1 point of damage at the end of each 24–hour period. Once a Heavily Damaged character's damage is equal to or less than twice his Toughness bonus, he becomes Lightly Damaged instead.

Critically Damaged

A character is Critically Damaged whenever he has taken damage in excess of his wounds. A Critically Damaged character does not remove damage unless he devotes himself to complete rest (such as when receiving extended care, as per the Medicae skill on page 109). If he does so, the character makes a Challenging (+0) Toughness test at the end of each 24–hour period. If he succeeds, he removes 1 point of Critical damage. Once all Critical damage has been removed, a character becomes Heavily Damaged instead.

Medical Attention

Medical attention can range from the application of healing drugs to a successful Medicae test. Medical attention can provide immediate recovery or can speed the process of natural healing. For additional information, see the Medicae skill on page 108. Medical attention can also be something granted between game sessions by the GM, and would not necessarily be tied to Medicae tests or other skills that any character might have. This is up to the GM to establish, and would usually involve the passage of time via narrative time, although this should be done to help speed the game along. A GM should avoid leaving players in situations where they have a Heavily or Critically Damaged character and due to this are unable to participate in the game.

Cybernetic and Bionic Replacements

It is possible—and often a good idea—to restore lost limbs with bionic replacements. In fact, sometimes an Acolyte might prefer to lop off a perfectly good arm to gain the benefits of having a cybernetic replacement to better honour the Omnissiah. See **Chapter V: Armoury** for how cybernetic and bionic replacements work as well as the process for obtaining them.

Movement

"Mount up. It'll be a hard flight if we're to catch them afore the suns set."

–Merritt Hadrax, pilot of the shuttle *Brazen Grox*

Movement is an important factor in Dark Heresy games, as Acolytes are likely to be in constant motion as they investigate heresies, ferret out clues, and (often violently) quash those who would imperil Mankind through purposeful direction or foolhardy action. As discussed at the beginning of the chapter, there are two different methods of keeping time in an Dark Heresy game—narrative time and structured time—and each has its own unique rules regarding movement.

Structured and Narrative Time

During structured time, which typically involves combat, a character may take a specific action during a round to move at one of four speeds: Half Move, Full Move, Charge, or Run. The number of metres a character moves at these various speeds is dictated by his Agility bonus, and can be further modified through some talents or traits. **Table 7–23: Structured Time Movement** gives more details on the various speeds.

During narrative time, when a character is not actively involved in combat or some other all-consuming, time-sensitive task, knowing how far a character can move in a given amount of time is often still important to the story. Narrative time movement describes the standard speeds a character can move at a normal pace under ideal circumstances. Environment and terrain, discussed below, can affect these speeds, helping or hindering a character as he travels. **Table 7–24: Narrative Time Movement** gives more details on the various speeds.

Table 7–23: Structured Time Movement (in Metres/Round)

AgB	Half Move	Full Move	Charge	Run
0	1/2	1	2	3
1	1	2	3	6
2	2	4	6	12
3	3	6	9	18
4	4	8	12	24
5	5	10	15	30
6	6	12	18	36
7	7	14	21	42
8	8	16	24	48
9	9	18	27	54
10	10	20	30	60

Narrative Movement and Terrain

Terrain conditions affect how quickly a character can cover ground during narrative time. Slogging through a field full of waist-deep snow is much harder than walking across the broad flagstone-paved courtyard. When moving through thick foliage, dense crowds, soft sand, deep mud, and other similar difficult terrain, a character's Movement is halved. Furthermore, the Game Master determines what, if any, modifiers apply to narrative time due to the environment.

Hurrying in Narrative Time

During an Acolyte's investigations, time is often of the essence, for the fate of worlds can hang in the balance. When moving in narrative time, a character can hurry to double his narrative time Movement. While hurrying, a character suffers a –10 penalty to Perception-based tests due to the distraction of his haste.

A character can hurry for a number of consecutive hours equal to his Toughness bonus before he starts to feel its effects. At the end of this period, he must make a Challenging (+0) Toughness test or suffer 1 level of Fatigue. Additionally, at the end of each consecutive period of the same length for which he hurries, he must make another Toughness test with a cumulative –10 penalty or suffer 1 level of Fatigue. For example, he suffers a –10 penalty to his Toughness test at the end of the second period, a –20 after the third, and so forth.

Running in Narrative Time

When moving in narrative time, a character can run up to triple his narrative time movement. While running, a character suffers a –20 penalty to Perception-based tests.

At the end of the first hour for which he runs, a character must make a Challenging (+0) Toughness or suffer 1 level of Fatigue. At the end of each subsequent hour, he must make another Toughness test with a cumulative –10 penalty or suffer 1 level of Fatigue.

Table 7–24: Narrative Time Movement

AgB	Per Minute	Per Hour	Per Day
0	12m	0.75km	7km
1	24m	1.5km	15km
2	48m	3km	30km
3	72m	4km	40km
4	96m	6km	60km
5	120m	7km	70km
6	144m	9km	90km
7	168m	10km	100km
8	192m	12km	120km
9	216m	13km	130km
10	240m	14km	140km

Table 7–25: Treacherous Environment Agility Modifiers

Condition	Modifier
Fog or Smoke	+10
Mud	+0
Shallow Water	+0
Darkness	–10
Thick Snow	–10
Underbrush	–10
Dense Crowds	–20
Zero Gravity	–20
Rubble	–20
Tremors	–20

Forced Marching

While the standard time for marching is ten hours in a day, nothing is stopping characters from continuing past that time. After a ten-hour march, a character can safely press on for a number of hours equal to his Toughness bonus. At the end of the first hour after the end of that period, the character must make a Challenging (+0) Toughness test or suffer 1 level of Fatigue, and must repeat this test with a cumulative –10 penalty at the end of each consecutive hour of marching thereafter. Fatigue gained from forced marching is removed at a rate of one level per two hours of rest.

Movement and Environment

The rates as listed in **Table 7–23: Structured Time Movement** assume a relatively clear and uncluttered setting. This is rarely the case, however, as few combats take place on a clear day in empty hive habways or open fields, and there can be any number of obstacles present to hinder a character's movement. Refuse strewn corridors, deep snow, thick fog, deep, soft sand, dense underbrush—these are but a few examples of the conditions that can complicate navigation. In such conditions, a character's structured time Movement rate is halved (rounding up).

In structured time, if a character takes a Run or Charge action in a treacherous environment, he must make a Challenging (+0) Agility test. Failure means he falls Prone at a point in his movement determined by the GM and based on the degrees of failure. The difficulty of this test can be further modified at the GM's discretion based on any number of factors. See **Table 7–25: Treacherous Environment Agility Modifier** above for guidance.

Climbing

There are many times in a character's experience when the best way to reach a destination or bypass an obstacle is by climbing. Clambering over a fence, scaling a city wall, descending into a crevasse, and scaling up a wall to an ideal rooftop sniper position are all instances where climbing is required. Climbing is divided into two general categories depending on nature of the terrain: simple climbs and sheer surfaces.

Simple Climbs

Simple climbs include low walls, steep hills, tall piles of rubble, trees, or anything else that requires effort and concentration but no real skill to accomplish. Any character with his hands free can automatically accomplish a simple climb as long as he takes his time and is not being distracted (while taking fire, for example).

If a character is hurrying, being chased, under fire, or otherwise distracted, he needs to make a Challenging (+0) Strength or Athletics test to perform a simple climb. With one degree of success, the character completes his climb at a rate of one-half his Half Move speed. For each further degree of success, the character climbs an additional metre. If he fails the test, the character falls from his starting climbing position. At his discretion, the Game Master can adjust the difficulty of the climb to account for any other factors that he deems appropriate. Some types of climb, such as ascending a sturdy ladder or steep flight of stairs, are so simple that no test should be necessary, even when distracted.

Sheer Surfaces

Many surfaces are beyond the means of ordinary characters to climb, and often require specialised training and equipment. A sheer cliff with overhangs and no handholds, an icy crevasse, the walls of buildings, or the massive flying buttresses of a hive city are examples of such technical climbs, and attempting a climb like this requires a Hard (–10) Athletics test. With one degree of success, the character completes his climb at a rate of one-half his Half Move speed. For each further degree of success, the character climbs an additional metre. If he fails, the character falls from his starting climbing position. Specialised gear items such as grapnels and clip harnesses add bonuses to Athletics tests and are discussed further in **Chapter V: Armoury**.

Abseiling

If a character needs to descend a sheer surface quickly, he can attempt abseiling as opposed to climbing down. Abseiling requires climbing gear, a drop harness, or at least a good, stout line, and requires a Challenging (+0) Agility test. With one degree of success, the character descends at a rate of 10 metres per round, plus an additional metre for every additional degree of success. With one degree of failure, the descent rate is reduced to 5 metres per round. Failure by two or more degrees requires the character to make a Challenging (+0) Strength test or lose his grip—and if he is not wearing a drop harness or otherwise secured, he falls from his starting climbing position.

Jumping and Leaping

A jump is a controlled vertical ascent or descent wherein a character attempts to either jump as high as he can, or jump safely down from an elevated surface without taking damage. If a character is pushed from a ledge, or is otherwise not in control of his descent, he is not jumping, but falling (see page 243). A leap is a horizontal jump by which a character attempts to cover as much ground as possible. Both jumping and leaping can benefit from a running start, and both require a Full Action.

Standing Vertical Jumps

An average character can jump, from a standing position, roughly one half-metre straight up as measured from the ground to the bottom of his feet. Jumping distance depends as much on a character's body mass as it does on his Agility or Strength, so this distance tends to vary only slightly among characters. A character can jump up to reach an overhead item like a ledge or other handhold that is as high as his own height plus about one metre for average arm length and an additional half-metre for the average standing jump. A test is not usually required for such a jump, though the GM can call for an Agility test if the character is carrying heavy items, for example. Pulling oneself up onto a grabbed ledge requires a Challenging (+0) Strength test.

A character can attempt to safely jump down short distances. When a character attempts this, he must make a Challenging (+0) Agility test. If he succeeds, he can safely drop a number of metres equal to his Agility bonus, plus 1 metre per degree of success he scored on the test. If he fails, he falls Prone and suffers falling damage for the full distance (see page 243) upon impact. If he succeeds but does not score enough degrees of success to fall safely, he falls Prone and suffers falling damage for a number of metres equal to the distance he fell minus his Agility bonus.

Running Vertical Jumps

With a running start of at least four metres in a straight line, a character can increase the height of his jumps. At the end of his running jump, the character must make a Challenging (+0) Agility test. If he succeeds, he adds a number of metres equal to half of his Strength bonus (rounded up), plus another half-metre for each additional degree of success beyond the first, to his normal vertical jump distance. If the character fails the test, he stumbles and must succeed on an additional Challenging (+0) Agility test or fall Prone. Either outcome ends the character's turn. For every four additional metres beyond the first four that the character runs before making the jump, he receives a +10 bonus to his Agility test (to a maximum of +30).

Standing Horizontal Leaps

To make a Standing Horizontal Leap, a character must make a Challenging (+0) Agility test. If he succeeds, he leaps a number of metres equal to his Strength bonus, plus another half-metre for every additional degree of success he scores beyond the first. If he fails, the character only leaps a number of metres equal to half of his Strength bonus (rounded up); each additional degree of failure beyond the first reduces this distance by another half metre (to a minimum of one-half metre). If it is important, the height attained during a leap is equal to one quarter the distance leapt in metres, rounded up.

Running Horizontal Leaps

As with Running Vertical Jumps, to make a Running Horizontal Leap a character must have a running start of at least four metres in a straight line. At the end of the movement, the character makes a Challenging (+0) Agility test. If he succeeds, he leaps a number of metres equal his Strength bonus, plus another half-metre for each additional degree of success beyond the first. If he fails, the character only leaps a number of metres equal to half of his Strength bonus (rounded up); each additional degree of failure beyond the first reduces the distance leapt by another half metre (to a minimum of one-half metre). For every four additional metres beyond the first four that the character runs before making the leap, he receives a +10 bonus to his Agility test (to a maximum of +30). If it is important, the height attained during a leap is equal to one quarter the distance leapt in metres rounded up.



Swimming

Under ideal circumstances a character, does not need to make a tests to swim, but ideal circumstances are rare in Dark Heresy. Rough, choppy seas, restrained hands, heavy burdens, fighting while swimming, and the like are all considered hazardous conditions, and require a character to make a Challenging (+0) Athletics test as a Full Action to move. If the character succeeds, he moves a number of metres equal to one-half his Strength bonus (rounded up) in any direction. He can also simply tread water. If he fails, the character makes no progress and cannot move. A character can also swim underwater, but needs to hold his breath to do so. A character who is physically incapable of swimming (unconscious, paralysed, bound, etc.) automatically sinks. While underwater, a character risks **Suffocation** (see page 243) by drowning.

Heavy equipment, especially armour, makes swimming incredibly difficult. If a character is wearing armour or is otherwise weighted down (at the GM's discretion), all Athletics tests are made with a –30 penalty. If a character so encumbered fails an Athletics test to swim, he suffers 1 level of Fatigue.

Swimming in Narrative Time

Prolonged swimming, no matter the circumstances, is exhausting and potentially dangerous. A character can swim without consequence for a number of hours equal to his Toughness bonus. After that point, he must make a Challenging (+0) Toughness test at the end of each consecutive hour of swimming with a cumulative –10 penalty on each test beyond the first. If a character fails his Toughness test, he gains a level of Fatigue. If a swimming character falls unconscious due to Fatigue, he immediately slips beneath the surface and begins to Suffocate as per page 243. To determine distance covered for each hour of swimming, use **Table 7–24: Narrative Time Movement** (page 245) and use the character's Strength bonus in place of his Agility bonus.

Carrying, Lifting, and Pushing Objects

Under normal circumstances, it is not necessary to know exactly how much a character can carry, and common sense can serve as a guide in most instances. In general, an average character can reasonably carry a main weapon, such as a lasgun, autogun, or flamer, plus one or two secondary weapons like a pistol or melee weapon, along with a few clips of extra ammunition and several pieces of miscellaneous equipment in a rucksack, satchel, or similar container. It is not at all reasonable, however, for a character, even a very strong one, to be walking around with three heavy weapons and several thousand rounds of ammo for each, or for the character to have a backpack with every item from the gear section of the Armoury. There are, however, times when just how much a character can lift or carry is crucial information. The amount of weight a character can move is dependent on the sum of his Strength and Toughness bonuses. Compare that total to **Table 7–26: Carrying, Lifting, and Pushing** to find out the limits of a character's might. It is important to note that certain traits and talents can increase these values.

Table 7–26: Carrying, Lifting, & Pushing

Sum of SB and TB	Max Carrying Weight	Max Lifting Weight	Max Pushing Weight
0	0.9kg	2.25kg	4.5kg
1	2.25kg	4.5kg	9kg
2	4.5kg	9kg	18kg
3	9kg	18kg	36kg
4	18kg	36kg	72kg
5	27kg	54kg	108kg
6	36kg	72kg	144kg
7	45kg	90kg	180kg
8	56kg	112kg	224kg
9	67kg	134kg	268kg
10	78kg	156kg	312kg
11	90kg	180kg	360kg
12	112kg	224kg	448kg
13	225kg	450kg	900kg
14	337kg	674kg	1,348kg
15	450kg	900kg	1,800kg
16	675kg	1,350kg	2,700kg
17	900kg	1,800kg	3,600kg
18	1,350kg	2,700kg	5,400kg
19	1,800kg	3,600kg	7,200kg
20	2,250kg	4,500kg	9,000kg

Carrying Weight

A character's Carrying Weight is how much he can comfortably carry without suffering Fatigue and penalties to his movement. If a character carries more than this weight he is Encumbered.

Lifting Weight

A character's Lifting Weight represents the maximum amount of weight he can pick up off the ground. A character may attempt to move while holding a heavy load, but if that load exceeds his Carrying Weight, he is Encumbered. Lifting a heavy load is considered a Full Action. A character can attempt to lift more than his limit by making a Challenging (+0) Strength test. For every degree of success he scores, the character adds +1 to the sum of his Strength bonus and Toughness bonus for the purpose of determining limits. If the character scores two or more degrees of failure, he immediately suffers one level of Fatigue.

Pushing Weight

Pushing Weight is the maximum amount of weight a character can push across a smooth surface, like a ship's corridor or the polished stone floor of a dark temple. Difficult terrain can make pushing objects difficult or even impossible. Pushing an object is a Full Action, and pushing weight up to his limit requires no test. Pushing weight that exceeds this limit requires a successful Challenging (+0) Strength test. For every degree of success he scores, the character adds +1 to the sum of the character's Strength bonus and Toughness bonus for the purpose of determining limits. If the character scores two or more degrees of failure, he immediately suffers one level of Fatigue.

Encumbered Characters

A character who attempts to carry more than his normal Carrying Weight, but less than his Lifting Weight, is considered Encumbered. While Encumbered, the character suffers a –10 penalty to Agility tests. Additionally, after spending a number of hours equal to his Toughness bonus while Encumbered, a character must make a Challenging (+0) Toughness test or suffer one level of Fatigue.

Throwing Objects

There are many weapons, such as grenades and knives, that are designed to be thrown, but a character can attempt to throw nearly any object that weighs up to half of his normal Lifting Weight as indicated by **Table 7–26: Carrying, Lifting, and Pushing**. To throw an object that is not a regular weapon (i.e., not a grenade or knife), a character makes a Challenging (+0) Strength test. If he succeeds, the object flies a number of metres equal to his Strength bonus. For each additional degree of success, this distance is multiplied by the degrees of success (one additional degree of success beyond the first doubles the distance, two additional degrees of success beyond the first triples it, and so forth). If he fails, the object falls short, flying a number of metres equal to half of his Strength bonus (rounded down). If this distance is 0 metres, it falls at his feet. If the thrown object hits a hard surface such as a wall or vehicle, the surface takes 1d10+SB Impact damage plus 1 additional damage for each degree of success past the first. If the object is thrown at a specific target, it is treated as an improvised weapon, and the character makes a Ballistic Skill test instead of a Strength test. A character can attempt to throw an object that weighs more than half his Lifting Weight, but he must make a Difficult (–10) Strength test to hurl it successfully. See **Chapter V: The Armoury** for more on using grenades and other Thrown weapons, plus full rules for improvised weapons.

Lighting

Acolytes in Dark Heresy can find themselves participating in night-time raids, under black, moonless skies, or infiltrating through dank, foetid sewer systems. As a result, the oppressive darkness becomes an enemy in its own right, concealing countless threats and nameless terrors in its inky depths. An experienced character knows that a reliable, portable light source like a luminen-pack or glow-globe is every bit as important as his weapon. For ease of play, Dark Heresy uses three levels of lighting conditions: Bright, Shadow, and Darkness.

Bright light is any light that allows for normal vision, such as sunlight, a well-lit chamber, or the light of a glow-lantern. Shadow conditions occur during predawn and twilight hours on Terra-like worlds, when a character is just out of range of a light source, or when a light source is obscured by an environmental effect like smoke or fog. Darkness is, of course, the absence of light. Aside from obscuring vision, Shadow and Darkness conditions also have a deleterious effect on a character's movement and combat capabilities. Characters can move through Shadow at full speed with no complications. If a character attempts to move faster than half of his Movement rate in Darkness, he must make a Hard (–20) Perception test to stay on course. If he fails, he becomes disoriented and wanders in a randomly determined direction instead of moving toward his goal. For the effects of lighting on combat, see page 229.

Flying

The following section describes the rules that cover everything in Dark Heresy blessed (or cursed) with the power of flight, from flying creatures and devices, to characters and NPCs with specific, flight-capable technology.

Altitude

On a typical Terra-like planet, there are three broad altitudes: Hovering, Low Altitude, and High Altitude. A character who makes a Full Move action while flying can use it to move up or down one altitude level. Moving up or down more than one altitude level in a single turn requires a Charge or Run action.

Hovering Altitude

A hovering character or creature is skimming just above the ground, typically at an altitude of no greater than two metres, and can move over low obstacles with ease. It can both attack and be attacked by land-bound creatures and characters. Often, a creature that can hover cannot fly at other altitudes, as is the case when a creature possesses the Hoverer trait (see page 136). A creature with this trait always stays at roughly the same altitude, roughly two metres above the ground, even if it descends into low terrain like a crater or valley. Generally, hovering creatures do not willingly descend into places they cannot escape, as common sense dictates.

Low Altitude

A character or creature flying at Low Altitude is beyond normal melee range of land-bound threats, but still well within range of most ranged attacks from or against such characters or creatures. A Low Altitude flier takes no penalties for attacking targets on the ground, but enemies attacking it from ground level suffer a –10 penalty to their Ballistic Skill tests (in addition to any normal penalties for range or other factors).

High Altitude

A character or creature flying at High Altitude is well beyond the reach of any attacks coming from the ground or from Low Altitude. Characters or creatures at High Altitude can only attack or be attacked by others at the same altitude.

Flying Movement

Flying characters and creatures are broken into two general categories defined by traits: Hoverers and Flyers (see **Chapter IV: Talents and Traits** for information on these traits). Hoverers move through the air, but are limited to an altitude of roughly two metres. A Flyer is not limited to ground level, and can ascend or descend to any altitude. If included in a creature's profile, each trait has an associated number that dictates that creature's Flying Movement.

Flying Movement works just like regular Movement, but only when the creature is airborne. While flying, a creature must make at least one Movement action (such as Half Move, Full Move, Charge, and Run) during each of its turns in flight to stay aloft. If a hovering creature suddenly stops flying, due to being Stunned or not devoting a Move action, for example, it simply comes to a safe landing on the ground. If it is at Low Altitude instead, it falls to the ground and suffers falling damage (see page 243) as if it fell 15 metres. A creature that plummets from High Altitude suffers falling damage as if it fell 25 or more metres, based on the GM's discretion.

The Effects of Gravity

While the Imperium's inhabited worlds might vary slightly in gravity, its effects on game play are usually minimal. Only when characters visit high gravity or low gravity worlds, or are caught in zero gravity, are movement, lifting, and other factors affected.

Low Gravity Worlds

On worlds with low gravity, all characters have their Agility bonus increased by 2 for the purposes of Movement and Initiative. Characters also have the sum of their Strength and Toughness bonuses increased by 4 for the purpose of determining Carrying, Lifting, and Pushing Weights. When throwing objects (including weapons) on low gravity worlds, characters have their Strength bonus increased by 2. All Jumping and Leaping distances are doubled when on low gravity worlds.

High Gravity Worlds

On worlds with high gravity, all characters have their Agility bonus decreased by 2 (to a minimum of 1) for the purposes of Movement and Initiative. Characters also have the sum of their Strength and Toughness bonuses decreased by 4 for the purpose of determining Carrying, Lifting, and Pushing Weights. When throwing objects on high gravity worlds, characters have their Strength bonus decreased by 2 (to a minimum of 0). All Jumping and Leaping distances are halved (rounding up) when on high gravity worlds.

Zero Gravity

Characters in Dark Heresy are most likely to encounter zero gravity in space, especially when there has been a significant technological failure. Zero gravity is considered difficult terrain for determining movement, and making a Charge or Run action requires a Hard (–20) Agility test to avoid drifting off in a random direction. Characters who fail the Agility test are also considered Prone. A character starting a Move action in zero gravity must be adjacent to a floor, wall, ceiling, deck, or other secure object so that he has something to push off from.

Vehicle Combat

"Strap in and ready your weapons; we're about to ram!"

-Hermes Dag, moments before impact

Combat is not limited to battles between personal opponents. On habways and battlefields alike across the galaxy, vehicles of all manner of sizes and power are part of Mankind's struggle for survival. This section describes how players use vehicles in combat situations, including firing vehicle weapons, ramming, and resolving vehicle damage.

Vehicles in Dark Heresy are designed to be integrated directly into structured time. Characters using vehicles in combat still occupy a normal slot in the Initiative order, still act during their turn, and still take actions via Half Actions, Full Actions, Reactions, and the like. A character embarked in a vehicle can perform many of his normal actions, and can also perform a number of actions exclusive to characters embarked in a vehicle as described on page 251. The actions that pertain to direct control over the vehicle usually require the character to be the vehicle's operator (the main driver), while other actions such as firing a vehicle weapon can be performed by a passenger.

Driving a Vehicle

To drive a vehicle, a character must have the relevant Operate skill. PCs might be able to drive simple ground vehicles untrained at the Game Master's discretion (with a suitable penalty to any required skill tests) but driving a walker or piloting a skimmer would be beyond their expertise.

When driving a vehicle, a character with training in the correct skill does not have to make skill tests to perform routine driving. The character is assumed to know how to start the vehicle, steer, and obey any relevant local driving customs or regulations.

Skill tests come in when the character is attempting something particularly challenging, or is trying to operate the vehicle during combat or a similar high-stress situation. Running another person's vehicle off of the road during a high-speed chase would require a skill test, for example. Deftly weaving a captured Eldar jetbike between the falling spires of a crumbling hive as it undergoes an orbital bombardment would require several.

These skill tests can be standard or Opposed tests, depending on the situation. For instance, the aggressive driving example above would require an Opposed test against the other drivers involved, whereas the latter example would require several standard skill tests. Just like other forms of skill tests, Operate tests for vehicle use can be modified due to circumstances.

Table 7–27: Difficult Terrain and Other Hazards on page 251 sums up some of the different types of conditions a vehicle can travel through, and the penalties such conditions imposes on any Operate tests. These penalties are cumulative with any other penalties or bonuses the vehicle or driver can be subject to, such as the vehicle type or any applicable vehicle traits.

Vehicle Combat Actions

An operator can drive or otherwise direct his vehicle in a wide manner of manoeuvres or attacks, the better to pursue (or escape from) heretics and other enemies. As a general rule, a vehicle must move directly forward or backward at least its own length before turning 90° in any direction. It can turn more than once, provided it moves a sufficient distance each time.

The following actions are available to vehicle crew or riders:

Evasive Manoeuvring

Type: Full Action
Subtypes: Concentration, Movement
The vehicle weaves and dodges, presenting a hard target. As part of this action, the operator must make a Challenging (+0) Operate test. The vehicle moves its Tactical Speed, following normal movement restrictions. If the operator succeeded on his test, the vehicle imposes a –10 penalty on all attacks made against it for every degree of success the operator scored on the test until the beginning of the operator's next turn (ranged attacks made from the vehicle during that time suffer the same penalty). If the operator fails the test by five or more degrees of failure, the vehicle goes **Out of Control** (see page 255).

Floor It!

Type: Full Action
Subtypes: Concentration, Movement
The operator slams down the pedal (or equivalent), and the vehicle surges forward at top speed. As a part of this action, the operator makes a Difficult (–10) Operate test. If he succeeds, the vehicle moves double its Tactical Speed, plus five additional metres for every degree of success the operator scored on his test. The vehicle imposes a –20 penalty on all attacks made against it until the beginning of the operator's next turn (ranged attacks made from the vehicle during that time suffer the same penalty). If the operator failed his test by five or more degrees of failure, the vehicle goes **Out of Control** (see page 255). This action cannot be used with a Walker unless it has the Living trait.

Table 7–27: Difficult Terrain and Other Hazards

Modifier	Types of Terrain
+0	Clear, open ground, paved roadway.
–5	Rough graven road, cleared dry field.
–10	Deep mud or standing water less than 20 cm deep, drifting sand, dense undergrowth and brush.
–15	Flowing water approximately 1 metre deep, rocky and unstable terrain, thick forests or ruined cityscapes. Failing an Operate test in such terrain by four or more degrees results in the vehicle becoming bogged down and stuck, and it must be pried free before continuing.

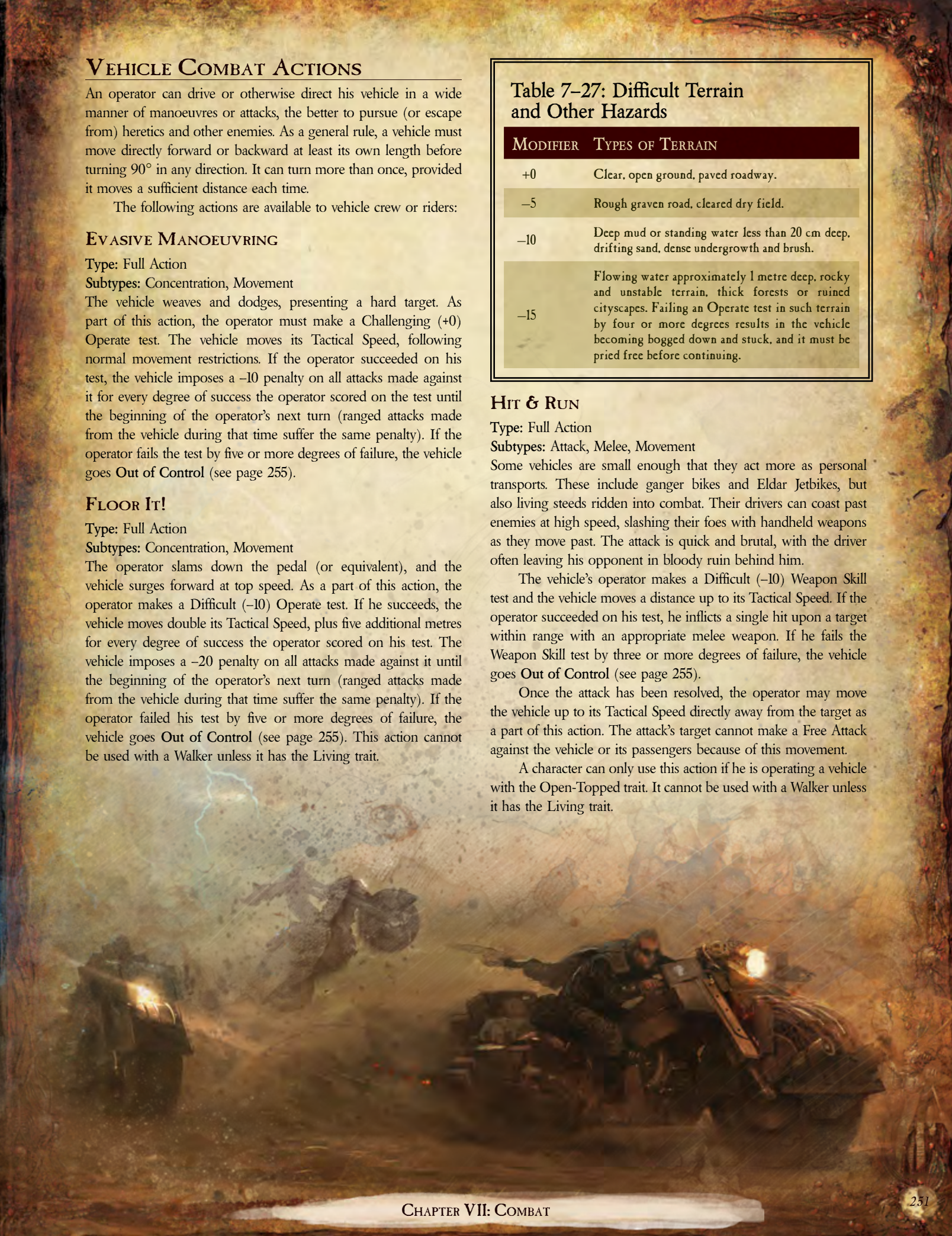
Hit & Run

Type: Full Action
Subtypes: Attack, Melee, Movement
Some vehicles are small enough that they act more as personal transports. These include ganger bikes and Eldar Jetbikes, but also living steeds ridden into combat. Their drivers can coast past enemies at high speed, slashing their foes with handheld weapons as they move past. The attack is quick and brutal, with the driver often leaving his opponent in bloody ruin behind him.

The vehicle's operator makes a Difficult (–10) Weapon Skill test and the vehicle moves a distance up to its Tactical Speed. If the operator succeeded on his test, he inflicts a single hit upon a target within range with an appropriate melee weapon. If he fails the Weapon Skill test by three or more degrees of failure, the vehicle goes **Out of Control** (see page 255).

Once the attack has been resolved, the operator may move the vehicle up to its Tactical Speed directly away from the target as a part of this action. The attack's target cannot make a Free Attack against the vehicle or its passengers because of this movement.

A character can only use this action if he is operating a vehicle with the Open-Topped trait. It cannot be used with a Walker unless it has the Living trait.



Jink

Type: Reaction
Subtype: Movement
The driver sees a threat and twists the wheel or hits the thrusters suddenly, hopefully throwing his vehicle out of the line of fire. Unless piloting a Walker, he can only use this Reaction if his vehicle moved at least its Tactical Speed during the previous round. In response to an attack he is aware of, the operator can make a Challenging (+0) Operate test with a penalty equal to the vehicle's Size trait. If he succeeds, he negates one hit from a single attack, plus one additional hit per degree of success he scores beyond the first. If the driver fails the test by five or more degrees of failure, the vehicle goes **Out of Control** (see page 255).

Ram!

Type: Full Action
Subtypes: Attack, Melee, Movement
One of the deadliest ways to utilise a vehicle is as a blunt instrument. Many enemies of humanity have died beneath the grinding treads of the Imperium's tanks.

As part of this action, the operator makes a Challenging (+0) Operate test. The vehicle moves a number of metres up to twice its Tactical Speed. It must move at least a number of metres equal to its Tactical Speed in a straight line. If the operator succeeds, the vehicle collides with an object within 3 metres at the end of the move. It inflicts a single hit upon the target that causes 1d10 Impact damage, plus additional damage equal to the vehicle's Armour points (AP) on the facing that struck the target. For every 10 metres the vehicle moved beyond its Tactical Speed as a part of this action, it inflicts an additional 1d10 damage. For every point of damage the ramming vehicle inflicts, it moves its target 1 metre. This attack cannot be Parried. If the target suffers the hit but prevents the damage (such as via a force field), it is still moved a number of metres equal to the damage it would have suffered.

If the vehicle collides with another vehicle (or something else of suitable size and density), it also suffers damage equal to the AP of the facing of the vehicle or object it struck plus 1d5.

Movement and Living Steeds

Characters operating vehicles with the Living trait can perform many of the same actions as with normal vehicles, but the following tests and effects replace the usual ones:

Evasive Manoeuvring: The rider has his steed make a Full Move in an erratic pattern. This requires a Hard (–20) Survival test with a bonus equal to the steed's Agility characteristic.

Floor It!: Here the steed moves its Run distance, and the rider makes a Difficult (–10) Survival test.

Hit & Run: The steed instead moves up to its Charge distance, then after the attack can make a second movement up to its Charge distance.

Jink: Riders on living steeds make an Arduous (–40) Survival test with a bonus equal to the steed's Agility characteristic to perform this action.

Ram!: Vehicles with the Living trait cannot perform a Ram! action unless they have special rules allowing for it.

Tactical Manoeuvring: Living steeds instead move their Half or Full Move, depending on whether the rider took a Half Action or Full Action.

Rearing Strike

Type: Half Action
Subtypes: Attack, Concentration, Movement
This action can only be performed when operating a vehicle with the Living trait. The steed is incited to attack, smashing its foes with iron-shod hooves, mauling them with savage claws, dismembering them with its vicious teeth, or even disgorging a gout of toxic liquid upon them, depending on the creature. The rider has his mount make one melee or ranged attack, for which the rider makes a Hard (–20) Survival test with a bonus equal to his steed's Weapon Skill characteristic for a melee attack or Ballistic Skill characteristic for a ranged attack. If he succeeds, the steed inflicts a single hit upon the target with the appropriate weapon.

Table 7–28: Vehicle Combat Actions

Action	Type	Subtype(s)	Description
Evasive Manoeuvring	Full	Concentration, Movement	Move Tactical Speed, enemies suffer –10 penalty to hit vehicle per DoS for next round.
Floor It!	Full	Concentration, Movement	Move double Tactical Speed plus an additional 5m per DoS, enemies get –20 to shoot at vehicle for next round.
Hit & Run	Full	Attack, Melee, Movement	Move Tactical Speed and attack with –10 bonus to WS. Then, move Tactical Speed again.
Jink	Reaction	Movement	Avoid incoming attack with penalty equal to vehicle's Size modifier.
Ram!	Full	Attack, Melee, Movement	Must move at least Tactical Speed, deal damage equal to AP + 1d10.
Rearing Strike	Half	Attack, Concentration, Movement	Rider makes Hard (–20) Survival test with bonus equal to steed's WS/BS to allow steed to inflict hit with its weapon.
Tactical Manoeuvring	Varies	Movement	Move Tactical Speed (Half) *or* twice Tactical Speed (Full), and turn 90°.

Tactical Manoeuvring

Type: Half Action *or* Full Action (see below)
Subtype: Movement
The operator drives the vehicle carefully to its destination using its standard Movement action. The vehicle moves either its Tactical Speed (as a Half Action) or twice its Tactical Speed (as a Full Action), following the standard movement restrictions.

Vehicles in Combat

Characters operating vehicles can take actions as normal during structured time. Some of these actions vary from those available to characters not operating vehicles, but still fall into the same basic categories: Half Actions, Full Actions, Reactions, Free Actions, and Extended actions, and have the same action sub-types (Movement, Concentration, etc.).

Some vehicles have multiple crewmembers. In such cases, the vehicle's commander's Initiative roll determines the Initiative of the remaining crew (if there is no one in charge of the crew, use the operator's Initiative). The order of Initiative should be rearranged so the crewmember that rolled the highest Initiative takes his turn immediately after the commander (or driver), then the crewmember with the next highest Initiative, and so forth. Each crewmember can take a different action, but each still has only the normal number of actions during his turn (see page 215). For example, a driver can move the vehicle, while passengers can use mounted or personal firearms to spray their targets with shots or take other actions they could reasonably execute within a vehicle.

Vehicle Attacks

Any attack actions a vehicle's gunner or passenger can take are the same as those listed on **Table 7–1: Combat Actions** (see page 219), with the following notes:

- Any shooting from a vehicle suffers a –10 to hit if the vehicle moved its Tactical Speed during the previous round.
- Any shooting from a vehicle suffers a –20 to hit if the vehicle moved twice its Tactical Speed in the previous round.
- Gunners or passengers can take Full Actions even if the vehicle has moved.
- Passengers can only fire from a vehicle if they are in a position to do so (such as if the vehicle is Open-Topped, or has hatches or vision slits that could be used as firing positions). The type of vehicle they are shooting from determines what facing passengers have when firing their own weapons.
- Critical effects that hamper the crew's ability to make attacks hamper passengers in exactly the same manner.
- A character with the appropriate Operate skill for a vehicle does not need specific weapon proficiencies to fire any weapons mounted on that type of vehicle without penalty. It is assumed that his expertise covers weapon use as well.
- All weapons mounted on a vehicle, including Pintle Mounted weapons, are automatically assumed to be braced. Personal weapons fired by passengers that require bracing must be braced normally before being used.

Attacking Vehicles

Attacking a vehicle follows a very similar process to standard attacks, and follows many of the procedures and rules that govern attacks from page 226. There are a few key differences, such as facing and different Hit Locations, and these are described below. As with standard attacks, no one can attack a vehicle until the GM has verified that the attack is even possible by checking the requirements of the attack. Melee attacks against vehicles require the attacker to be engaged in melee combat with his target. The usual penalties for ranged attacks made while engaged with an enemy apply to vehicles (see **Weapon Classes** on page 144). The **Spray & Pray** sidebar on page 224 can apply to attacks made against vehicles as well.

Assuming the attack is possible, follow these steps:

- Step One: Apply Modifiers to Attack
- Step Two: Attacker Determines Facing
- Step Three: Attacker Makes a Test
- Step Four: Attacker Determine Hit Location
- Step Five: Attacker Determines Damage
- Step Six: Target Applies Damage

Step One: Apply Modifiers to Attack

Melee and ranged attacks made against vehicles follow the same methods for determining modifiers as regular attacks as per page 226, except as noted. For example, most vehicles have a Size modifier that provides attackers a bonus to hit.

Step Two: Attacker Determines Facing

Unlike most standard characters, creatures, and NPCs, the direction a vehicle is attacked from matters quite a bit. Vehicles are protected by heavy armour plating, but this plating tends to be thicker or thinner depending on where on the vehicle it is. Generally speaking, thicker armour is placed upon a vehicle's front and, if it has one, its turret. Weaker armour is often placed on a vehicle's rear quarters. These different areas of a vehicle are referred to as facings.

When making any type of attack against a vehicle, the attacker needs to know what facing his attack hits. A vehicle is divided roughly into four quarters, each of a 90° angle. The angle to the front of the vehicle is the Front facing. The two angles to the left and right of the vehicle are the Left Side and Right Side facings. The angle to the rear of the vehicle is the Rear facing (see **Diagram 7–1: Vehicle Arcs** on page 254).

The facing the attack hits determines how much armour the attack must overcome to cause damage to the vehicle's integrity. If needed for attacks coming from above or below the vehicle, use the Rear facing to resolve armour and damage.

Step Three: Attacker Makes a Test

After the modified characteristic and the facing have been determined, the attacker makes a Weapon Skill test if he is performing a melee attack, or a Ballistic Skill test if performing a ranged attack. If the result of the roll is equal to or less than the modified characteristic, the attack hits.

Diagram 7–1: Vehicle Arcs



Evasion Reactions

As noted in the previous section, vehicles have access to the Jink action that can be used as a Reaction. Vehicles cannot Dodge, and only Walkers can Parry (and then only if they have arms with which to Parry). See the **Jink** action on page 252 for more details on how this Reaction operates.

Step Four: Attacker Determines Hit Location

The attacker already knows which facing his attack struck by determining where his attack came from in relation to the vehicle's current orientation. In most cases, attacks come directly from the attacker, but explosives and weapons with indirect fire can strike other facings of a vehicle. On a successful hit, a character must also determine where exactly his hit struck. Using the percentile dice result from the attacker's Weapon Skill or Ballistic Skill test, reverse the order of the digits (e.g., a result of 32 becomes 23, a result of 20 becomes 02, and so on) and compare this number to **Table 7–29: Vehicle Hit Locations**.

As mentioned previously, whenever the location hit is the Turret, the attack is treated as if it hit the vehicle's Front facing, even if the shot originated in the Rear facing.

When a character strikes a vehicle with an attack that inflicts multiple hits (such as a Swift Attack action or Full-Auto Attack action), he spreads each hit after the first much as he would against any other target. Extra hits beyond the first can either be allocated to the original target or any other targets within range, provided none of the new targets would have been harder to hit than the original target. If extra hits are allocated to the same target, roll on **Table 7–29: Vehicle Hit Locations** to determine the locations these additional attacks strike.

Table 7–29: Vehicle Hit Locations

d100 Roll	Location	Description
01–20	Motive Systems	These could be tracks, wheels, leg actuators, actual legs, grav-plates, engines, power relays and so on. These systems are often quite fragile, regardless of the type of vehicle, and as such most vehicles find themselves immobilised rather than suffering outright destruction.
21–60	Hull	The attack has hit the vehicle's main hull or body. Powerful hits here could kill crewmembers or detonate fuel and ammunition stores.
61–80	Weapon	The attack has hit one of the weapons mounted on the vehicle's hull. It could be a sponson, or a fixed weapon protruding from the vehicle's front. If there are multiple weapons in this location, the GM should randomise which one is hit. If a vehicle has no weapon on that particular facing, treat it as a hit to the hull. These attacks often destroy the weapon system, but some attacks can translate back to the main hull of the vehicle, causing secondary damage.
81–100	Turret	The attack has hit the vehicle's turret. If a vehicle has more than one turret, then the turret closest to the attacker is the turret affected by the attack. If there are multiple weapons in this location, the GM should randomise which one is hit. If a vehicle has no turret, treat it as a hit to the hull. Turret destruction is just as dangerous as hits that penetrate the hull, as volatile ammunition and important crewmen often reside within the turret.

Step Five: Attacker Determines Damage

This process functions in exactly the same way as with regular attacks with the exception of how Righteous Fury works against vehicles. See page 227 for the full rules for determining damage.

Righteous Fury and Vehicles

Attacks against vehicles also benefit from the Righteous Fury rules. Righteous Fury against vehicles is generated in the same manner as against other targets (see page 227). Instead of rolling on one of the Critical Effect tables for personal injuries, the attacker rolls 1d5 on the appropriate Vehicle Critical Effect table, based on the vehicle Hit Location he struck. The vehicle suffers the listed effect. However, the vehicle does not count as having sustained Critical damage this way, and the Vehicle Critical Effect it suffers is not cumulative with actual Critical damage.

Step Six: Target Applies Damage

Vehicles have two primary defensive characteristics: Armour points (also referred to as Armour or AP) and integrity.

Armour represents both the innate hardness of the materials used to construct a vehicle, as well as the physical protection built into a vehicle to defend against attacks. The thick ceramite hull of a Leman Russ Demolisher, for example, has extremely good armour, while the ramshackle hull of an Ork Trukk has extremely poor armour. Vehicles often have different Armour points for each facing. The front of a Leman Russ battle tank is nigh invulnerable, for example, but a shot to the weaker rear facing may have a devastating effect. Armour points function in the same manner as Armour points for a person or creature (see page 227). When a hit causes damage to a vehicle, roll damage then subtract the vehicle's AP from the damage (taking into account the weapon's penetration value).

Integrity is a representation of how much damage a vehicle can sustain before exploding into ruin. It can be affected by any number of things, from the sturdiness of the materials used to construct the vehicle to the amount of sub-system redundancy built into critical components.

Integrity functions in the same way for vehicles as wounds do for characters. After a hit's damage has been reduced by a vehicle's AP, the remaining damage is applied to the vehicle's integrity, reducing it by that amount.

Vehicle Critical Damage

When a vehicle has sustained an amount of damage equal to its integrity, all additional damage is treated as Critical damage in the same manner as Critical damage is applied to people and creatures. Consult the appropriate Vehicle Critical Effect table (dependant on where the vehicle was hit by the attack that caused the Critical damage) and apply the result. Like the standard Critical Effect tables for individuals, results on the Vehicle Critical Effect tables are cumulative. For example, if a vehicle suffers 2 damage to its Hull after already sustaining damage equal to its integrity, it suffers the "2" result on the Hull Critical Effects table. If it then suffers 4 more damage from a hit that struck its Motive Systems, it suffers the "6" result on the Motive System Critical Hit Effects table.

Out of Control, Crashing, and Falling Over

There are many instances where the movements of a vehicle will be beyond a driver's ability to control. Some vehicles go Out of Control in different ways than Wheeled and Tracked vehicles; Skimmers Crash (see page 256), for instance, and Walkers Fall Over (see page 257)

Out of Control (Wheeled & Tracked Vehicles)

Whenever a vehicle goes Out of Control, either due to circumstance or due to Critical damage, the vehicle must move during its next round (the operator has no choice in this). To determine the direction, roll 1d10 on **Table 7–30: Out of Control Direction**.

Once the direction has been determined, the vehicle moves its Tactical Speed plus 1d10 metres in that direction. Anything it strikes suffers a single hit as if the vehicle had performed a Ram! action on it (see page 252). The vehicle suffers the consequences of that action as normal. The crew and passengers must make a Challenging (+0) Toughness test or be Stunned for 1 round if the vehicle collides with something this way.

Table 7–30: Out of Control Direction

d10 Roll	Direction
1–4	45° to the vehicle's left.
5–6	Straight ahead.
7–10	45° to the vehicle's right.

Table 7–31: Weapon Critical Hit Effects

Critical Damage	Critical Effect
1	A strong concussive hit leaves the gun intact, but knocks the gunner away from his station. The gunner is Stunned for 1 round.
2	A glancing blow knocks the gun about, dislodging an ammo linkage, buckling a breach door, or shorting out a power system. It is a minor issue, but will take time to fix. The weapon immediately jams. The jam can be cleared via the normal method.
3	The hit frazzles the gun's targeting system, blocks a vision slit or causes internal armour to flake away and strike the gunner in the eyes. All attacks made with the weapon suffer a –10 penalty for 1d5 rounds.
4	With the sound of grinding metal, the gun locks in place. The gun suffers the Weapon/Turret Locked damage condition (see page 262). The weapon is now only capable of firing in a direct straight line in whatever direction it happened to fire last (or directly forward if it had not fired yet). If the weapon was a Fixed weapon, treat this as the result 5 on this table.
5	The gun's ammo-hopper or power control system is destroyed, leaving the weapon incapable of loading ammunition. The weapon suffers the Weapon Disabled damage condition (see page 263) until it has been repaired.
6	The weapon's targeting systems are annihilated by the blast. The weapon gains the Targeting Systems Destroyed damage condition (see page 262).
7	The gun's ammo-hopper or power control systems are severely damaged, or perhaps the weapon's barrel is cracked from a heavy impact. The weapon can still fire, but with a risk of causing an ammunition explosion. Every time the weapon is discharged, roll 1d10. On a result of 3 or higher, roll damage against the vehicle and any gunners manning the weapon as if the destroyed weapon had hit them, halving all damage rolled. If this happens, the weapon gains the Weapon Destroyed damage condition (see page 263), and all the remaining ammunition in that clip is destroyed.
8	The weapon explodes and is torn from its housing. Damage from the explosion rips further into the vehicle's hull, possibly injuring the weapon's gunner. For each gunner operating that weapon, roll 1d10; on a result of 1 or 2, that character is struck by a single hit with the same damage type as the hit that caused this effect and damage equal to one quarter (rounding up) of the damage the hit inflicted on the vehicle.
9	As above, except the explosion rips through the entire crew compartment. Each character inside suffers 1 level of Fatigue, suffers 1d10+6 Explosive damage to his Body location, and must make a Challenging (+0) Agility test or catch on fire. If this occurs, refer to the On Fire! sidebar on page 263. Anyone who catches fire can attempt to put themselves out as described in the rules for fire on page 243.
10+	The force of the attack destroys the weapon and continues through into the vehicle's hull, detonating the ammunition store or power supply for the weapon. The vehicle explodes immediately. It cannot be repaired and no equipment from within the vehicle can be salvaged. Each character inside suffers 2d10+18 Explosive damage to a randomly determined Hit Location. Each character within 2d10 metres of the vehicle suffers a single hit for 1d10+6 Explosive damage to a randomly determined Hit Location. If the Vehicle has the Open-Topped or Bike vehicle trait, each character inside may make a Challenging (+0) Dodge test to bail out at the last second, avoiding the damage for being inside. Each character who succeeds at the Evasion Test suffers 1d10+6 damage from the vehicle's explosion.

Crashing (Skimmers)

One of the chief drawbacks to skimmers is how fragile their propulsion systems tend to be. An immobilised tank usually grinds to a halt, but a Skimmer can find itself crashing directly into the ground and exploding in a fireball that kills everyone on board.

If an effect would ever cause a Skimmer to go Out of Control, it Crashes instead. A crashing Skimmer moving within 10 metres of the ground suffers the following effects:

- If the distance the Skimmer moved (or was attempting to move) during that turn was as equal to its Tactical Speed or less, it moves half the distance it was attempting to travel in its current direction. It then comes to a complete stop. Roll 1d5 on the **Table 7–34: Hull Critical Effects** above; the vehicle suffers that result. Anything it strikes suffers a single hit as if it had performed a Ram! action on it (see page 252), and the vehicle suffers the consequences of that action.
- If the distance the Skimmer moved (or was attempting to move) is greater than its Tactical Speed, it travels a number of metres equal to its Tactical Speed in a direction determined by the GM, then swerves 1d10 metres in a random direction (see the **Scatter Diagram** on page 230) before crashing to a complete stop. Roll 1d10 on **Table 7–32 Hull Critical Hit Effects** above—it suffers that result. Anything it strikes suffers a single hit as if it had performed a standard Ram! action on it (see page 252).
- If a Skimmer crashes while moving at its Tactical Speed or faster, it may also roll on impact. In this case, roll 1d10; on a 6 or higher, it rolls onto its roof (or, if it was moving at high speeds might even cartwheel end over end). When rolling for the Critical Effect, add +4 to the roll. If it survives, it loses half its integrity, and must be repaired before it can be used again. At the GM's discretion, it might be completely wrecked and unusable instead.

If a Skimmer moving more than 10 metres above the ground crashes, the results are far worse. The pilot has time to make a single Very Hard (–30) Operate test. If he succeeds, the vehicle crash-lands. The vehicle is destroyed, and anyone inside suffers 2d10 Impact damage ignoring Armour, and is Stunned for a number of rounds equal to the damage he suffered (after reduction for Toughness bonus). If he fails the test, the vehicle ploughs into the ground and explodes, as per the 10+ result on **Table 7–34: Hull Critical Effects** on page 259. Individuals can bail out at the last second according to the rules, although they count as falling from whatever altitude the vehicle was at the turn before it Crashed.

Table 7–32: Motive Systems Critical Hit Effects

Critical Damage	Critical Effect
1	A savage blow to the vehicle's drive mechanism or legs forces the operator to fight to maintain control. He suffers 1 level of Fatigue and must make a Challenging (+0) Operate test; if he fails, use the Scatter Diagram (see page 230) to determine the vehicle's new facing.
2	The vehicle is knocked violently from its current position, but otherwise does not take any major damage. It cannot move further than its Full Move distance until the end of the next round under its own power. Note it can still go Out of Control or otherwise be forced by alternate effects to move further than this would allow.
3	One of the vehicle's tracks, legs, or axles has taken a major hit, and now one side of the vehicle's drive mechanism is responding more slowly than the other. The vehicle gains the Motive Systems Impaired damage condition (see page 261).
4	The vehicle's fuel or drive power systems have taken a glancing hit. The vehicle is in no danger of exploding, but coaxing speed out of the engine is far more difficult now. If the operator attempts to take an action that would move the vehicle further than its Full Move distance, he must make a Difficulty (–10) Operate test. If he fails by three or more degrees of failure, the vehicle's engine stalls, and it suddenly stops; if it is a Skimmer, the vehicle Crashes immediately (see page 256).
5	The driver finds that the vehicle's control systems are completely unresponsive...but the vehicle is still moving! Tracked and Wheeled vehicles go Out of Control (page 255), Skimmers Crash (page 256), and Walkers move forward half their Tactical Speed or Full Movement before Falling Over (page 257). If the vehicle was stationary during the previous round, this result has no effect (though a Skimmer in midair still Crashes).
6	The hit tears off a tread, damages a knee joint, or tears into the grav-generator, doing severe damage. The vehicle gains the Motive Systems Crippled damage condition (see page 261). If this brings the Tactical Speed to 0, the vehicle is treated as having suffered the Motive Systems Destroyed damage condition instead. It grinds to a halt; if midair, a Skimmer Crashes as per page 256.
7	The small internal explosion causes loose bolts to ricochet around the driver's controls, or perhaps a control panel explodes in the driver's face. He suffers 1 level of Fatigue, suffers 1d10 Impact damage to the head location, and must make a Difficult (–10) Operate test before he can move the vehicle next turn. If the vehicle was already moving when this result occurred and the vehicle's operator is unable to regain control, then the vehicle goes Out of Control if it is a Tracked or Wheeled Vehicle, Crashes if it is a Skimmer, or moves forward half its Tactical Speed or Full Move distance before Falling over if it is a Walker.
8	The vehicle's motive systems are ripped apart in an explosion that immediately stops the vehicle from moving. The vehicle suffers the Motive Systems Destroyed damage condition (see page 261). Skimmers that suffer this result Crash (see page 256).
9	The vehicle's power systems or fuel tanks are penetrated. The vehicle grinds to a halt and immediately catches alight. The vehicle gains the Motive Systems Destroyed damage condition (see page 261) and is now aflame (see On Fire! the sidebar on page 263). Skimmers that suffer this result Crash into the ground as per page 256.
10+	The hit smashes the vehicle's drive shaft or sends a surge through its power systems. The vehicle immediately lurches forward before flipping over completely! Tracked Vehicles, Wheeled Vehicles, and Skimmers immediately move forward half their Tactical Speed and then flip over in a Crash (see page 256). Walkers move forward half their Tactical Speed before Falling Over. Anything mounted on the top of the vehicle (turrets, equipment, and especially pintle mounted weapons) is destroyed. Exposed crew and passengers are thrown or crushed. Other weapons mounted on a vehicle's hull can still be used, assuming there are any crew left to use them. The vehicle is completely Immobilised (and also upside down), and cannot move under its own power until recovered and repaired. It suffers the Motive Systems Destroyed damage condition (see page 261); this cannot be repaired until the vehicle has first been turned ride-side up again.

Falling Over (Walkers)

If an effect would ever cause a Walker to go Out of Conrol, it Falls Over instead. Whenever a Walker falls over, the driver or rider rolls on the **Scatter Diagram** (see page 230) to determine which direction it falls; this also determines what facing it lands on. The Walker takes 1d10 damage to that facing and a randomly determined vehicle Hit Location. If the Walker falls a dangerous distance, it suffers 1d10 Impact damage plus 1 damage per metre it fell to a randomly determined Hit Location. This damage ignores Armour in both cases. The operator must take a Challenging (+0) Toughness test or be Stunned for one round. Assuming the walker is capable of moving, it can stand up as a Full Action.

Damage & Repair

Just as injuries take time to heal, vehicles take time to repair. A thrown track link or broken ammo feed might take no more than a few hours to replace, whereas a crippled turret or burnt-out interior might see the vehicle languishing in a repair bay for weeks. As players care for their own characters, so too will they need to keep track of how damaged their vehicles are in order to keep them in peak working condition.

Repairing Vehicles

Unlike living beings, vehicles do not heal naturally over time and must be repaired manually. Some repairs are easier than others, some repairs require more time, and sometimes conditions might make repairs next to impossible. The rules below cover the types of vehicle damage a vehicle, what skills are required for repairs, repair difficulty, and their duration.

Table 7–33: Turret Critical Hit Effects

Critical Damage	Critical Effect
1	A strong concussive hit leaves the gun intact, but rattles those manning the location. Each character within the vehicle's turret is Stunned for 1 round.
2	A heavy blow knocks the turret aside, but it is not immediately apparent how much damage the gun has taken. The weapon is now jammed (see page 224).
3	The hit frazzles the gun's targeting system, blocks a vision slit or causes internal armour to flake away and strike the gunner in the eyes. All ranged attacks made with the weapon suffer a –10 penalty for 1d5 rounds.
4	With the sound of grinding metal, the turret locks in place. The gun gains Weapon/Turret Locked damage condition (see page 262). The weapon is now only capable of firing in a direct straight line in whatever direction it happened to fire at last (or directly forward if it had not fired yet). Pintle Weapons maintain their Fire Arcs even if a turret has jammed in place.
5	The turret loses power, and everything stops working. The turret and the weapons contained within are undamaged, but nothing has any power and thus no weapons other than pintle weapons can be fired; the turret itself cannot rotate until the power systems are repaired. If the turret had any other equipment linked to it (such as additional searchlights, communications equipment and so on), these cease to operate. For the purposes of repairing damage, treat this as a Weapon Destroyed damage condition, but the weapons within the turret do not need to be replaced before a character can make the Repair test (see page 258).
6	The turret's targeting systems are annihilated by the blast. Each non-pintle weapon mounted on the turret suffers the Targeting Systems Destroyed damage condition (see page 262).
7	The hit tears through the turret's armour, leaving only useless shards of metal. All further hits to the vehicle's turret now roll against the vehicle's Rear facing Armour rather than the Front facing Armour, regardless of which direction the shot strikes the turret from. Treat the vehicle has having lost 2d10 AP for the purposes of repairing the Armour (see Reduced Armour, page 262). If hit came from a ranged attack, roll 1d10 for each crewmember. For each result of 1 or 2, the affected character is struck by a single hit with the same damage type as the hit that caused this effect, for an amount of damage equal to one quarter of the original damage (rounded up). The vehicle abruptly gains the Open Topped vehicle trait, which could be a problem if the vehicle is in a poisonous atmosphere, underwater, or in a vacuum.
8	Several areas of the turret are blasted away and the entire turret catches fire. Any weapons mounted in or on the turret suffers the Weapon Destroyed damage condition. Any equipment on or in the turret is destroyed, and the turret itself gains the Weapon/Turret Locked damage condition. Additionally, the turret is set alight (see the On Fire! sidebar on page 263).
9	As above, except the fire pours into the main hull of the vehicle, setting everything ablaze. Each character inside the affected portions of the vehicle, as determined by the GM, must make a Challenging (+0) Agility test or catch on fire (see the On Fire! sidebar on page 263). Anyone who catches fire can attempt to put himself out as described in the rules for Fire on page 243.
10+	A colossal explosion tears the turret away from the vehicle, the twisted wreckage flying into the air as the vehicle itself is ripped apart by secondary explosions. The vehicle is destroyed. It cannot be repaired and no equipment from within the vehicle can be salvaged. Each character inside the turret is instantly killed. Each other character embarked in the vehicle takes 2d10+18 Explosive damage. Characters within 2d10 metres of the vehicle suffer 1d10+6 Explosive damage from the blast. If the Vehicle has the Open-Topped or Bike vehicle trait, each character inside may make a Challenging (+0) Dodge test to bail out at the last second. Anyone who succeeds at this test survives, but suffers 1d10+6 E Damage from the vehicle's explosion. The turret itself flies 3d10 metres in a random direction, and inflicts a hit on anything it strikes as if the vehicle had used the Ram! action on that target after having moved its Tactical Speed (see page 252).

The Repair Test

Repairing any of the different vehicle damage types (see **Damage Conditions** on page 260) requires a Repair test. This is a standard skill test (see **Chapter I: Playing the Game** page 23) with the exception that players can use a number of different skills for the test rather than one specific skill (such as Tech-Use). This is conducted in this way to give Acolytes the chance to repair minor damage, yet at the same time requiring significant technical skill, such as Forbidden Lore (Adeptus Mechanicus) and Tech-Use, for more crippling damage.

A character must have training in at least one of the following skills to attempt a Repair test:

- Common Lore (Adeptus Mechanicus)
- Common Lore (Tech)
- Forbidden Lore (Adeptus Mechanicus)

Collectively these three skills are referred to as Essential Repair skills, and they are the bare minimum required for even the simplest Repair test. A character need not possess all three in order to attempt a Repair test, but he must have at least one at Known (rank 1). A number of Repair tests also require additional skills before they can be attempted; any additional skill prerequisites are listed in each individual damage condition.

A successful result reverses the damage condition or repairs the integrity or Critical damage the character attempted to negate.

Some Repair tests have skills as prerequisites, but the character need not make the Repair test using that particular skill. For example, repairing a Critically Damaged vehicle requires the character to possess Tech-Use or Trade (Armourer) as a Known (rank 1) or higher skill, but if the character had Forbidden Lore (Adeptus Mechanicus) +20 and it would provide a better chance of succeeding on the test, then he can make the test using that skill instead. This represents the Acolyte using his accumulated knowledge in making the most efficient choices during the repairs.

Table 7–34: Hull Critical Hit Effects

Critical Damage	Critical Effect
1	The vehicle jolts to one side with the force of a strong hit, forcing all aboard to grab onto something to stay in their seats. Any crewmember who is not strapped in or otherwise secured must make an Ordinary (+10) Toughness test or be Stunned for 1 round.
2	An internal gas line bursts, unleashing an opaque but non-lethal cloud within the crew compartment. Until the leak is sealed, the crew suffers a –20 penalty on all tests to take actions in the vehicle. Anyone inside the vehicle can spend a Full Action on his turn to close the leak without a test.
3	A jarring blow tosses the vehicle around, throwing things about the interior. Any crewmember who is not strapped in or otherwise secured must make an Ordinary (+10) Toughness test or be Stunned for 1d5 rounds. Anyone aboard the vehicle suffers a –10 penalty to ranged attacks until the end of the next round.
4	Some electrical cabling or power coupling is blasted loose by the impact, raining a sudden shower of sparks down on a member of the crew. A randomly selected member of the crew suffers 1 level of Fatigue and a single hit for 1d10+6 Impact damage to the Body location.
5	Several hull plates buckle and fall away, weakening the vehicle. Reduce the Armour points of the facing struck by the attack by 1d10 until the vehicle is repaired.
6	A small explosion rips through the crew compartment, damaging internal systems and wounding the crew. Each character in the affected section of the vehicle (as determined by the GM) suffers 1 level of Fatigue, suffers a single hit for 1d10+6 Explosive damage to the Body location, and must make a Challenging (+0) Agility test or catch fire (see page 198). If this occurs, refer to the On Fire! sidebar on page 263.
7	The hit tears through the vehicle's armour, leaving only useless shards of metal. Reduce the Armour points of the facing struck by the attack by half (rounding up) until the vehicle is repaired. If the hit came from a ranged attack, roll 1d10 for each crewmember. For each result of 1 or 2, the affected crewmember is hit by a single hit with the same damage type as the hit that caused this effect, for an amount of damage equal to one quarter of the original damage (rounded up). In addition, the vehicle suddenly gains the Open Topped Vehicle trait, which could be a problem if the vehicle is in a poisonous atmosphere, underwater, or in a vacuum.
8	As per the effect directly above, but the vehicle also catches fire! Refer to the On Fire! sidebar on page 263.
9	A short, sharp explosion flares outward from the vehicle. Armour panels fall off, weapons are blasted free, and the vehicle's drive mechanisms are ruined, causing it to stop dead. The vehicle is now a shattered hulk and suffers the Vehicle Destroyed damage condition (see page 262). Roll 1d10 for each remaining weapon on the vehicle; on a result of 5 or lower, the weapon in question suffers the Weapon Destroyed damage condition (see page 263). Each character inside of the vehicle suffers 1d10+6 Explosive damage to a randomly determined Hit Location, and must make a Difficult (–10) Toughness test or become Stunned for 1d10 rounds. Skimmers automatically crash as per page 256.
10+	The vehicle's ammo supply, reactor or fuel supply takes a direct hit, and the vehicle erupts from within. Shards of molten metal are sent flying in every direction as the vehicle is reduced to a smoking crater. The vehicle is destroyed and cannot be repaired. No equipment from within the vehicle can be salvaged. Each character inside suffers 2d10+18 Explosive damage to a randomly determined Hit Location. Anyone within 2d10 metres of the vehicle suffers 1d10+6 Explosive damage from the blast. If the Vehicle has the Open-Topped or Bike vehicle trait, passengers or crew may make a Challenging (+0) Dodge test to bail out at the last second. Anyone who succeeds at this test instead suffers the 1d10+6 damage from the vehicle's explosion.

Repair Difficulty

The difficulty of a Repair test depends on its complexity and local conditions: repair facilities, environmental problems like storms or blizzards, and so on. It is also possible to decrease the test difficulty by having more advanced skills than the minimum requirements. Each damage condition has its own associated base Difficulty Rating, but in addition to this modifiers in **Table 7–35: Repair Location & Conditions** can both help and hinder Repair tests.

Repair Time

Another important element to a Repair test is duration for the repairs. Re-linking a thrown track, banging the dents out of armour plating, or fixing a weapon that has been locked in position usually requires less time than replacing a targeting system or installing a new grav-engine. Each damage condition has an associated Repair Time rated in hours, days, weeks, or even months, and characters need to determine whether they have enough time to make the required repairs before attempting the Repair test.

Scoring additional degrees of success on the Repair test reduces the repair time, but additional degrees of failure can add to it. It is possible for multiple degrees of failure to result in failed test. This means it must be reattempted (with the time already spent being wasted) or, in some cases, cause further damage to the component under repair. Each damage condition lists any specific additional rules, but **Table 7–36: Repair Success & Failure Time Modifiers** lists the basic ways additional degrees of success and degrees of failure can decrease or extend the time for any Repair test.

Rush Jobs

The PCs can speed up repairs by performing a Rush Job. This halves the required time (e.g., a repair that would normally take 12 hours will take 6 hours), but the Repair test suffers a –30 penalty.

Careful Repairs

Acolytes can also spend more time to perform Careful Repairs. This increases the required time by half (e.g., a normal 12 hour repair will now take 18 hours), but the test gains a +30 bonus.

Very Long Repair Times

Some extremely complex or time consuming repairs could have the Acolytes spending months (in narrative time) conducting a series of repairs. In these situations the GM and the players can work out how many Repair tests they would need to make over this time, or simplify the various required tests into a series or even a single test. For extended durations the GM needs to determine the modifiers for additional degrees of success and degrees of failure, from **Table 7–36: Repair Success & Failure Time Modifiers** on page 261, by extrapolating its examples to create the longer time scales.

Damage Conditions

Burnt panels and dents in the bodywork are relatively minor issues. More substantial damage can have some very specific effects upon a vehicle, and these are referred to as damage conditions. In all instances, the proper equipment and replacement parts are required for these types of repairs. The characters cannot fix missing armour or a destroyed weapon if they do not possess replacements. The GM has final say on who may attempt the repairs, whether the PCs are in a position to make the repair, and whether the repair is possible in the first place.

This section contains both the rules for various lingering damage conditions and their repairs. Each section contains the skill requirements (i.e., over and above the Essential Repair skills) plus the difficulty of the Repair test and the repair time (both of which can vary depending on what skills the character attempting the Repair test possesses). If there are any additional bonuses or penalties for additional degrees of success or degrees of failure on the Repair test, they are included here as well.

Lightly Damaged

Skill Requirements: Essential Repair skill
Repair Difficulty: Challenging (+0). Ordinary (+10) if the character has Tech-Use, Trade (Armourer), or Trade (Technomat).
Repair Time: Varies/1 hour per point of integrity repaired.

Lightly Damaged vehicles are easier to repair, and can generally be repaired by vehicle crews and operators with a basic working knowledge of technology. If a vehicle has suffered damage up to half its total integrity (rounding up), it is Lightly Damaged. A Lightly Damaged vehicle can fight without any penalties.

Repairing all the integrity on a Lightly Damaged vehicle requires a character to only make a single Repair test and not one test per point of integrity.

Heavily Damaged

Skill Requirements: Essential Repair skill
Repair Difficulty: Arduous (–40). Hard (–20) if the character has Trade (Technomat). Challenging (+0) if the character has Tech-Use or Trade (Armourer).
Repair Time: Varies/4 hour per point of integrity repaired.

Heavily Damaged vehicles take a substantial amount of time and effort to repair, and become greater liabilities the longer they go without repairs. If a vehicle has suffered more damage than half its total integrity (rounding up), but has not yet suffered any Critical damage (other than those caused by Righteous Fury), it is said to be Heavily Damaged. Heavily Damaged vehicles suffer a –10 penalty to all Operate tests in addition to any other penalties or bonuses it may already have.

Table 7–35: Repair Location & Conditions

Repair Test Modifier	Example
+30	Revered and ancient forge world. Well-stocked repair facility.
+20	Field base with ample supplies. Hive world of superior manufacturing prowess.
+10	Area free from any enemy fire. Field encampment with basic repair supplies. Hive world of standard manufacturing prowess.
+0	Required tools and supplies. Calm weather or away from the enemy fire.
–10	Rudimentary or faulty repair equipment/tools. Close to active battlefields or uprisings. Abandoned or run-down forge world. In the open without access to proper facilities. Disruptive, inclement weather.
–20	Ruined forge world. Monsoonal storms, blizzards or sandstorms. Pervasive and endless insect swarms. Under artillery or air bombardment. Primitive locale lacking industrial base.
–30	A blistering desert or endless ice sheet. Dense (and possibly carnivorous) jungle. Poorly-supplied field base or encampment. In the thick of an ongoing battle. Under orbital bombardment. Trapped in a cult-dominated region.

Repairing all the integrity on a Heavily Damaged vehicle requires one Repair test for every 5 points of integrity damage (or fraction thereof). Once a Heavily Damaged vehicle's integrity is repaired to half its starting value, the vehicle is then considered Lightly Damaged.

Critically Damaged

Skill Requirements: Tech-Use *or* Trade (Armourer)
Repair Difficulty: Challenging (+0). Ordinary (+10) if the character has both Tech-Use and Trade (Armourer).
Repair Time: Varies/1 day per point of Critical Damage repaired.

Critically Damaged vehicles take an exceptionally long time to repair, and only rare individuals steeped in the forbidden knowledge of the Omnissiah are truly capable of soothing the machine's wounded spirit and coaxing life into it once again. If a vehicle has suffered any Critical damage (not including Critical damage caused by Righteous Fury), it is Critically Damaged. It is rare for a commander to send a vehicle so heavily damaged into combat, but if a Critically Damaged vehicle is ever forced to fight, its operator suffers a –20 penalty to all Operate tests in addition to any other penalties or bonuses that might be present.

Critical damage must be repaired before any repairs can be made to integrity, and each point of Critical damage on a Critically Damaged vehicle must be repaired individually. Once a Critically Damaged vehicle has had every point of Critical damage repaired, it is said to be Heavily Damaged. Repairing Critical damage does not reverse any lingering damage conditions, such as destroyed weapons or vehicle immobilisation.

Vehicle Construction

Each species builds their vehicles from a different technology base, and there are many types that have extremely simple or highly complex construction techniques. Though both of Imperial origin, civilian autocars and bikes can differ greatly in complexity and sophistication when compared to the mighty war machines of the Imperial Guard. Some types, such as many underhive carriages or Ork war-buggies, are more a ramshackle assemblage of whatever materials might be available at the time and less a properly consecrated design. Others, particular the heretical xenos-tech of the ancient Eldar, are so advanced as to often be incomprehensible to mere humans. In these cases the GM should modify the skill requirements, repair difficulty, and repair times to better reflect the alternative construction techniques that go into these types of vehicles.

Fire Damaged

Skill Requirements: Essential Repair skill
Repair Difficulty: Routine (+20)
Repair Time: Varies/1 hour for every 6 rounds/30 seconds (or part thereof) the vehicle spent alight or had a crewmember or passenger within it who was on fire.

Fires are understandably just as dangerous for vehicles as they are people. Exposed wires and cabling can melt, fuel systems can explode, and even something simple like seat or a control panel can be destroyed by fire, making operating the vehicle difficult if not impossible. Vehicles that have spent any amount of time on fire due to Critical damage, or that have contained crew or passengers that have been set on fire, are said to be Fire Damaged. All tests taken to Operate a Fire Damaged vehicle suffer a –10 penalty. See the **On Fire!** sidebar on page 263 for details on what happens to a vehicle that has been set on fire.

Motive Systems Impaired

Skill Requirements: Essential Repair skill
Repair Difficulty: Challenging (+0). Ordinary (+10) if the character has Tech-Use, Trade (Armourer) or Trade (Technomat).
Repair Time: 4 hours (this time can be extended or decreased due to specific vehicle traits; see page 187).

A vehicle that suffers a Motive Systems Impaired condition reduces its Tactical Speed by 1d10, and the driver must pass a Challenging (+0) Operate test at the start of his turn if he wants to rotate the vehicle more than once during that turn. If the operator fails the Repair test by three or more degrees, then something has gone wrong during the repairs. The vehicle is now treated as having suffered a Motive Systems Crippled Result.

Motive Systems Crippled

Skill Requirements: Trade (Technomat)
Repair Difficulty: Very Hard (–30). Hard (–20) if the character has Tech-Use or Trade (Armourer).
Repair Time: 16 hours (this time can be extended or decreased due to specific vehicle traits, see page 187).

A vehicle that suffers a Motive Systems Crippled result on the Vehicle Critical Effects tables reduces its Tactical Speed by 2d10 and its Cruising Speed by half. If the operator fails the test by three or more degrees, then something has gone wrong during the repairs. The vehicle is now treated as having suffered a Motive Systems Destroyed Result.

Motive Systems Destroyed

Skill Requirements: Tech-Use *or* Trade (Armourer)
Repair Difficulty: Arduous (–40). Hard (–20) if the character has both Tech-Use and Trade (Armourer).
Repair Time: 2 days (this time can be extended or decreased due to specific Vehicle traits, see page 187).

A vehicle that suffers a Motive Systems Destroyed condition cannot move under its own power. If the character fails the Repair test by three or more degrees of failure, then he has done something wrong and must reattempt the repairs from scratch. The time used to repair the vehicle's motive systems, including any additional time due to the degrees of failure, is wasted.

Table 7–36: Repair Success & Failure Time Modifiers

Repair Time Required	Degrees of Success (each additional)	Degrees of Failure (each additional)
Up to 4 hours.	–10 minutes	+10 minutes
Over 4 hours and up to 8 hours.	–20 minutes	+20 minutes
Over 8 hours and up to 16 hours.	–30 minutes	+30 minutes
Over 16 hours and up to 48 hours.	–1 hour	+1 hour
Over 2 days and up to 7 days.	–4 hours	+4 hours
Over 1 week and up to 2 weeks.	–12 hours	+12 hours
Over 2 weeks and up to 4 weeks.	–1 day	+1 day
Over four weeks and up to 2 months.	–4 days	+4 days
Over 2 months and up to 4 months.	–12 days	+12 days

Reduced Armour

Skill Requirements: Essential Repair skill
Repair Difficulty: Hard (–20). Challenging (+0) if the character has Trade (Armourer).
Repair Time: Varies/4 hours for every 5 points (or fraction thereof) of AP repaired.

Whenever a vehicle suffers a reduction in Armour due to Critical damage, this can be repaired by dividing the missing armour up into groups of 5 AP and taking a Repair test for each individual grouping. If the character fails a Repair test by three or more degrees of failure, then the armour has been installed incorrectly and the Repair test for that specific grouping of AP must be reattempted.

Targeting Systems Destroyed

Skill Requirements: Tech-Use *or* Trade (Armourer), and either Common Lore (Adeptus Mechanicus) *or* Forbidden Lore (Adeptus Mechanicus).
Repair Difficulty: Very Hard (–30).
Repair Time: 1 week (2 weeks if the vehicle has the Super Heavy vehicle trait).

Whenever a weapon suffers a Targeting System Destroyed result on the Critical Effects tables, it suffers a –20 penalty to all shots taken with that weapon (or location, such as a turret, if it is the location's targeting systems that are destroyed). Repairing a weapon's targeting system is often a complex and time-consuming process involving the installation of targeting cogitators and the appeasement of hallowed machine spirits, and thus only those well-versed in the laws and rituals of the Machine God possess the required knowledge to undertake such a difficult task. Failing the Repair test to restore a vehicle's targeting system results in the machine spirit rejecting its new home; the Repair test must be reattempted. Additionally, the character that attempted the repair must spend one day in silent meditation and reflection on the Great Works of the Omnissiah for every degree of failure on the Repair test. He can reattempt the Repair test once he has finished contemplating how he might have offended the machine spirit he was attempting to install.

Vehicle Destroyed

Skill Requirements: N/A
Repair Difficulty: N/A
Repair Time: N/A

A number of results on the Vehicle Critical Effects tables indicate that a vehicle has been destroyed without an internal explosion. This condition cannot be repaired, but items from within can still be recovered at the GM's discretion. Vehicle-mounted weapons mounted that have not been destroyed can be removed; this requires a Repair test as if attempting to repair a Weapon Destroyed result (see page 263). If the character attempting this test succeeds, the weapon is removed and can possibly be refitted onto another vehicle. In all instances, the GM has final say on what can be salvaged and what, if any, special equipment the characters require before they can salvage any extraordinarily heavy or cumbersome weapons.

Weapon/Turret Locked

Skill Requirements: Trade (Technomat)
Repair Difficulty: Challenging (+0) for non-Turret-Mounted weapons. Hard (–20) for Turret-Mounted weapons. If the character has Tech-Use or Trade (Armourer) he gains a +10 bonus.
Repair Time: 16 hours for non-Turret-Mounted weapons. 48 hours for Turret-Mounted weapons.

Sometimes a weapon's mounting can be damaged even if the weapon itself remains untouched. Weapons that suffer a Weapon/Turret Locked result can make ranged attacks, but lose their fire arcs and are treated as Fixed Weapons until the this damage condition has been repaired. If the character fails the Repair test with three or more degrees of failure, something goes terribly wrong and he must reattempt the repair from the start.

On Fire!

A vehicle catching fire is very bad for everyone involved. Unlike living creatures, which tend to run around screaming before falling over dead, vehicles have a nasty habit of exploding if they remain alight for too long, as fuel tanks, reactor cores, and ammunition bays detonate. When this happens, there is often little left of the vehicle (or the crew) to salvage.

Vehicles on Fire

Each second a vehicle remains on fire is another moment where something unstable could ignite and explode. If a vehicle ever catches fire, the GM should roll 1d10 for it at the end of each round and consult the following chart:

Table 7–37: Vehicle Fire

d10 Roll	Effect
1-9	Roll again at the end of next round.
10	Something explosive ignites, and the vehicle suffers 8 Critical damage to the Hull (ignoring Armour).

The chance of exploding increases every round. For every round after the first that a vehicle remains on fire, the GM should add +1 to the roll (for example, at the end of the fourth round that a vehicle has been on fire, the GM would add +3 to the Roll).

Inside a Flaming Vehicle

If being near a vehicle that is on fire is bad, then being inside a flaming vehicle is much worse. Vehicle crews and passengers have limited time to extinguish flames before vital (and explosive) equipment is destroyed. At the start of any crewmember or passenger's turn, he can attempt to put out the fire by using internal fire suppressant systems, fire extinguishers or whatever he happens to have on hand. This is done as a Full Action via a Hard (–20) Agility test. If the character succeeds, he puts the fires out, and the crew can breathe a sigh of relief (although the vehicle can still be set on fire again). If character fails the test, the vehicle remains aflame until the fire is put out or the vehicle explodes.

The GM can increase or decrease the difficulty of this test due to special conditions (putting a fire out in the pouring rain is easier than putting a fire out in the middle of the scorching desert). Crew inside a flaming vehicle suffer a –20 penalty to all tests they have to make (the –20 is included in the Agility test above, not in addition to it).

If the fire is successfully put out, the crew and the passengers can act normally from that point on without suffering the –20 penalty. The vehicle itself gains the Fire Damaged damage condition from page 261.

Crew and Passengers On Fire!

As noted in a number of results on the Vehicle Critical Effect tables, it is possible for crewmembers and passengers to also be set alight even when the vehicle itself is not on fire. When a crewmember or passenger is set alight, he follows the standard rules for being set on fire (see page 243). At the end of each round during which a vehicle had burning passengers inside it, the GM should roll 1d10 for each person inside who was on fire. On a result of 10, the vehicle also catches fire. On any other result, the vehicle does not catch fire.

Weapon Destroyed

Skill Requirements: Essential Repair skill
Repair Difficulty: Challenging (+0) for Sponson/Pintle mounted weapons. Hard (–20) for Fixed/Hull/Turret mounted weapons. +10 Bonus if the character has Tech-Use or Trade (Armourer).
Repair Time: 8 hours for Sponson/Pintle mounted weapons. 16 hours for Fixed/Hull/Turret mounted weapons.

Weapons that have suffered a Weapon Destroyed result cannot be repaired and must instead be replaced. The Acolytes must first obtain a new weapon to replace the destroyed one (through a Requisition test as per page 142). Once a replacement weapon has been acquired, the Repair test is taken in order to install the new weapon. If the character fails the Repair test with two or more degrees of failure, the character has installed the weapon incorrectly and must start the repair over.

Weapon Disabled

Skill Requirements: Essential Repair skill
Repair Difficulty: Ordinary (+10) for Sponson/Pintle mounted weapons. Hard (–20) for Fixed/Hull/Turret mounted weapons. +10 Bonus if the character has Tech-Use or Trade (Armourer).
Repair Time: 4 hours for Sponson/Pintle mounted weapons. 8 hours for Fixed/Hull/Turret mounted weapons.

A weapon that suffers a Weapon Disabled result on the Vehicle Critical Effects tables cannot make ranged attacks (or in rare cases, melee attacks for weapons designed for close combat) until it has been repaired via a Repair test. If the character fails the Repair test with three or more degrees of failure, something goes terribly wrong, and the weapon is now too badly damaged to repair and must be replaced (see Weapon Destroyed).



Chapter VIII: Narrative Tools

While tense, exciting combat is an important component of Dark Heresy, it represents just a fraction of the events that Acolytes experience in the course of their adventures. This chapter covers such occurrences as travelling through dangerous lands, engaging in delicate social manoeuvring, and the effects of exposure to terrifying events and the corruption of the Warp, along with the rules and guidelines for investigations, calling on Reinforcement Characters, and the uses of Fate points.

Narrative Time

"We are at war with forces too terrible to comprehend. We cannot afford mercy. Mercy destroys us, it weakens us and saps our resolve. Put aside all such thoughts. They are not worthy of Inquisitors in the service of our Emperor. In our resolve, we reflect His Will."

–*The Verses of Inquisitor Enoch*, Canto XLVII

In the frenetic whirl of combat, each moment can mean life or death for the characters involved. Thus, in combat and during certain other time-sensitive tasks, gameplay is managed in structured time, with events broken down into rounds during which each character receives a turn to act. Outside of combat, this level of structure is unnecessary and would impede, rather than enhance, the game. When the Acolytes are not fighting, Dark Heresy is handled in a more freeform manner. Here the Game Master describes scenes and events, and the players state their reactions and make tests at critical moments to further shape and guide the ongoing story the group is creating. This approach is called narrative time. Narrative time is a broad category that includes almost any events occurring with the Acolytes' involvement that are not combat. This encompasses a wide range of activity, which can be broken down into encounters.

Encounters

In narrative time, the focus of the game is free to shift focus in response to the tasks and activities the Acolytes perform. A hallmark of narrative time is that, unlike structured time, there are no set units of time or order in which activities occur. Depending on the needs of the story, the GM may carefully describe the details of the Acolytes' surroundings, the NPCs, and events going on around them, or he may paint in broad strokes to progress the story to a more important moment. For instance, a GM might describe each room in detail as the Acolytes carefully make their way through the ruins of a xenos temple complex, carefully checking for ancient traps and other hazards. At the other end of the spectrum, the GM may use only a few sentences to describe weeks or months of uneventful Warp travel aboard a voidship (for which any Emperor-fearing citizen should breathe a sigh of relief and a prayer of gratitude).

The action in a roleplaying game moves between segments called encounters. Encounters can cover time periods ranging from a few minutes to many hours or longer, but are usually delineated by the Acolytes' attempt to accomplish a specific objective.

Returning to the examples above, each room of the xenos temple might be approached as a separate encounter, perhaps leading to a new encounter when the Acolytes meet an enemy or particularly fiendish trap, while the entire interstellar journey may be handled as a single encounter, with the simple objective of reaching their destination without causing too much trouble along the way.

The GM determines where one encounter ends and another begins, which usually occurs very naturally and without the need for bookkeeping or a specific announcement. As a general guideline, one encounter ends and another begins when the Acolytes move to a new location (though the definition of a location depends on the needs of the story), or when the category of encounter changes in response to the Acolytes' actions. For example, pulling a gun is a good way to begin a combat encounter! The Acolytes are sure to engage in a staggering array of activities of all kinds during their time serving the Throne, but for ease of reference, encounters are considered to primarily fall into one of five categories: social, exploration, travel, combat, or downtime.

Social Encounters

During social encounters, the Acolytes interact with NPCs primarily through conversation. These interactions may be positive or negative, ranging from friendly banter to barely-concealed threats. A social encounter might involve the Acolytes convincing a guard to accept their forged identifications and grant them access to a restricted area, or it could entail questioning the patrons of a hive tavern to find information about a notorious crime lord. The stakes in a social encounter can be every bit as high as in combat, with the fate of a world depending on the Acolytes' success in interrogating a powerful cult leader, or the Acolytes facing execution unless they adequately defend their actions before planetary magistrates in a formal tribunal.

Social encounters often play a major part in the Acolytes' investigations. While snooping and researching musty tomes can be just as integral, almost all investigations require the Acolytes to ask questions or converse with a live human (or approximation). Many investigations begin with the Acolytes asking around, perhaps inquiring amongst the locals while undercover, or discussing the details of a crime scene with the authorities. As servants of an Inquisitor, most Acolytes are no strangers to interrogation. In combat, wise Acolytes seek to take prisoners whenever possible. Live prisoners can yield important information under questioning, advancing the investigation in significant ways.

Social encounters usually end amicably enough, with all parties involved excusing themselves and parting ways (perhaps already formulating plans for revenge), or by escalating to the point that a combat encounter begins. More details on **Social Interaction** can be found on page 277.

Exploration Encounters

Exploration encounters occur when the focus of the action moves to the Acolytes' interaction with the environment, such as navigating through a dangerous marshland, or searching for clues at a gruesome murder scene. As always, the GM sets the scene for the players when an exploration encounter begins, so that the players can make informed decisions as to their Acolytes' actions. Depending on the situation, the GM may or may not call for tests—walking to the other side of a chapel can easily be accomplished, but manoeuvring through a death world's arboreal canopy above a toxic swamp may call for a number of Agility-based tests. Once any tests, if necessary, have been made, the GM narrates the results and describes any changes in the environment due to the Acolytes' actions, or describes a different location newly revealed. Exploration encounters are likely to arise frequently in the Acolytes' investigations, often as a prelude to combat or another type of encounter.

Exploration encounters are almost always completed in narrative time, as the action is usually driven by the Acolytes' approach. This is not to say that time is not of the essence; exploration encounters have the potential to be every bit as deadly as combat, from the Acolytes trying to avoid an avalanche, to being trapped in a voidship's cargo bay as it vents atmosphere. However, these sorts of situations usually depend on how the Acolytes respond, rather than in what order, and do not feature the back-and-forth of a struggle against foes. In some rare cases, the GM may find it appropriate to utilise structured time if the order of actions becomes necessary. Since the Acolytes are not actively opposed by their environment (at least not usually), Opposed skill tests are rarely used during exploration encounters.

Travel Encounters

Travel encounters occur when the Acolytes must move from one location to another. While some journeys are as simple as the players declaring their intended destination, other may consist of encounters in their own right. This is the case when a journey involves some element of risk, whether of bodily harm or simply of becoming lost or delayed. Travel encounters might require the Acolytes to navigate their way through unfamiliar terrain, such as a dense forest or tumbledown underhive. Many skills can be useful during travel encounters. In particular, many travel encounters require Navigate tests in order to read a map, stay on course, and judge direction when there is no reliable trail to follow. Awareness tests may be called for, to determine if the Acolytes are able to spot danger in time, such as hostile creatures or NPCs, traps, or natural hazards.

The natures of the challenges in a travel encounter are largely influenced by the environment through which the Acolytes are attempting to travel. Travel encounters are likely to be interrupted by other types of encounters, which the Acolytes must complete before returning to their journey. These could range from asking for directions through the maze-like interior of a hive city, stopping to battle a xenos predator, or halting to explore a particularly interesting location.

See **Movement** on page 245 for the complete rules for movement in both structured and narrative time.

Navigation and Exploration

Travel is often more than simply getting from one place to another. For Acolytes in a new environs, this can become difficult even when the destination is known. Simply living long enough to make the journey can be an issue, as many investigations can take them into hostile areas where the environment itself poses dangers. In these situations, characters often have to use skills to successfully traverse a wasteland between hive cities, or orient themselves in the depths of a death world acid-forest. These actions are predominately done in narrative time, though in certain circumstances the GM can move to structured time for especially tense occurrences.

Navigation comes into play on many worlds and in many settings, especially for new Acolytes yet to visit many locations outside their home world. Navigate skill tests can allow characters to determine where they are after their Aquila Lander has crashed en route to a desert rendezvous, or when they have successfully eluded an ravenous underhive beast through hours of running in the dark. These also come into play to determine the course across a seemingly endless ocean to a port before emergency rations are depleted, or to establish a route through a winding series of valleys to reach a cache of Faceless Trade xenos relics. This skill can also be used to avoid becoming lost and keeping on the correct path or route once it is established. Unfamiliar settings can often provide deceptive sidetracks or meanderings that would lead characters away from their destination, especially in a densely forested wilderness or the endless ruins of an ancient xenos cityscape.

Unfamiliar and challenging environments also often call for tests beyond that which might be used to uncover clues or other objects of an investigation. The Survival skill allows characters to search areas for vital items like potable water and non-irradiated food. This might come from scrounging through the ruins of a huge tank battle for still-edible ration packs, or locating pockets of rainfall in the cavities of sessile carnivorous flora. Like Navigate tests to ensure the warband maintains its course while travelling, this Survival test might come up periodically to ensure the Acolytes maintain health if they do not have their own supplies. If they are actively tracking someone, Awareness can be used to pick up tracks and successfully follow their quarry and again may be required in intervals to ensure they do not lose their target. The Wrangling use of the Survival skill can convert native fauna into beasts for travel, a process that might take days or longer but could result in a very useful means to cross dangerous settings. Such beasts might even be sold or gifted to valued aides after a mission is completed, possibly increasing the Acolyte's Influence there and forming useful contacts should they return.

Combat Encounters

Combat encounters occur when the Acolytes are involved in time-sensitive conflict where every moment counts and the timing of each character's actions greatly impact the outcome. Most often, combat encounters are life-and-death struggles featuring guns, blades, or even bare fists. Combat encounters might also include high-speed autocarriage chases or a race against time as Acolytes attempt to stop a damaged shuttlecraft plummeting to the ground.

When a combat encounter begins, the game transitions from narrative time to structured time. One sign that a combat encounter has begun, for example, is when the Game Master calls for an Initiative roll. Full details on combat encounters can be found on page 215 in **Chapter VII: Combat**.

Downtime

Players engage in all manner of exciting events during the course of a game of Dark Heresy, but between harrowing combats, dramatic arguments, and intrepid exploration, there are often lulls in the action. Frequently, Acolytes must travel aboard a vehicle or voidship from one location to another in order for the next important encounter to occur. The distinction between this scenario and a travel encounter is that in the case of downtime, the Acolytes are merely passengers, and their actions do not directly or otherwise impact the journey. The story may also require the Acolytes to wait for a period of time, perhaps having arranged a clandestine meeting with an informant, or prepared an ambush for their enemies. Downtime encompasses all such lulls.

Most downtime encounters can be completed very quickly, as there are almost never any tests or other rolls needed. The GM simply describes the journey, wait, or events in as much detail as he feels appropriate. The players may also wish to describe the sorts of activities their Acolytes do to keep busy during the interim; this is an excellent opportunity to explore the characters' personalities by showing how they spend their time when not actively engaged in activities related to an investigation. For Acolytes, this often means poring over information related to the investigation, training with or maintaining weaponry, or otherwise ensuring they are prepared for whatever comes next.

Starvation

While it is usually assumed that Acolytes can find basic food and water on most Imperial planets with a degree of civilisation, they often find themselves in hostile environments such as hive wastes or death worlds. When in an environment where food and water is scarce, GMs can choose to have the PCs track their total amount of consumable resources.

Once a character runs out of food and water, he begins to starve. A character can starve for number of days up to his Toughness bonus before suffering any ill effects. Once that time expires, the character can no longer recover Fatigue for any reason and begins suffering 1 level of Fatigue each day. These effects last until the character recovers with a substantial amount of food or water.

Usually, Acolytes do not move directly from one adventure or investigation to another, if for no other reason than the need for rest and recovery from injuries. Whether days, months, or years, such "off-screen" periods between adventures fall under the category of downtime. As with other periods of downtime, it is a good idea for players and the GM to work together to describe, broadly, the manner in which the Acolytes spend their downtime, and any notable life events. This helps reinforce the distinct personalities of the Acolytes, and helps to immerse the players in the campaign and the universe of the 41st Millennium.

Decisions, Tests, and Consequences

The story of each Dark Heresy game unfolds through a collaborative process, with the GM guiding the narrative and the players making decisions about the actions of their Acolytes—the protagonists of the story. When those decisions have important consequences for the story and the outcome is not certain, tests are used to determine the results of the Acolytes' actions. These decisions and tests are what determine the resolution of an encounter, and lead, either directly or indirectly, to subsequent encounters. Fundamentally, encounters unfold through the repetition of three steps:

- **Define the Situation:** Before the players can decide what actions their characters take, they must be aware of the environment around their Acolytes and the situation confronting them. The Game Master sets the scene by describing the Acolytes' surroundings, including any relevant details of the environment, any present NPCs, and what the Acolytes' senses tell them. Such details may include the appearance of stains on the rockcrete walls around them, the bolt pistol holstered at the NPC bounty hunter's side, or the smell of rotting meat coming from behind a rusted iron grate. Some details have a direct impact on the Acolytes' actions, while others serve to help immerse the players in the grim future of Dark Heresy.
- **Player Decisions and Character Actions:** Once they understand the situation facing the Acolytes, the players decide how their characters act. This could include examining the environment more closely, drawing a weapon, running for cover, making a wry comment, and more. The players can also ask the GM questions to ascertain further details about the environment, the NPCs present, or any on-going events, to be sure that they are properly informed to make good decisions.
- **Results:** Once the players determine how their characters want to proceed, the GM narrates the results of their actions, while calling for any relevant tests. Depending on the situation and the actions on which the players decided, tests may be needed to determine how well the Acolytes perform at their chosen tasks, or if they are able to complete them at all. If the actions are not difficult or have no real bearing on the story, tests are not necessary, and the GM simply tells the players the results of their characters' actions. The group repeats these steps until the encounter is resolved.

Example

After a tense combat encounter with a group of cultists, the players decide to begin looking around the cultists' chamber, thereby beginning an exploration encounter. The GM previously described the chamber before the fight, but now that there is no imminent danger, he repeats the explanation, taking additional time to answer the players' questions about the details of the cold, candlelit stone chamber. Jeanine and Tom both declare that their characters are searching the room, and the GM calls for Awareness tests. Tom's character, Iosef, discovers a loose stone block that he easily removes, revealing a hidden compartment with a small iron-bound chest, inscribed with occult markings. The GM explains that the chest is locked, and Joe says he will use his character's Security skill to pick the lock. Opening the chest reveals a misshapen humanoid skull daubed with dried blood. The Acolytes decide to hang on to the skull for now, and that it would be safer left in the chest. The GM secretly makes a Psyniscience test for Harry's psyker character, but it fails, so he doesn't tell the players anything about the Warp presence emanating from the skull. Convinced that there is nothing left for them in the room, the Acolytes head back out the door and continue investigating the tower.

Not So Fast!

In the course of a Dark Heresy session, the Acolytes are sure to face all number of intense and exciting situations, and events can unfold quite rapidly as the GM describes the action occurring around them. As such, it can sometimes be easy to get caught up in the action without stopping to ensure everyone has had a chance to react, if desired. Any time a player sees an opportunity for his Acolyte to act, he should not hesitate to interject with his actions before the opportunity is gone. GMs and players should do their best to accommodate such requests, even if it occasionally means "rewinding" a few seconds' worth of time.

Influence and Subtlety

"Just big talk, ignore it. There is no way any Inquisition lackeys could have gotten here without us knowing about it."

–"Rotten" Crokken,
aka Kalepha Ummentine, Inquisitorial Acolyte

Though an Inquisitor may be a fearsome psyker, a shrewd manipulator, and a deadly warrior, the most important tool at his disposal is not his weapon or his mind, but his influence over the people of the Imperium. Each Inquisitor is vested with the ultimate authority in order to accomplish his mission to safeguard Mankind, but how he uses the resources available and the image he presents to the wider Imperium greatly impact his effectiveness. This is at least as true for the Acolytes serving an Inquisitor, who cannot always rely on the name of the Inquisition to ensure cooperation. These considerations are represented in Dark Heresy by Influence and Subtlety, which, respectively, track how much sway the Acolytes have with the citizens and institutions of the Imperium, and how well-known their activities are to both their allies and enemies.

Influence

Influence is a characteristic, and like other characteristics it is measured on a scale from 0–100. Influence represents an Acolyte's reputation, connections, resources, and other factors that allow him to obtain desired results from the citizens and institutions of the Imperium. The higher a character's Influence, the better he is able to exert control over others, and hence the easier it is for him to get items delivered, services performed, and other actions taken at his request. All Acolytes start with a certain amount of Influence, which they can increase through gameplay.

Uses of Influence

Whenever an Acolyte attempts to use his reputation or resources within the Imperium, the GM can call for an Influence test. As with other characteristics, there are numerous ways in which a character may utilise his Influence, but some common uses include the following:

- **Requisition:** When an Acolyte attempts to obtain equipment, supplies, or services, it is his Influence that determines if he has the resources, connections, or funds to track down and acquire or purchase the item. This use of Influence represents an Acolyte calling on his contacts, bribing or pressuring merchants, relying on his reputation with the relevant Imperial organisation, or even retrieving the necessary funds from a financier. Full rules for using Influence to requisition equipment can be found on page 141.
- **Social Interaction:** Dropping the right names or invoking a fearsome reputation can go far in convincing others to reveal information or acquiesce to a character's wishes. Indeed, merely invoking the name of the Inquisition is enough to have many loyal citizens falling over backwards to obey. An Acolyte can use his Influence to manipulate others into doing his bidding, revealing information, or otherwise offering assistance. He can also use this to generate local currencies as needed for bribes or other social actions where monetary lubrication would be beneficial. All this can impact Subtlety if done too overtly, though this can be desirable when the warband desires their presence known in order to flush out their prey, for example.
- **Investigation:** In the course of an investigation, Acolytes often need to access resources and information beyond their personal abilities and assets. Characters can use their Influence to cast a wider net and expedite the investigation. This can include leaning on contacts for information, gaining access to restricted archives, or ensuring cooperation by local authorities. Leveraging Influence can greatly smoothen the investigation, though using it too often can lessen Subtlety.

Gaining Influence

Unlike other characteristics, players cannot increase their Acolyte's Influence by spending xp on advances. Influence can only be increased though an Acolyte's actions. An Acolyte's Influence increases as the character succeeds at his duty, or as a result of specific actions the Acolyte takes to increase his reputation and resources. The following are some of the most common reasons for an Acolyte's Influence to increase:

- **Connections:** Knowing the right people can be instrumental in getting things done. Taking one's request straight to the best person to act on it, cutting through the layers of bureaucracy and avoiding communication delays, can achieve faster and more effective results. Whether looking at a single hive city or a sub-sector, the Acolytes discover again and again that ties of fealty, responsibility, and authority construct a tangled web and an almost crippling inertia. For an Acolyte to be able to contact the right individual directly can mean the difference between a world's salvation and its damnation. Connections can come from earlier shared experiences, such as common service in the Imperial Guard or aboard the same voidship, or can occur during investigations as an Acolyte meets new people and establishes relationships. Organisations for which an Acolyte has the Peer talent indicate strong connections as well. It is up to the GM to determine how much Influence a connection is worth. Forming a close bond with a merchant group operating on a single planet may potentially be worth a point or so of Influence, while simply having one's name known to the Lord Sector may be worth several.
- **Debts and Favours:** Perhaps the most effective way to gain assistance from an individual is by calling in a favour or settling a debt. Doing so provides an immediate incentive for the person or organisation to act in accordance with the Acolyte's wishes. This is particularly true when it is undesirable or unthinkable to explain the reasons behind the request, a situation in which Acolytes often find themselves. By accomplishing tasks for an individual or organisation, or otherwise benefitting it through their actions, an Acolyte's Influence can increase. The amount of the increase depends on the power and Influence of the person or organisation, as well as the importance of the task or benefit.
- **Reputation:** Acolytes often achieve their wishes by relying on their reputation. By accomplishing his duties and performing impressive feats, an Acolyte can increase his Influence as his name becomes known to the great and powerful, as well as the toiling masses of Imperial governance. Uncovering and foiling a plot by Chaos cultists, saving a powerful noble from

Table 8–1: Influence Increases

Influence Gained	Sample Reasons
1	Bringing a minor heretek to justice and stopping his production of unsanctified weapons; disrupting a lesser Faceless Trade operation in minor heretical artefacts.
2	Uncovering and purging a coven of xenophilious nobles; gaining the esteem of a High Marshal of the Adeptus Arbites.
3	Saving the life of a Lord Admiral; detecting and alerting a significant Imperial world of a forthcoming xenos attack.
4	Impressing an important sector lord at a formal banquet; successfully investigating and denouncing a radical Inquisitor.
5	Saving a sub-sector capital world from certain destruction; banishing a Greater Daemon back to the Warp.

Table 8–2: Influence Decreases

Influence Lost	Sample Reasons
1	Becoming embroiled in a shoot-out with Hive Desoleum Sanctionaries; failing to exhibit the proper decorum at a formal gathering of the sector's nobility.
2	Failing to prevent the minions of the Callers of Sorrow from releasing a deadly pathogen in the lower levels of Hive Desoleum.
3	Destroying the sacred thigh bone of Saint Koriel while fighting to defend his basilica.
4	Commandeering a company of Imperial Guard, directly resulting in the loss of a major world to Ork invasion.
5	Declaring Exterminatus on a world without proper cause.

certain doom, or even sentencing a world to Exterminatus are all actions that can raise an Acolyte's Influence. The degree of increase depends both on the importance of the action, and on how overt or subtle the Acolyte is in this performance. Executing a heretic in a great spectacle can spread an Acolyte's name across a world and beyond, but saving a planet from certain destruction might do little for a character's wider reputation beyond those few privy to the act.

Losing Influence

Just as certain actions and results can increase an Acolyte's Influence, so can his decisions and even simple chance result in decreases to his Influence. Reputation is fickle, and Acolytes must take care to protect theirs. At the GM's discretion, an Acolyte's Influence can decrease when something happens to weaken his resource network and reputation, whether through his own fault or due to outside agency. The following are just some examples of events that might decrease an Acolyte's Influence:

- **Failure:** Just as success increases Influence, so does failure decrease it. Failing to stop the Imperium's enemies harms the Acolytes' reputation in the eyes of the Imperium's rulers and leaders, and may also decrease the confidence their Inquisitor has in their abilities. In the most extreme cases, failing to stop a heretical plot may even lead some to suspect the Acolytes of treachery. Similarly, when performing a task for an individual or organisation that would result in an increase in the Acolyte's Influence, failure can have the opposite effect, particularly in the case of very egregious failure that harms the interests of the would-be benefactor. The amount by which failure decreases an Acolyte's Influence depends on the severity of the failure, and how subtle or overt the Acolyte's actions.
- **Excessive or Reckless Use:** Influence reflects an Acolyte's standing in the Imperium and reputation in the eyes of his peers and betters. Abuse or misuse of his authority can swiftly turn opinion against him. When an Acolyte fails an Influence test by more degrees of failure than his Fellowship bonus, his Influence decreases by the difference between the two.
- **Sacrifice:** In desperate situations, an Acolyte may be forced to sacrifice his resources or reputation to accomplish a goal. This could mean calling in a major favour, requesting an onerous task of, and thereby alienating, an ally, or even sending allies or servants on a suicide mission. When attempting an Influence test, before rolling, an Acolyte may choose to decrease his Influence by 1d5 in order to automatically succeed. If degrees of success are important, the Acolyte is considered to have achieved a number equal to his Fellowship bonus. Note that in situations where no test is possible, this use of Influence cannot be made: the situation is beyond even the Acolyte's ability, or the item is impossible to acquire.
- **Atrophy:** An Acolyte must continuously attend to his Influence, lest it slip away with the passage of time. If an Acolyte goes long enough without any new achievements to bolster his reputation, he risks his name being forgotten by contacts, his achievements overshadowed by others, and his reputation tarnishing as those who remember his name reflect on his absence from the stage. For each year that passes during which the Acolyte does not perform any work for his Inquisitor, his Influence decreases by 1.
- **Reinforcement Aid:** Influence is also lost when the warband requests a Reinforcement Character fight at its side. This represents the Acolytes calling favours, debts, or other means to have one of these powerful individuals come to their aid. See page 294 for more information concerning the Reinforcement system.

The loss of Influence represents actual shifts in attitudes toward the Acolyte, or a loss of resources. While it can serve as a simple setback, the loss of Influence can also act as the impetus for exciting encounters or entire game sessions. If a player wishes to recoup lost Influence through in-game activities, the GM should try to accommodate this. For instance, an Acolyte who loses Influence because he failed to save the life of a respected preacher could go before the Ministorum to seek atonement. This could be represented by an in-depth social encounter, or the GM could use the opportunity as a springboard for a new adventure, giving the Acolyte an opportunity to redeem himself by performing a dangerous task for the deacon.

Inquisitor Influence

Powerful though they may be, it is all but impossible for Acolytes to wield Influence even close to that of the Inquisitor who leads them. Much of what marks an Inquisitor worthy of the title are his achievements and ability to get results, but it is a simple fact that to be an Inquisitor is to wield limitless authority. Only the foolhardy, desperate, or treasonous dare to defy an Inquisitor's will. In the performance of their duties, Acolytes often invoke the authority of their master in order to succeed. Using the Inquisitor's influence can be of great benefit to an Acolyte, granting him access to resources otherwise far out of reach.

Before attempting an Influence test, an Acolyte can choose to reduce the group's Subtlety by 2 in order to use the Influence value of the Inquisitor in place of his own. The GM should provide this, based on his own determination of the Inquisitor's Influence. This might be altered based on the warband's recent successes and failures as well as their Subtlety; the GM can use the guidance on page 361 in this determination. If the test results in loss of Influence, it is the Inquisitor's Influence that is decreased, rather than the Acolyte's, with possible consequences to the warband.



Use Not Lightly Thy Master's Name...

Using their Inquisitor's Influence can be greatly beneficial to the Acolytes, but comes at the risk of angering the Inquisitor. Some Inquisitors prefer to see their Acolytes succeed on their own merits, but even one who encourages his servants to wield his authority openly cannot abide damage to his reputation, which has likely taken decades—or longer—to build. If the Acolytes repeatedly misuse or harm his Influence, an Inquisitor should take action to show his disapproval and remind them of the consequences for repeated failure. The forms this may take are as varied as Inquisitors, but some possible punishments include the following:

- Stripping one or more Acolytes of the ability to use the Inquisitor's Influence.
- Ceasing all direct communication and support.
- Removing a finger, toe, eye, limb, or other body part, possibly with the promise to replace it once the Acolyte has redeemed himself.
- Sending an assassin or kill-squad after the Acolyte as a warning to improve his service.
- Consigning the Acolyte to excruciation or an act of dedicated penance.

Subtlety

Subtlety represents how secretive or overt the Acolytes are in their behaviour as they prosecute an investigation. Subtlety ranges from 0–100 and can be used as the basis for a test, just like a characteristic. Unlike characteristics, there is a single Subtlety value for the warband of Acolytes, which the GM tracks in secret, so that the players never know exactly what their Subtlety score is. The higher the Acolytes' Subtlety is, the less their enemies and potential allies know of their actions. The more their Subtlety decreases, the more transparent their actions become and the more others know. Inquisitors and their Acolytes take many different approaches to accomplish their duties, and a high Subtlety is not necessarily better. While many Inquisitors prefer to move unseen throughout the Imperium, the better to take their enemies by surprise, some operate openly, trusting in the populace's fear of the Inquisition to smoke out the heretics amongst them. High and low Subtlety both have benefits and drawbacks, depending on the situation and the Acolytes' methods.

Tracking Subtlety

Each warband begins with a Subtlety of 50. During the game, the Acolytes' actions serve to increase and decrease the group's Subtlety. The more obvious and direct they are, the lower their Subtlety, while the more cautious and secretive, the higher the value. Subtlety is likely to change throughout the course of an investigation in response to the Acolytes' decisions and the vicissitudes of fate. **Table 8–3: The Subtlety Track** on page 271 provides examples of the behaviour of a group at different Subtlety values.

Effects of Subtlety

Subtlety is a crucial concern for Acolytes who serve an Inquisitor, with a number of far-reaching effects, yet neither a low or high value is necessarily "better," as both can be beneficial under different circumstances. Whether low or high, Subtlety mainly affects the game in two ways. First, Subtlety impacts the game narratively, affecting the reactions of NPCs, shaping what resources the Acolytes can access, and determining how much their enemies and allies know of their activities. Second, the group's Subtlety can modify certain tests, either lowering or raising the difficulty based on its current value and the purpose of the test in question. Some tasks are more easily accomplished if the Acolytes are unknown or effectively disguised, while others benefit from a general awareness of the Acolytes' activities.

Narrative Effects

The transparency or secrecy of the Acolytes' behaviour can have any number of effects on the narrative of a game of Dark Heresy. A group that acts too openly could betray their presence to the cult for which they are searching, allowing the heretics plentiful time to flee or prepare an ambush. Conversely, if the Acolytes are too subtle in their investigation, when the time comes, they could have extreme difficulty convincing local authorities of the seriousness of the threat or even the true power the Acolytes represent.

When an encounter arises that depends significantly on how overt or subtle the Acolytes are, the GM makes a Subtlety test using the group's current value. If the test succeeds, the Acolytes are considered subtle for the purposes of the event or encounter, remaining hidden from the cult or unknown to the Enforcers, for instance. If the test fails, the Acolytes are overt; their actions are revealed to a cult, taverns begin to buzz about odd strangers in the area, or their reputation becomes known to local Enforcers.

Depending on the potential consequences for the narrative, the GM can roll the Subtlety test when the Acolytes take a particular action, or only once the results become evident. For instance, if the Acolytes are attempting to disguise themselves as offworld scholars in order to investigate a guild suspected of trading in proscribed texts, the GM could roll a Subtlety test when they introduce themselves, in order to determine if the guilders have heard rumours of an Inquisitor's Acolytes in the area, or of unknown persons investigating their operations. The guilders might offer a round of vintage amasec to the Acolytes—but if the Subtlety test had failed, the amasec is perhaps laced with a poison, or they have alerted their henchmen to intercept the Acolytes. When to make a Subtlety test ultimately comes down to the GM's preference and instinct. As with other tests, a Subtlety test is only necessary if the outcome has an impact on the story.

Through its effects on the narrative, Subtlety can provide great opportunities for roleplaying. If they are openly operating as Acolytes of an Inquisitor, even powerful and influential individuals are likely to show the utmost respect and deference (at least to their faces), while these same NPCs may respond to the Acolytes with disdain or outright contempt if their authority is unknown. Even in the case of an NPC offering the same services or information regardless of the Acolytes' Subtlety, the nature of their interaction may be very different. A barkeep serves drinks to the Acolytes and offers the latest gossip in either case, but if the warband is subtle, he may water down the drinks and make jests at the Acolytes' expense. If he knows who they are, however, he might behave in an overly obsequious manner while serving the best amasec in the house and refusing to accept payment, clearly revealing that what might have been a carefully crafted disguise is all for naught. The Acolytes can then either try to continue with the charade, or utilise their reputation to their advantage.

Table 8–3: The Subtlety Track

Subtlety	Example
01–10	The Acolytes wear ostentatious armour and outfits, emblazoned with icons of the Inquisition, and a trio of tiny, winged servitors trumpet the group's every entrance. The warband accomplishes most tasks by giving direct orders to others in the name of the Inquisition, loudly threatening any who would dare oppose them.
11–20	The Acolytes rely on their reputations to accomplish their goals, openly wearing symbols of their affiliations and loyalties. When questioning suspects or the general populace, the Acolytes are blunt and direct, and ready to respond with violence should anyone attempt to flee or deceive them.
21–30	When dealing with a suspected cultist, the Acolytes openly attack with the goal of subduing him for later interrogation.
31–40	While refraining from invoking the name of the Inquisition, the Acolytes nonetheless favour the direct approach, and respond to violence in kind. The heavy weaponry they tote draws some attention, particularly from the local Enforcers.
41–50	The Acolytes take no great pains to hide their weapons and armour, nor to conceal their business. However, neither do they draw extra attention to themselves or announce their true allegiance.
51–60	When dealing with a suspected cultist, the Acolytes trail him, observing his behaviour from afar and asking around amongst his acquaintances.
61–70	The Acolytes go to great lengths to keep their presence unknown to their enemies, and to avoid drawing the attention of local authorities. They do their best to avoid violent engagements, even involving the lower ranks of the heretics' organization.
71–80	The Acolytes go undercover to conduct the investigation. Even before their arrival in-system, the Acolytes operate under thoroughly detailed false identities in order to infiltrate the heretics' ranks and bring them down from within.
81–90	Surprise is amongst the Acolytes' primary weapons. They operate with great stealth, concealing their presence or identity until it is time to strike.
91–100	The Acolytes are neither seen nor heard, or are so perfect in their disguises that none suspect their true nature.

Subtlety Test Modifiers

Often, the success of an Acolyte's actions depends on how secretive or overt the group has been earlier. Infiltrating the local underworld can be much more difficult if everyone is watching over their shoulders for signs of the Inquisition. When an Acolyte attempts a test and the outcome depends on how well-known the group is, the GM can choose to have the group's Subtlety modify the test. To do so, the GM first decides if the action the Acolyte is attempting benefits from overtness or from subtleness. The following examples demonstrate tasks that benefit from subtlety and from overtness:

Examples of tasks benefitted by Subtlety:

- Employing the Disguise use of the Deceive skill to conceal an Acolyte's identity.
- Using the Inquiry skill to ask around in the criminal underworld, or questioning other untrusting individuals.
- Applying the Shadowing use of the Stealth skill to covertly follow a suspected cultist.
- Exercising the Tracking use of the Survival skill to locate a suspected killer.

Examples of tasks benefitted by Overtness:

- Using the Charm skill to impress an Adeptus Arbites Judge.
- Employing the Terrify use of the Command skill to stop a squad of Enforcers running from a xenos monstrosity.
- Applying the Inquiry skill on Emperor-fearing citizens.
- Exercising the Interrogation skill to pry information from a recalcitrant cultist.

The GM then rolls a test using the group's Subtlety. If the Subtlety test is successful, the Acolyte gains a +20 bonus to tests relevant to a task that benefits from subtlety, or a –20 penalty if the task benefits from overtness. Conversely, if the Subtlety test is failed, the Acolyte suffers a –20 penalty if the task benefits from subtlety, but a +20 bonus if the test benefits from overtness. Depending on the circumstances and nature of the task at hand, this modifier could apply to a single roll, or to a series of tests using different skills.

Of course, not every test should be affected by Subtlety. Before making a Subtlety test in order to modify an Acolyte's skill use, the GM should consider if the target NPC could possibly be aware of the Acolytes, and if so, if it makes a significant difference. When used appropriately, this effect of Subtlety significantly reinforces the importance of the Acolytes' choices. It reminds players that each of their actions has consequences, and that the world responds to the decisions they make.

Gaining Subtlety

As already stated, a group's Subtlety is not fixed, and changes based on the Acolytes' actions. Unlike characteristics, Subtlety often fluctuates, and usually changes numerous times during the course of an adventure in response to the players' decisions and the course of action taken by the Acolytes. The Acolytes increase their Subtlety by acting in a manner that conceals their presence or misdirects their foes. By using stealth, guile, and generally maintaining a low profile, the Acolytes can ensure a high Subtlety value, and the effects—both beneficial and detrimental—that entails.

When the Acolytes gain Subtlety is at the GM's discretion. Any time an Acolyte acts to conceal his presence or to provide misinformation about the group and its plans, the GM can choose to increase the group's Subtlety. While Acolytes sometimes act with the specific intent of increasing their Subtlety, it can also occur as a side effect of their actions. When deciding how to go about a task, the Acolytes must consider the potential ramifications for future encounters; concealing their presence and identities could prevent the local authorities from interfering with an investigation, but those same authorities might not believe the Acolytes' story if they catch them breaking into a corrupt noble's manse. There are many ways that a group's Subtlety might increase, such as the following examples:

- **Deception:** Lies, disguises, and false identities can help to conceal the Acolytes' presence and wrong-foot their enemies. All too often, the Acolytes have little or no knowledge of their true opponents when beginning an investigation, and can gain an advantage by ensuring their enemies are no better off. As all Inquisitors know, information is power. When an Acolyte successfully accomplishes an act of deception, the GM may raise the group's Subtlety. The amount gained depends on the scale of the deception and who it is being deceived. If the target of the deception is crucial to the investigation, the group's Subtlety could increase quite a bit. If, on the other hand, the target is only tangentially related to the main thrust of the action, the effect should be fairly minimal. The GM may also wish to consider the personality and reputation of the NPC involved. If the person has a reputation for outrageous exaggerations and falsehoods, perhaps no one believes him when he starts ranting about Acolytes of the Inquisition visiting him.

Conjunction of Subtlety and Influence

In many ways, Subtlety and Influence are connected. While Influence represents, in part, how well-known each individual Acolyte's career and achievements are on a sector-wide level, Subtlety represents knowledge of the group's current activities and whereabouts on a local level. Generally, the effects of Subtlety are short-term, while Influence is long-lasting and more permanent. Influence changes more slowly and infrequently, with major changes happening over time, whereas Subtlety can fluctuate quite a bit within a relatively short period. Influence and Subtlety have different effects on the game and usually come into play in different situations. However, sometimes both Subtlety and Influence can be relevant to a single test or encounter. Similarly, there are ways in which Subtlety can affect Influence and vice versa. It is up to the GM to determine when Subtlety and Influence are both relevant, or when one impacts the other. Throughout this section, sidebars such as this one offer examples and suggestions for GMs on handling the combination of Subtlety and Influence.

Subtlety and Change in Influence

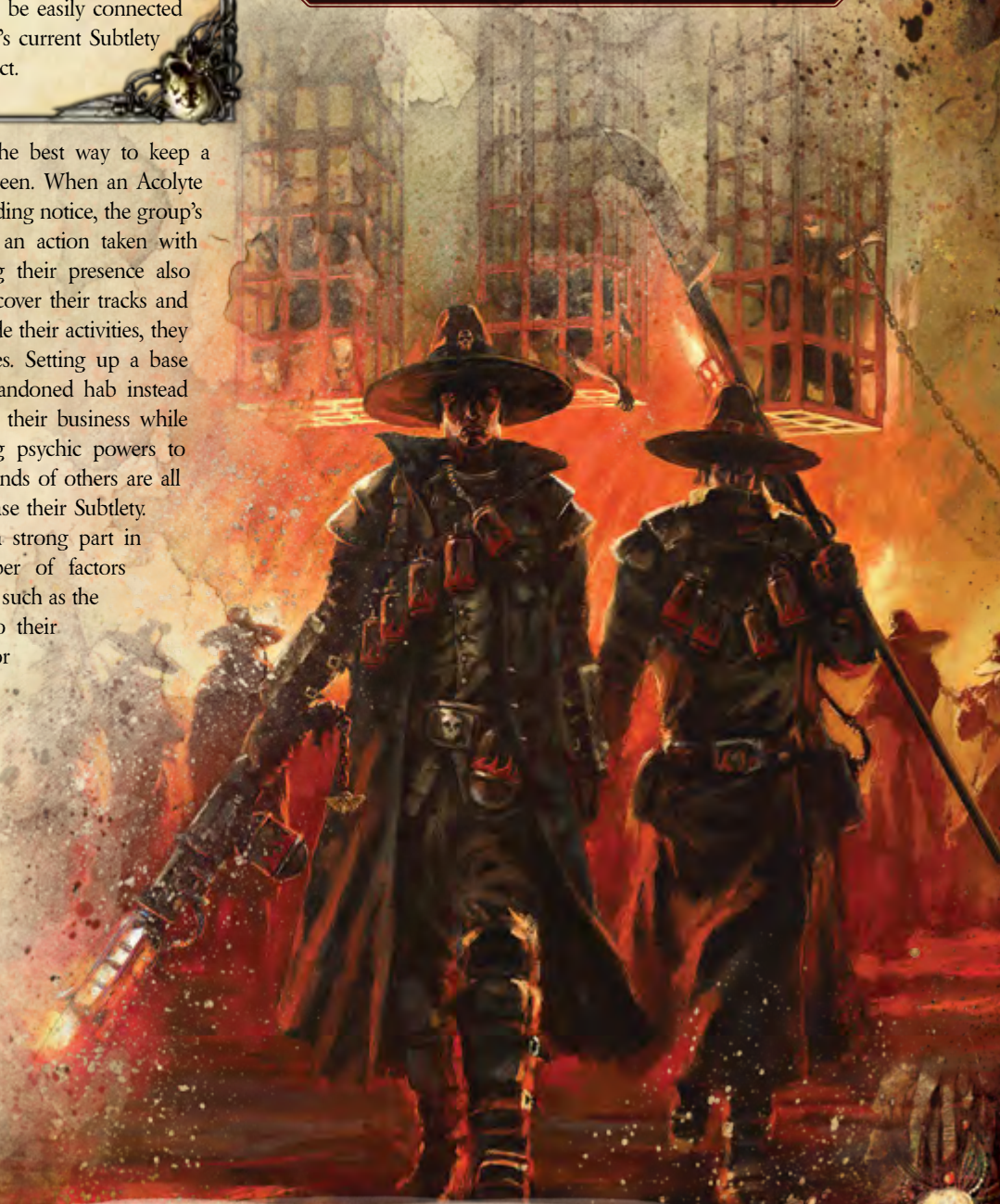
Oftentimes, events that result in an increase or loss of Influence for an Acolyte occur in the midst of an investigation or assignment. An Acolyte can perform an impressive and monumental feat, but the boost to his reputation could be much less if only his closest companions know of it. Conversely, even an abysmal failure could do little to affect an Acolyte's reputation if no one can link him to the incident. When an Acolyte stands to gain or lose Influence, the GM can decide that the warband's current Subtlety has the potential to mitigate the change. If so, he makes a Subtlety test against the warband's current Subtlety. If the test succeeds, the GM reduces the amount of Influence gained or lost by 1 for every 2 degrees of success. A warband's Subtlety is temporary in comparison to an Acolyte's Influence; if the nature of the event is such that the Acolyte can be easily connected to it after the fact, the warband's current Subtlety should not have an impact.

- **Stealth and Subterfuge:** Perhaps the best way to keep a low profile is to simply never be seen. When an Acolyte completes a relevant task while avoiding notice, the group's Subtlety could increase. Similarly, an action taken with the express purpose of concealing their presence also might increase it. As the Acolytes cover their tracks and generally act in such a way as to hide their activities, they can avoid tipping off their enemies. Setting up a base of operations in a forlorn and abandoned hab instead of a well-known inn, going about their business while wearing disguises, and even using psychic powers to conceal their presence from the minds of others are all possible ways Acolytes could increase their Subtlety.

While the Acolytes' actions play a strong part in determining their Subtlety, any number of factors beyond their control can also contribute, such as the methods of communication available to their enemies and allies, or the tendency for the local citizenry to gossip. When the group's Subtlety increases, it does so by a random amount, which the GM determines in secret. Recall also that the GM secretly tracks Subtlety, and the value is always hidden from the players. Consequently, though the players know their Subtlety at the beginning of the game, as soon as events start to modify it, they can never be sure of the exact value. When the GM decides that something has occurred to raise the Acolytes' Subtlety, it usually increases by 1d5. For major accomplishments or pivotal events, however, the Acolytes may gain 1d10 Subtlety. In either case, the GM can add positive or negative modifiers to these rolls based on the circumstances and the actions of the Acolytes. For instance, an Acolyte securing lodgings for the group under a false name might gain 1d5–2 Subtlety, while conducting business under an assumed identity complete with a detailed cover story, thorough disguise, and carefully falsified documents might increase the group's Subtlety by 1d10+1.

Example

The Acolytes are in the Apex of Hive Desoleum investigating signs of unsanctioned psychic activity in the vicinity of the Nellos family estate. Dave decides his character, Lorr, will pose as a distant relative, visiting from another world, with the other Acolytes posing as his servants and bodyguards. When Lorr introduces himself as Garbon Hrave, Dave makes a Deceive test, winning the Opposed test and achieving four degrees of success. The GM decides that Lorr's disguise and cover story convince the family, leaving them and their neighbours with no suspicions (at least at this time). The GM secretly rolls 1d5+1 and increases the group's Subtlety by the resulting 3.



Subtlety and Influence Tests

Effective use of Influence requires an Acolyte to use his name and reputation. While it is possible to use Influence while remaining incognito, such as by dropping names or making vague threats, it is often more difficult. Similarly, if an Acolyte has been acting subtly, others may not believe him when he finally does reveal his true identity. When an Acolyte attempts to use his Influence whilst engaged in an investigation, the GM should determine if the group's Subtlety has any bearing on the attempt. If so, then the GM can make a Subtlety test to determine the modifier to the Acolyte's Influence test, just as for any other test the outcome of which depends on Subtlety.

Losing Subtlety

Just as the Acolytes' actions can increase Subtlety, so can they reduce it. When the Acolytes act in a way that reveals their presence or intentions, the GM can reduce Subtlety in much the same way that he raises it for their covert actions. It is difficult to maintain high Subtlety if the Acolytes conduct their investigation using direct confrontation, excessive requisitions, brandishing grandiose weaponry and armour, relying on their reputations and authority, and generally broadcasting their presence. Such tactics may be effective in the short term, but the Acolytes must be wary that they do not hinder their ultimate goals. When the Acolytes' behaviour calls attention to their presence, activities, or plans, the GM secretly lowers their Subtlety value by a random amount appropriate to the situation. The following examples illustrate some of the common actions that decrease Subtlety:

- **Exercising Authority:** From the most primitive feral world to the most populous hive city, word of an Inquisitorial presence spreads swiftly. If the Acolytes use their connections to the Inquisition to open doors, loosen tongues, or detain suspects, it can quickly reveal their presence to the populace and their enemies, even if such uses of power were made in private. The amount of Subtlety lost due to exercising authority is affected by the trustworthiness and discretion of the people they reveal themselves to, as well as how public are the circumstances of the revealing event.
- **Intimidation:** Whether threatening the wrath of the Emperor or just a bloody lip, intimidation tends to get an Acolyte noticed, whether or not the target knows who the Acolyte really is. The amount of Subtlety lost due to intimidation depends on factors such as the severity of the threat, the importance and reputation of the threatened party, and whether the Acolyte follows through, as well as anything else the GM deems relevant.
- **Combat:** Any time the characters engage in conflict, their Subtlety may be reduced. Even if the Acolytes leave no direct witnesses and cannot be tied to the fight, dead bodies and collateral damage lead to people talking, which makes it more difficult to lay low. Again, this holds true whether the locals view the Acolytes as representatives of the Inquisition or merely as no-good outsiders. The amount by which the Acolytes' Subtlety is reduced depends on the scale of the conflict, as well as how likely any witnesses are to talk. The types of weapons the Acolytes use and their appropriateness to the environment might also contribute. A shoot-out with laspistols and stubbers in the underhive is unremarkable, but one with graviton guns and force swords is not.

When the Acolytes lose Subtlety, the amount lost is random, just as with increases to Subtlety. Depending on the importance and scope of the action, the Acolytes' Subtlety can decrease by either 1d5 or 1d10, modified at the GM's discretion. As the Acolytes engage in secretive and overt actions, their Subtlety fluctuates. Small steps taken to hide their presence can be undone when a fight breaks out. A warband loudly arriving in the name of the Inquisition, then soon fading into the shadows, might cause their enemies to wrongly believe the Acolytes have given up and moved on. Consequently, Subtlety is fluid and, to an extent, self-determining. As Acolytes operate overtly, it becomes more difficult for them to conceal future actions. Likewise, a group that has thus-far behaved furtively or deceptively might have trouble getting noticed, even if they want to.

Example

While Lorr subtly questions the patriarch of the Nellos family, the rest of the group sneaks away in order to break into a neighbouring manse and look around. Their attempt at stealth goes disastrously wrong, and the Acolytes end up shooting their way out, killing or wounding several guards in the process. The GM decides that the incident draws a lot of attention and puts all of the households in the area on high alert. He decreases the group's Subtlety by 1d10+3. The GM does this in secret, but the players are fairly sure their bungled attempt caused a sizeable reduction in Subtlety.

Determining Subtlety

One element that distinguishes Subtlety from the other characteristics and resources at the players' disposal is the fact that, once events have modified the group's starting Subtlety, they are not aware of its exact value. Players are usually aware when their Subtlety changes, and if it increases or decreases, but they do not know by what amount. In some cases, however, the GM can modify the warband's Subtlety without the players even realising it—for instance, if the Acolytes were unaware that an enemy had intercepted their vox transmissions. As events further modify their Subtlety, it becomes more and more difficult for the players to guess its current value. This reflects the uncertain nature of undercover or otherwise covert investigations, and it helps to reinforce the air of mystery and paranoia that is an important part of Dark Heresy. However, while the Acolytes cannot be certain of exactly how well-known their presence is to enemies and potential allies, this information is nonetheless an important factor in many decisions. For instance, if the Acolytes are deciding whether to approach a cult's hideout stealthily or in force, it helps to know that the cult is expecting intruders and has heightened security. Acolytes can get a rough idea of how successful their efforts at going undetected have been by asking around, observing the populace, or monitoring enemy communications. In game terms, by taking actions such as these, players can obtain limited information from the GM regarding the group's current Subtlety.

Table 8–4: Subtlety Determination Examples

Skill Test	Skill Test Result			
The Acolytes are trying to...	3 Degrees of Failure:	1 Degree of Failure:	1 Degree of Success:	3 Degrees of Success:
Monitor suspected cultists of the Amethyst Hand to determine if the cult realises it is under investigation. (Awareness test)	The Acolyte accidentally tails the wrong person. The players (wrongly) believe that the cult is unaware of them, and so are not prepared for the next day's attack.	The Acolyte ends his attempted surveillance prematurely, incorrectly determining that he is about to be discovered or even attacked.	The Acolyte tails the cultist to a meeting of the Amethyst Hand and learns that the cult is indeed aware that someone is investigating them. The Subtlety bonus is 2.	Additionally, the Acolyte overhears the cultists making plans to preemptively strike against the Acolytes.
Ask around the local taverns and markets to check if anyone is aware of their presence. (Inquiry test)	The GM tells the players that their Subtlety bonus is 1 (when it is really 4); the Acolytes believe that their activities are well-known, causing them to act hastily and recklessly.	After a day, the Acolytes are no wiser. Unfortunately, their reputation as generous spenders and drinkers spreads, decreasing their Subtlety.	Spending a day prowling the local taverns, the Acolytes determine that their presence is mostly unknown. Their current Subtlety bonus is 4.	The Acolytes also discover the name of a certain person who is looking for them—a new potential lead.

Making the Attempt

When attempting to determine their current Subtlety, the players must first decide what exactly the Acolytes are trying to discover, and how they are going about it. For instance, the Acolytes might wish to determine whether locals are gossiping about the new outsiders, or whether a crime lord knows that several of his lieutenants are recently amongst the dead after a shootout. Based on the Acolytes' planned actions, the GM decides on an appropriate skill test to determine the outcome. There are numerous ways the Acolytes can attempt to discover their Subtlety, but likely skills include Awareness or Inquiry. The following are examples of common methods Acolytes can employ in an attempt to discover their warband's Subtlety:

- **Asking Around:** Often, the best way to determine how well-known the group's activities are is to simply ask around. Acolytes must walk a fine line when pursuing such a course of action, however. If they are not careful, they could inadvertently draw attention to themselves through their questions; individuals whom the Acolytes question may have their curiosity piqued and begin making inquiries of their own. For this reason, Acolytes must keep their questions vague or general. This precaution, however, runs the risk of dredging up inaccurate information. This approach relies primarily on use of the Inquiry skill.
- **Observation:** Acolytes can attempt to determine their Subtlety by observing others. This could range from making general examinations of the populace and eavesdropping on conversations, to trailing a suspected heretic to see if his behaviour gives anything away. This strategy poses less risk of backfiring, as the Acolytes do not become directly involved. By the same token, if the Acolytes select the wrong persons or locations to examine, they may find themselves spending a great deal of time with little payoff. This approach commonly calls for Awareness tests.
- **Inspection:** Particularly on more advanced worlds, Acolytes can discern a good deal of information about the relative covertness of their activities by inspecting records and data. This approach covers everything from remotely infiltrating a data-net to examining records at the local Administratum officio. Accessing or understanding such information usually requires specialised skills and knowledge, for the Acolytes must often bypass security measures or decrypt coded information. As such, it calls on an eclectic group of skills such as Tech-Use, Security, or Linguistics.

Attempts to determine Subtlety are not to be undertaken lightly. They require the Acolytes to distil information from a number of sources, which generally takes a considerable amount of time. Exactly how long it takes is at the GM's discretion, but should generally be the better part of a day, or longer. Additionally, the Acolytes must proceed cautiously, lest their efforts to verify the success of their covert attempts actually backfire and tip off their enemies to the warband's presence. Under many circumstances, Acolytes can choose to spend extra time on the attempt, or alternatively to complete it in less than the amount of time the GM states. Taking additional time on the attempt provides a bonus to the skill test, while rushing the attempt provides a penalty.

Unless the GM determines otherwise, only a single Acolyte makes the skill test to determine Subtlety, although he can benefit from assistance from other Acolytes if circumstances warrant. Having too many Acolytes working to determine Subtlety can be counter-productive, making it impossible to get an accurate picture as the various efforts create a sort of "echo chamber" in which the Acolytes own inquiries get back around to them, giving a false impression that others are asking around regarding the Acolytes. As a rough guideline, Acolytes can attempt to determine their Subtlety in as little as half of the time that the GM quotes, but with a –30 penalty to relevant tests, while spending twice as long grants a +20 bonus.

Changing Locations

The Imperium is a fractured empire, spread thinly across the immensity of the galaxy. While worlds within a single system can communicate via a number of conventional methods, interstellar communication requires messengers or Astropaths, methods which are usually costly, slow, or unreliable, and often all three. Further, whether astropathically transmitted or carried by a courier aboard a voidship, interstellar communication must rely on the vagaries of the Warp, with all the unpredictability and danger that entails. For these reasons, it is difficult for a group's reputation to spread from one star system to another with any rapidity. In fact, the Acolytes may very well reach a destination before word of their latest exploits.

When the group travels to a new system, roll 2d10. If the Acolytes' Subtlety is above 50, subtract the result of the roll from their Subtlety, to a minimum of 50. If the group's Subtlety is below 50, add the result of the roll to their Subtlety, to a maximum of 50.

The GM can modify this roll depending on the situation. For example, if the Acolytes are travelling to a system that maintains frequent contact with the world they just departed, the GM might modify the roll by –5, while if they travel to a feral world that has only the most sporadic of contact with the wider Imperium, he might add +10 or more to the result. Additionally, at the GM's discretion, character creation options that affect starting Subtlety can apply during a change in location.

Normally, the Acolytes make a single skill test when attempting to determine Subtlety. Depending on the circumstances and the Acolytes' plan, however, the GM can require multiple skill tests, perhaps by different Acolytes. Additionally, the attempt might take place through several encounters. For instance, if the Acolytes decide to examine the records at the local Sanctionary precinct to see what the local authorities know about the Acolytes' activities, they must first gain access to the records without being caught, which would defeat the purpose. This could include multiple encounters, as the Acolytes break into the precinct house, search for the proper documents, avoid a patrol, and attempt to escape undetected. In this way, determining Subtlety can become the focus for a night's play and make for an exciting adventure in its own right.

The Game Master secretly rolls skill tests to determine Subtlety, so that the players do not know the result. If the skill test is successful, the GM describes the results, narratively providing the players with some idea of their Subtlety. In addition, the GM reveals the group's current Subtlety bonus (the first digit of their Subtlety score).

The Risks of Failure

If the skill test fails, the GM still provides a narrative description of the results. If the test fails with less than two degrees, the GM can, at his discretion, declare that the Acolytes' attempts are simply inconclusive. However, if the test results in two or more degrees of failure, the Acolytes' attempts garner misleading results, and the GM provides an inaccurate number for the group's Subtlety bonus. Just how misleading the results are depends on the number of degrees of failure and the specifics of the situation. The number that the GM provides to the Acolytes is different from their actual Subtlety bonus by an amount equal to the degrees of failure scored on the test. The GM decides if the false result is higher or lower than the Acolytes' actual Subtlety bonus, corresponding to the narrative description he provides. There are many potential outcomes depending on what method the Acolytes used. **Table 8–4 Subtlety Determination Examples** on page 275 provides some examples based on the result of the test and the circumstances.

The GM should describe the results of a failed attempt in the same manner as a successful attempt, so that the players do not become suspicious. This lack of certainty for the players adds an exciting degree of tension to the game, and can make for some very dramatic turns if the Acolytes proceed based on a misunderstanding of the situation.



Social Interaction

"Your gun might kill a man, but my words can sway a world."

–Cleric Leedo Phrexin

Fierce warriors though the Acolytes may be, conversation and non-violent interaction is an important part of Dark Heresy. Asking questions is a big part of most investigations, and a group that lets its guns do all the talking is likely to end up with many corpses but few answers. Inevitably, the Acolytes find themselves interacting with varied and often strange inhabitants of the Imperium, whether by choice or necessity. For the GM, the responsibility of portraying the numerous NPCs with whom the Acolytes interact may seem daunting. To assist the GM in determining how characters respond to the Acolytes, each NPC has a Disposition and Personality. Disposition and Personality serve as useful guidelines for the GM when portraying an NPC, but also provide a way to determine his reaction to the queries, bribes, and threats of the Acolytes. Disposition represents an NPC's opinion of the Acolytes, while Personality affects his behaviour during conversation and defines the effects of interaction skills used by the Acolytes.

Disposition

Disposition is a characteristic possessed only by NPCs. Like other characteristics, it is measured on a scale from 0–100. Disposition represents an NPC's current temperament and his feelings toward the Acolytes. The higher this value, the more likely an NPC is to trust or assist the Acolytes. Conversely, an NPC with a low Disposition is likely to be unhelpful or even hostile toward the Acolytes. At the beginning of a conversation, an NPC's Disposition is based more on his general mood and, potentially, his initial reaction to the Acolytes. As the conversation progresses, Disposition is shaped by what the Acolytes say and how they present themselves.

Disposition is generally used in two ways by the GM. First and more important, Disposition determines an NPC's behaviour toward the Acolytes in conversation, thereby serving to guide the GM in roleplaying the character. The GM accounts for Disposition when portraying an NPC, bringing it through in his words and tone. A low Disposition means the NPC could be rude, standoffish, or terse, while the GM might portray an NPC with a high Disposition as friendly, open, and honest.

Second, Disposition may be used as the basis for a test, just as with other characteristics. Disposition can be tested for a variety of reasons in order to determine how the NPC reacts to the Acolytes. The GM may test Disposition to determine what decision the NPC makes when given a choice by the Acolytes, or to discover whether he is fed up with the Acolytes and ready to abruptly end a conversation.

Testing Disposition

Often during the course of a conversation, an NPC makes decisions based on his feelings and opinions regarding the Acolytes. In these situations, the GM can roll a Disposition test for the character. If this test is successful, the NPC decides in favour of the Acolytes, but if the test is failed, the character makes the decision against the best interests of the Acolytes. The decision could be in response to a direct choice offered by the Acolytes, or may arise out of the conversation and the NPC's thoughts. For instance, if the NPC is secretly a member of the Chaos coven the Acolytes are investigating, the GM might periodically test Disposition in response to the Acolytes' questions, in order to determine if the NPC continues to feign cooperation or decides to cut and run before the Acolytes wise up.

Determining Starting Disposition

Most NPCs are indifferent toward the Acolytes when first encountered, reflected by a Disposition between 40 and 60, depending on the character's mood. However, in the case of some NPCs there are specific factors that can modify starting Disposition:

- **Servants of the Imperium:** An NPC affiliated with the Adeptus Terra or Inquisition begins with a Disposition equal to the highest Influence amongst the Acolytes. If the Acolytes have taken steps to hide their identities, the Game Master can first make a Subtlety test to determine whether the NPC knows who the Acolytes are.
- **Hatred of the Inquisition:** When the Acolytes encounter an NPC who is hostile towards the Inquisition, the GM makes a Subtlety test. If the test fails, the NPC's starting Disposition is reduced by 20, or more at the GM's discretion.
- **Awe of the Inquisition:** When the Acolytes encounter an NPC who is friendly toward or respectful of the Inquisition—as any good Imperial citizen should be—the GM makes a Subtlety test. On a failed test, the NPC's starting Disposition increases by 20, or more at the GM's discretion.

Personality

No two people behave in the same way. One person may be a boisterous conversationalist who responds well to flattery, while another may be a quiet introvert who is easily intimidated. An NPC's response to social interaction is based on his Personality. Personality is a profile that provides general guidance to the GM on how a character behaves during conversation, responds to uses of different skills, and acts when his Disposition reaches zero.

Personality is a tool to assist the GM in running social encounters, and he should not feel restricted by it. GMs should feel free to alter any aspect of a character's Personality based on the situation, his interpretation of that particular character, or the needs of the story.

Personalities and Social Skills

The primary function of Personality is to determine the effectiveness of different Interaction skills on an NPC, and their response to the use of those skills. Each sample Personality includes a table with entries for Interaction skills. The Modifier column shows the modifier applied to all uses of that skill on the NPC, in addition to any other situational modifiers. The Effect column shows how use of each skill affects the NPC's Disposition, as the Acolytes attempt to elicit information or persuade the NPC into a certain course of action. The effect, if any, permanently increases or decreases the NPC's Disposition by an amount based on the degrees of success (DoS) or degrees of failure (DoF) resulting from the skill test.

These sample Personalities also include a description of the action taken by the NPC once his Disposition reaches zero. This is only a suggestion, and the GM should feel free to modify it or select a different response entirely if he deems it appropriate for the individual NPC or the specific circumstances.

Example Personalities

The example Personalities included here are fairly general and represent only a small number of the possible types that NPCs might evince. If the GM finds himself in need of a Personality for an NPC in an unexpected social encounter, he might use one of these. These also offer a good starting point for a GM when designing unique Personalities for his own NPCs. GMs are encouraged to modify these Personalities as they see fit, and create new ones as desired in his campaigns..

Aggressive

The character is openly hostile, bluntly fending off inquiries and other attempts to obtain resources or information from him. This NPC might be very demanding, and can rapidly escalate from discussion to argument in order to meet his own goals for the conversation, even if that is simply to deny whatever the Acolytes want. This Personality is well-suited to NPCs with high Strength or Willpower, but low Fellowship.

Zero Disposition: Once reduced to zero Disposition, this NPC lashes out at the Acolytes. The aim of his attack is probably to scare the Acolytes off, but under some conditions it may be to injure or kill them.

Table 8–5: Aggressive Personality

Skill	Modifier	Effect
Charm	–20	+5 x DoS
Command	+0	+5 x DoF
Deceive	+10	+10 x DoS
Inquiry	+10	–10 x DoF
Intimidate	–10	+5 x DoF
Scrutiny	+20	N/A

Clever

An NPC with this Personality is evasive and misleading, and his speech is often filled with quips and wry asides. Even in the midst of a deathly serious conversation, the character often responds with sarcasm and wit, which he uses to avoid answering unwanted questions. Quick-witted Acolytes garner a positive response from the NPC, while dull conversationalists receive only sharp rebuffs. The Clever NPC succumbs easily to intimidation and brute force, his wall of jocularity collapsing. He generally sees right through lies and deceit.

This Personality is appropriate for NPCs with high Intelligence or Fellowship, but low Strength. This is not to say that the character might not be a worthy adversary, but this sort of NPC generally views violence as an undesirable outcome.

Zero Disposition: When the NPC's Disposition reaches zero, he ends the conversation with a curt remark or misdirection, after which he is dismissive of the Acolytes, refusing to give up any useful information or even interact at all. He might even attempt to move to avoid them. He takes effort to avert future interaction with the Acolytes, going to great lengths to evade encounters.

Table 8–6: Clever Personality

Skill	Modifier	Effect
Charm	+20	+5 x DoS
Command	+10	–10 x DoS
Deceive	–20	+10 x DoS
Inquiry	–10	–10 x DoF
Intimidate	+10	–5 x DoF
Scrutiny	–10	N/A

Confident

This NPC is thoroughly certain of the rightness of his actions, and reflects his conviction in strong and decisive speech. Threats and commands usually only strengthen his opposition, but he is often blind to subtle deception or manipulation. This Personality is ideal for NPCs with high Willpower or Toughness.

Zero Disposition: When the NPC's Disposition is reduced to zero, he ends the conversation forcefully, likely directly telling the Acolytes to leave him alone. In future encounters, the NPC flatly refuses to speak with them.

Table 8–7: Confident Personality

Skill	Modifier	Effect
Charm	+0	+5 x DoS
Command	–10	+5 x DoS
Deceive	+20	–5 x DoF
Inquiry	+10	+10 x DoS
Intimidate	–20	–10 x DoF
Scrutiny	+20	N/A

Submissive

The NPC speaks softly and uncertainly, always giving the impression that he expects someone else to interrupt him at any moment. He is agreeable to almost anything asked of him, and tries to appease everyone, telling them whatever he thinks they want to hear. The NPC is easily pushed around, but it is difficult to obtain useful information or action from him. This Personality is appropriate for NPCs with low Willpower or Fellowship.

Zero Disposition: When the NPC's Disposition reaches zero, he attempts to flee from the Acolytes, departing with a whimper or other suitably meek behaviour. In future encounters, the character again flees at the sight of them. If cornered, the NPC babbles useless appeals to the Acolytes for mercy, forgiveness, or whatever seems appropriate.

Table 8–8: Submissive Personality

Skill	Modifier	Effect
Charm	–20	–5 x DoS
Command	+20	+5 x DoS
Deceive	+0	N/A
Inquiry	+10	+5 x DoS
Intimidate	+20	–5 x DoF
Scrutiny	+0	N/A

Unhinged

This NPC is completely unpredictable when in typical conversation. His answers are often cryptic and confusing, and he constantly derails and muddles the conversation with rambling, unrelated tangents that are difficult to follow.

This Personality is appropriate for NPCs with a high number of Insanity points or who are suffering from madness, but it can also work for eccentric geniuses or other "quirky" characters. With some modification, this Personality can be used to represent an inscrutable xenos, whose responses are unpredictable and bizarre in the eyes of humans.

Zero Disposition: When the NPC's Disposition reaches zero, he can do any number of unexpected things. He could become catatonic, assault the PCs, or adopt another Personality entirely at his starting Disposition. The GM should examine the nature of the NPC and decide on an original response that thematically fits him.



Table 8–9: Unhinged Personality

Skill	Modifier	Effect
Charm	+2d10	+1d5 x DoS
Command	+2d10	–1d5 x DoF
Deceive	+2d10	+1d5 x DoS
Inquiry	–2d10	+1d5 x DoS
Intimidate	+2d10	–1d5 x DoF
Scrutiny	–2d10	–1d5 x DoF

Conversation Structure

Conversation in Dark Heresy is usually very organic, and a game session may seamlessly transfer from narrative to conversation and back again. During a conversation, the GM takes on the role of all the NPCs in the scene, acting out their part of the dialogue (some GMs even use different voices to help distinguish different NPCs). Players, of course, portray their own characters, responding to NPCs and each other, as well as describing any actions they take.

Unlike structured time, there is no Initiative order during conversation, and the action is not divided into turns. As in any conversation, the participants interject their own contributions as appropriate. Some conversations may become pretty intense, and characters may even talk over each other. In such cases, the GM may wish to "pause" the action and allow each player to restate their contribution, to make sure nothing important gets missed in the excitement. The GM might also sometimes need to briefly pause the conversation in order to resolve events occurring during it, such as a player narrating his Acolyte's movements and body language, the GM describing changes to the environment or the actions of NPCs. A common reason for the conversation to pause is for one of the participants to make a Social skill test. This does not mean that the characters involved in the conversation are actually pausing (although it might, in certain dramatic moments), but is a concession to the needs of game mechanics.

Social Skill Tests

Many things can happen in the course of a conversation. In such situations, Acolytes rarely take the time to stop and make small talk—there is almost always a goal in mind with any conversation. As the characters speak, they may attempt to influence, coerce, convince, or trick another character in a significant way. In these cases, the results are determined by Social skill tests. As with other activities, a test is only necessary if there is a chance of failure and the result has some impact on the story. An Acolyte telling a dreg that he has no money to spare does not call for a Deceive test, unless the GM plans for the insane dreg to seek revenge on liars.

Before making a Social skill test, the player describes or acts out how he intends to perform his appeal, trick, or threat. If the GM feels that a test is needed to determine the outcome, he and the player work together to determine a skill and characteristic most appropriate for the circumstances (as always, the GM has the final word). The GM then tells the player the difficulty of the test, factoring in both the NPC's Disposition and any other applicable modifiers for the situation, just as with any other test.

There are five Interaction skills primarily used in conversation: Charm, Command, Deceive, Intimidate, and Scrutiny. A character uses Charm when he wants to make a good impression or convince an NPC to assist him, Command to issue orders, Deceive to lie or cheat, and Intimidate to frighten or coerce a target. Scrutiny is usually used as a response to another character's actions; for instance, to detect if a character is lying, or to subtly study a conversation in order to find some detail he can use to his advantage. The above are just examples of common uses; each of these skills has a variety of different uses based on different characteristics, the situation, and the characters involved. As always, players are encouraged to come up with new and creative uses for skills, and they are not necessarily

restricted to those described here. For instance, in order to impress a hardened gunslinger, an Acolyte might make a Ballistic Skill test to strike a coin tossed into the air or perform some other feat of trick-shooting, with the degrees of success or failure influencing the NPC's Disposition as the GM feels appropriate. Although Ballistic Skill is normally used in combat, in this case the Acolyte is using it in order to influence an NPC during a social encounter, rather than to injure or kill an enemy.

Social skill tests are used during a conversation to represent important turning points and pivotal moments, and should only be called for when there are consequences for success or failure that would serve to advance the narrative in some way. If an Acolyte's lie, threat, or trick is not capable of having a significant effect, the GM can simply act out the NPC's response according to his Personality and Disposition, as normal.

NPCs and Social Skill Tests

Normally, NPCs do not make Social skill tests. Many players do not enjoy having their characters' actions decided by a roll of the dice. If a player has established his Acolyte as a tough and no-nonsense Arbitrator, he might not like a poor roll to result in his character being intimidated by an obscura-addled underhive scum. In some cases, however, it might be very appropriate and useful. For instance, if a player suspects that an NPC is lying to his character, the GM could make a Deceive test for the NPC, opposed by the Acolyte's Scrutiny skill. Even if the player does not suspect the deception (some GMs develop a very good poker face), the GM can call for an Opposed test to determine whether or not the Acolyte suspects. Different groups may have different preferences when it comes to NPCs using Social skills, and GMs and players should work together to figure out what works best for them. The success or failure of the test determines the change to the NPC's Disposition based on his Personality. The NPC's Personality also provides a guide for the GM to determine the NPC's reaction, whether a snappy comeback for a Clever character, or a subtle threat for a Confident NPC.

Interactions and Groups

Often, an Acolyte finds himself in situations where he needs to convince, mislead, or command multiple NPCs simultaneously. When using a Social skill to affect a group, a player resolves the test as normal, with the following changes:

- The test is only modified once for Personality. It is rare for an entire group to possess the same Personality, so the GM should choose which to use. This is usually the most vocal or commanding person in the group, but it might also be a quiet but respected elder, or a character holding a position of authority within the group.
- The test affects a number of NPCs equal to the Acolyte's Fellowship bonus. Regardless of which Personality was used to modify the test difficulty, each NPC reacts according to his individual Personality.

Investigation

"The heretic cannot be perfect, for he has rejected the Emperor. Being imperfect, he cannot perfectly hide his foul deeds. Unhidden deeds means we cannot fail to detect them. Once detected, he is dead. The logic is absolutely unassailable."

–Arbitrator Gynt Rapphus

As Acolytes of an Inquisitor, the impetus behind most Dark Heresy adventures is investigation. As the game proceeds, the story is guided by the Acolytes finding evidence and following leads as they work to root out the enemies of the Imperium and halt their sinister plots. This is usually a very natural process, with the GM setting the scene and providing clues for the Acolytes to find, and the players guiding the investigation as they discover and analyse clues, then decide which leads to pursue and how to go about doing so.

The structure of an investigation can be broken down into two fundamental components: clues and leads. Clues are the physical evidence or information that directly relate to whatever the Acolytes are investigating. Leads are the hints each clue provides on the direction the Acolytes should turn next in the course of their investigation. Each clue the Acolytes find often offers multiple leads. Some might be dead ends, while others lead to additional clues. As the Acolytes follow leads and uncover additional clues, they create a web that forms the structure of the investigation, and reveal what is really happening in the story—or at least enough to lead them to their quarry.

Clues

Clues represent all the evidence Acolytes find in the course of an investigation, whether physical or informational. Clues are the most important part of an investigation, for they provide answers to the Acolytes' questions, as well as opening new questions that guide the Acolytes closer to solving the mystery, halting the heretics, and completing the investigation. A clue might be anything from a bolt casing found at the scene of a crime, to a name pried telepathically from the mind of a captured heretic, to even the absence of the correct amount of blood from a brutally murdered noble. Everything can be a clue, so it is up to the Acolytes to not only gather them, but also sift through them to determine which are truly relevant to the investigation. Some might even lead them into other directions, and become the basis for new adventures.

Each relevant clue creates at least one new lead for the Acolytes to follow. Some leads are readily apparent, while others can be discovered by using a variety of different skills to further inspect the clue.

Types of Clues

Clues can be broadly divided into three categories: physical, informational, and correlational. Each clue is described further below, along with possible skill uses to acquire clues of each type. For more information on skill uses and how they can be applied to an investigation, see **Chapter III: Skills**.

Physical

Physical clues are any tangible evidence found in the course of an investigation. Physical clues tend to be the most reliable for advancing an investigation, as they are least open to interpretation, harder to falsify, and more easily shared with allies and subjected to further scrutiny. Witnesses may lie or make mistakes, and deductions can be incorrect, but physical evidence is difficult to fake. Acolytes can usually rely on their skills or on the abilities of others to authenticate physical evidence.

Perhaps as important as the presence of a physical clue is its absence in some situations. When an object expected to be found in a certain place is missing, it is often of significance to the investigation.

The following skill uses are helpful in locating physical clues, or verifying the lack thereof:

- **Deceive:** Deception can gain access to clues that would otherwise be out of the Acolytes' reach. For instance, an Acolyte might pose as a magistrate in order to access the local Enforcers' evidence locker, so that the Acolytes can examine a strange statue confiscated during a raid. While invoking the authority of their master or drawing on their own Influence can often obtain the same results, these approaches are more likely to reduce the group's Subtlety.
- **Awareness:** Perhaps the most basic method for locating clues is to carefully search the scene of a crime or heresy. Skilled investigators can often find hidden or concealed clues which others overlook, such as searching a room and discovering a rune-encrusted amulet hidden beneath a loose floorboard.
- **Scrutiny:** Keen-eyed Acolytes can identify the relevance of seemingly innocuous details and their importance, such as footprints on a dusty floor, or recent scratches on a hiver's arm. Acolytes should always be alert for suspicious objects or behaviour, for heresy lurks everywhere. Though constant vigilance, Acolytes can uncover important clues to the current investigation, or even the seeds of an unrelated heresy.
- **Sleight of Hand:** When acting subtly, Acolytes often need to obtain physical clues without tipping off suspects or others. Acolytes can use sleight of hand to swap out fake placeholders in order to buy more time, or simply to lift an incriminating or informative piece of evidence from an unsuspecting owner. For instance, an undercover Acolyte speaking with a nobleman suspected of trading in xenos goods might use this skill to surreptitiously take a dataslate from the noble's desk.
- **Survival:** Acolytes who feel at home in natural surroundings can often detect clues that others might ignore. For instance, an Acolyte could use the Survival skill to discover claw prints belonging to no native species near a mutilated corpse, showing what seems a simple animal attack to be much more.

Informational

Informational clues include any knowledge or data acquired in the course of an investigation. Acolytes may obtain informational clues by any number of means, including questioning witnesses, interrogating suspects, and reading musty old tomes. Informational clues are most easily faked, and Acolytes must often authenticate or prove these clues through physical or corroborating evidence before acting upon them.



As with physical clues, the absence of information can be a clue in itself. If a dataslate has been wiped clean, or a person refuses to give certain information, the Acolytes may rightly become suspicious. The knowledge that someone has deliberately concealed or destroyed information can be used to great effect in an investigation, yielding many new leads.

The following are some of the skills most commonly used to find informational clues:

- **Charm:** In the course of an investigation, Acolytes often need information from individuals who, while not heretics or actual enemies, are recalcitrant to reveal much. Whether this is due to fear, greed, hostility, or simple disinterest, Acolytes can learn much by simply winning their way into the good graces of these NPCs.
- **Deceive:** For Acolytes acting covertly, interrogation of suspects is often not an option. By posing as a potential or current ally, Acolytes can fool heretics into revealing damning information about themselves and accomplices. For instance, Acolytes may pose as criminal thugs in order to trick a recidivist into revealing his boss's identity.
- **Logic:** To locate informational clues, Acolytes must often sift through vast amounts of data. Acolytes might use Logic when examining star charts to determine the timing of a celestial conjunction that is prophesied to herald the return of a powerful Daemon Prince, or listening to hours of vox recordings to identify code words.

- **Interrogation:** Threatening and interrogating suspects and witnesses is, unsurprisingly, a common tactic for Acolytes in service of an Inquisitor, particularly once the time for subtlety has passed. When threats of the Emperor's wrath are not enough, careful application of the principles of excruciation can loosen even the most stubborn heretic's tongue, such as interrogating a cultist to discover where his brethren gather.
- **Lore (Common, Scholastic, & Forbidden):** It is often existing knowledge that illuminates the relevance or meaning of clues. For example, an Acolyte could make a Forbidden Lore test to recognise words scrawled in blood on a hab wall as referencing the legend of the Stalking Crimson and thus opening up an important new lead.

Correlational

Correlational clues are a special kind of informational clue that are discovered by drawing conclusions based on the comparison of multiple other clues. By looking at the relations and connections of other clues, an Acolyte may come to important conclusions regarding the investigation. Collecting multiple physical and informational clues and cross-examining them to find correlational clues can produce some of the most effective leads. In fact, correlational clues are often those "breakthrough" moments in the investigation that precede the final, climactic encounters.

The following skill uses are often helpful in discovering correlational clues:

- **Logic:** Once a group of Acolytes collects multiple clues, it is often necessary to deduce the connections and "fill in the blanks." Acolytes might examine the details of several ritual murders and conclude that more than one malefic group is at work. An Acolyte could use this skill to match the group's knowledge of a Chaos cult's activities to a seemingly innocuous statement by the local parish preacher, thus realising that he is a hidden cultist.
- **Scrutiny:** Before they can make sense of the clues they acquire, Acolytes must often conduct intensive research or study. They could use this skill, for example, to examine decades' worth of Administratum records to find discrepancies regarding the Luftius Rogue Trader dynasty, whose name comes up repeatedly during an investigation of smuggled xenos weapons.

Unnatural Clues

In addition to the three basic types of clues, there is a fourth, rarer variety of clue: the unnatural clue. Fundamentally a type of information clue, unnatural clues are gained by looking beyond the material world to ascertain information unattainable through normal means. This usually means a psyker drawing on powers of divination, but could also be obtained through means such as reading of the Emperor's Tarot. Because it often includes harnessing the power of the Warp, unnatural clues can be the most dangerous to pursue.

Leads

Leads are what drive an investigation onward, pointing the Acolytes to various potential paths and solutions. A lead gives the Acolytes guidance on where and how to go about searching for the next clues in their investigation. Each clue that the Acolytes discover reveals one or more new leads. Some leads could be dead ends or irrelevant red herrings, but others reveal new clues, bringing the Acolytes closer to the successful completion of their investigation.

Leads can potentially be one of the more difficult aspects of an investigation for the Acolytes to follow. Since a single clue can present multiple leads, the agents could have difficulty deciding which course to pursue. Some clues can produce many leads, only one of which connects back to the investigation, making it easy for the Acolytes to get side-tracked on a course of action that has no chance of resulting in further clues (see the **Dead End Leads** sidebar on page 283). To steer the investigation back in the right direction, Acolytes can use various skills to determine which leads are the most promising.

The following are examples of the many skill uses that can help the Acolytes to determine leads and choose which to pursue:

- **Awareness:** This skill is, of course, invaluable for discovering and following leads. For example, successful use can prompt an Acolyte to take a pocket chrono from the scene of a murder. Asking around amongst the deceased's acquaintances reveals that the item did not belong to him, from which the Acolyte deduces that it must have been torn away from the murderer during the struggle; if he finds the chrono's owner, he finds the killer.
- **Logic:** Application of the principles of logic can reveal many leads from a clue, whether physical or informational. For instance, after intercepting a coded message sent by heretics, the Acolytes must utilise this skill to decipher its meaning before they can act on it. If they are unable to crack the code, the Acolytes realise that their enemy is a highly intelligent and educated person, leading their investigation towards the nearby universitariat.
- **Scrutiny and Commerce:** Close observation is often an effective means of prising leads from a physical clue. An Acolyte could use Commerce to determine that a reliquary found in the temple of a murdered cleric is actually a fake. This could prompt the Acolytes to research the cleric's past—perhaps he was not the honest and pious man he seemed.

Types of Leads

Leads can take any number of forms, but the following are the most common types which Acolytes may pursue in an investigation. These descriptions are broad, and many clues offer effective leads of more than one type. Indeed, many approaches that the Acolytes can take, whether the GM expects it or not, incorporate several types of leads. Leads are a resource to aid GMs in constructing their own mysteries for Acolytes to solve, and GMs should never feel restricted when it comes to types of leads. Sometimes, a lead can arise due to unforeseen player actions or while the GM unfolds an encounter, and might not fit neatly into a single category. In such instances, it is usually not strictly necessary to classify the lead, so long as the GM knows how it can advance the story.

Association

Nearly every clue found in the course of an investigation ties back to a person in some way. It may not be the character the Acolytes are looking for, or even an individual directly involved in the subject of the investigation, but the person almost always has some new information to contribute to the investigation, even if they fail to realize its significance. Looking into who owned an object, originated a piece of information, or knew a victim, might vary greatly depending on the planet on which the investigation is taking place. On a developed Imperial world, there could be extensive Administratum records to search, while tracking down a clue's source on an undeveloped frontier world might require days of footwork. Of course, this can also vary by location—searching for a source in the main levels of Hive Desoleum might yield adequate records and cooperative witnesses, while doing so in the lower reaches might be fraught with peril as the Acolytes search through mountains of refuse and collapsed corridors.

Such individuals might be entirely ignorant of the heresy the Acolytes are investigating, but this may not stop the Acolytes from holding suspicions about the character's link to the case. If the individual is important or influential, this may be a problem, but usually a hefty dose of suspicion is appropriate. If a few innocents burn in the course of an investigation, so be it.

Authentication

Not all clues are as they first appear. Many clues can be falsified, perhaps by a guilty party attempting to avoid justice or misdirect the Acolytes. Informational clues, as already discussed, are the most easily faked, and characters may lie for all number of reasons, whether to conceal guilt, or out of fear or malice. Physical clues, while more difficult to fake, can still be fabricated. However, Acolytes can often discern a forgery by relying on their various skills, especially Scrutiny or Commerce.

Even a faked clue can provide valuable leads in the right direction—if the Acolytes identify it as such. Discovering who is responsible for the planted evidence can often bring the Acolytes that much closer to completing their investigation, for whoever did so is surely involved. Conversely, confirming that a clue is authentic can verify the Acolytes are on the right track.

Tracking

Some clues inform the Acolytes of the next clue they need, but not how to locate it. Tracking down a particular object or piece of information in the depths of a sprawling hive city or unfamiliar, hostile landscape (which might, of course, be one and the same) can make for one of the most challenging and time-consuming aspects of an investigation. Acolytes can employ any number of approaches to this task, drawing from a variety of skills. While one Acolyte might use his Survival skill to follow the physical trail back to its source, another might hit the streets, asking around for information. An Acolyte with an understanding of the mysteries of technology might access decaying cogitator-stacks, or use arcane instruments of detection to locate the next clue. Poring over the volumes of an ancient librarium, interrogating a suspected heretic, and even calling on the esoteric abilities of a psyker are just some of the methods Acolytes may use to find their way to the next clue.

Dead-End Leads

While some players may enjoy the challenge and excitement of dead ends, false trails, and counter-productive leads, others may simply find them frustrating. GMs should be prepared to work with their players on this subject, as it is important for everyone at the table to have a good time. For groups that do not enjoy dead-end leads, GMs should work to ensure that any lead the Acolytes follow advances the story in some way, even if it is simply a minor clue that points back to the "correct" lead the Acolytes originally decided against. Often, some minor adjustments to the plot can serve to keep the investigation moving forward, even when the players pick the "wrong" lead, or go off in a direction the GM never foresaw. This can also apply to clues. Perhaps the Acolytes fixate on an object or piece of information that the GM included simply to help set the scene and further immerse the players in the setting of Dark Heresy. Players, particularly in a group, have a tendency to latch on to something insignificant and convince themselves of its importance. In these cases, it may be more fun for everyone if the GM modifies the adventure plot so that one of the leads from this "false" clue in fact does serve to progress the investigation in some way, either leading to the next clue, or leading back to the "correct" clue the players originally ignored.

History

Learning a clue's history is often an effective way to uncover further information to progress the investigation. Whether physical or informational, knowing where a clue originated and how it came to be in the Acolytes' possession can uncover new revelations to aid the investigation. Unearthing such details can often be very challenging. Tracing a rumour back to its source might take many days of inquiring amongst the populace at all manner of locales. Discovering the origin of an object might require the Acolytes to consult experts on similar items, or even to access the secret lore of the Adeptus Mechanicus. Psychic powers can also be an effective and expeditious way to uncover such information, but as always, drawing on the power of the Warp is dangerous in itself.

Motivation

Getting inside the head of an investigation's target to understand his motivation can be a potent, if dangerous, tool. By their very nature, the Acolytes' foes are heretics or even inhuman, and to ponder overlong on the thought processes of such individuals is to risk corruption and heresy. Nevertheless, stopping the plots of the Acolytes' enemies often requires some degree of understanding, for if the Acolytes can predict their opponent's next move, it is that much easier to catch them. By comparing physical clues connected to the target, or informational clues that describe him, a rough profile can be developed, outlining the motivations and goals of the foe. The Acolytes can use this profile to better guide their own efforts, making educated guesses about their target's next moves and future plans. If such predictions hold true, the Acolytes may be able to stop their foe before his plan comes to fruition.

Method

Many investigations begin with the Acolytes looking into an event that has already occurred and attempting to determine how it was accomplished. This may mean locating individual clues and figuring out how they were involved and contributed to the event. This process is closely tied to a clue's history, and these two types of leads often go hand in hand.

Conducting the Investigation

Investigations can come in many forms. Some follow a linear progression, where a clue develops into a lead, which then results in a new clue, continuing in this form until a final confrontation resolves the investigation. This can be expanded where multiple clues direct leads, running in parallel where any one path might point to the same destination. Some have a single major clue, such as a recovered heretical tome, with multiple leads branching out from it, and each lead offering new clues and information, such as the tome's origin or ways to decipher its mysterious glyphs. Once the original clue is fully unravelled, then the warband might know enough to conclude the investigation.

As the Acolytes gather more information, they start to form hypotheses to explain what they have learned, which can then direct their actions to resolve the matter (often violently). They must take care not to act too early, however. A swift raid against a xenos weapon dealer might take him down permanently, but more time observing his actions could lead to uncovering his supplier and tracking down more of the illegal items. Waiting too long could allow them to spread further, and even introduce foul relics that corrupt souls. Timing major actions to greatest benefit is the mark of a veteran warband, but even skilled Acolytes might find their hand forced and thus have to act early. In the same example, if a cult planned a raid on the xenos relic dealer to steal the weapons and launch a major attack, the Acolytes might want to shut down the dealer quickly before the cult became too powerful.

Acolytes typically begin an investigation through the direction of their Inquisitor, either from a received message or direct assignment. In such cases, unless they are consumed with a more pressing concern (such as an imminent daemonic incursion or other extraordinary event), this generally decides the focus and direction for their following actions, such as where to start their inquiries. Acolytes often uncover conspiracies and possible heresies in the course of other actions, allowing for other options should they wish to pursue them. This might require their Inquisitor's approval or at least notification, depending on his personality and how the GM wishes to guide the ongoing campaign. Allowing the Acolytes to choose their investigations can make for interesting new adventures, and GMs are always encouraged to plant the seeds for new adventures in the course of their current storyline to allow for this. This also can make for good roleplaying as the warband, faced with several possible new investigations, might have to determine which to begin. They might go for one that seems more direct, with the fastest resolution but also perhaps with the least actual threat if left unresolved. They could instead go after one that might turn into nothing more than rumours and smoke, but could also be a wide conspiracy that might have tendrils across the sector. Minor, seemingly unrelated investigations might even turn into a large network of connected heresies and introduce a new arch-nemesis who has been guiding them for years.

Each warband also generally develops its own investigative style as they work together and develop group and individual strengths. Some might favour an obvious presence, using this to help flush out suspects. Others prefer stealth, perhaps infiltrating suspect groups. Some work with local authorities, using connections and influence to aid their efforts; their opposites might always work alone, distrusting anyone not part of their warband. It is important to note there is no right or wrong style, only what is effective. Above all, the Inquisition prizes results and the ends justify the means.



Fear, Madness, and Damnation

"Only the insane have strength enough to prosper; only those that prosper truly judge what is sane."

–Anon

In their service to Mankind, Acolytes face innumerable horrors—more than enough to shred the sanity and soul of a normal man. In combating the servants of Chaos, Acolytes risk corruption from the very forces they seek to defeat. Being present at profane ceremonies, reading forbidden texts, and being exposed to the powers of the Warp can corrupt the body and soul. Acolytes encounter many horrific sights, from grisly murders to terrifying xenos creatures. Fear can be a powerful obstacle to overcome, and repeated exposure to experiences of this sort slowly but surely erodes the sanity of even the strongest of wills. More than intellect or skill at arms, it is perhaps the capacity to face such horrors with one's sanity and soul intact that most distinguishes an Acolyte from the countless servants of the Imperium. Indeed, it is perhaps the ability to comprehend and fight on in the face of such threats that is the very making of an Inquisitor.

The following rules provide game mechanics to represent the threats to mind and soul which Acolytes must face. These rules are separated into two primary sections: dealing with Fear, and dealing with Insanity and Corruption. Fear concerns the Acolytes' immediate, visceral response to horrifying events, creatures, and experiences. Insanity explores the long-term effects of fears; even after an Acolyte overcomes his fear, the damage to his psyche remains, and as horror piles upon horror, he may eventually succumb to madness. Even more insidious, Corruption represents the lasting effects of exposure to Chaos, the Warp, and revelations of forbidden knowledge that can ruin a soul. Even the stoutest heart cannot face exposure such unnatural terrors unchanged, and though the effects can remain hidden for many years, eventually slow corruption can damn an Acolyte as surely as an unholy daemonic bargain.

During combat encounters, only the rules for Fear are generally used. The effects of Insanity and Corruption are usually dealt with in the aftermath of a battle rather than during it.

Insanity and Corruption Points

Insanity points (IsP) and Corruption points (CP) are characteristics that increase for PC's over the course of play. Both of these scores begin at 0 when a PC begins the game and increase over time as damage is done to a character's state of mind (as demonstrated by Insanity points) and the purity of his soul (as demonstrated by Corruption points). The higher these scores, the more tainted, damaged, and debilitated a character becomes, and should either of these scores ever reach 100, the character is either slain by his Inquisitor or fellow Acolytes for his own good, or falls from grace and becomes an enemy of Mankind. In either case, he can no longer serve his Inquisitor—he is lost in the eyes of the Emperor and must be retired from play.

Fear

The nightmarish galaxy of Dark Heresy is inimical to humanity, and Acolytes must battle against terrifying aliens, perversions of science, unholy entities from beyond the veil, and innumerable other horrors in the course of their duties. The mere knowledge that such things exist is deathly terrifying to the average citizen of the Imperium. In the course of their investigations, Acolytes come face-to-face with horrific creatures and experience terrifying events, from bloody mass sacrifices in the name of dark gods to impossible xenos monstrosities from the darkest void. Overcoming their fear in order to fight on against such terrors can be amongst the greatest challenges Acolytes must face.

When a PC is confronted by such a frightening event or adversary, he must make a Fear test; this is a Willpower test, which is modified by how frightening the horror he faces is. If the PC passes this test, then he continues to act as normal. If he fails, however, he succumbs to Fear.

Degrees of Fear

Fear can come in many forms, but some things are clearly more frightening than others. A horrid cult sacrifice could break the morale of a novice Acolyte, while a Bloodthirster's appearance might completely destroy his mind. **Table 8–10: Fear Test Difficulties** shows the penalties to Fear tests based on the degree of Fear of the source.

Table 8–10: Fear Test Difficulties

Degree of Fear	Test Modifier
Fear (1) Disturbing	+0
Fear (2) Frightening	–10
Fear (3) Horrifying	–20
Fear (4) Terrifying	–30

Failing the Fear Test

If a character fails a Fear test in a combat situation, he must immediately roll on **Table 8–11: Shock** on page 287, adding +10 to the result for each degree of failure after the first. The effects listed are applied immediately to the character. At the GM's discretion, depending on the situation and the cause of the Fear, he may also assign Insanity points to characters who fail a Fear test.

If the character fails a Fear test in a non-combat situation, he becomes unnerved and suffers a –10 penalty to any skill or test that requires concentration. This penalty lasts while the character remains in the vicinity of the source of his Fear (simply leaving and coming back again doesn't stop this). Whenever a character fails a Fear test by 3 or more degrees of failure, he also gains 1d5 Insanity points. In special situations or settings, the Game Master should feel free to also apply alternate or other effects, such as levels of Fatigue.

Very Bad Things

Fear tests in non-combat situations are very much the GM's call as to when and where they occur, and should not be considered automatic. They can be best used to bring home the horrific nature of a scene. The following are some guidelines for setting degrees of Fear outside of combat, and examples of situations that would cause a Fear test other than those triggered by an enemy's Fear trait:

- **Fear (1) Disturbing:** Viewing the scene of a gruesome murder, or seeing minor unknown supernatural or psychic phenomena—strange lights, spectral voices, weeping statues, and other unnatural occurrences.
- **Fear (2) Frightening:** Meeting someone known to be dead, being buried alive, or encountering major supernatural phenomena—the skies raining blood, paintings coming to life, or flesh bursting into flame.
- **Fear (3) Horrifying:** Sudden, shocking, and inexplicable death (maggot swarms exploding out of a fellow Acolyte), hideous moments of revelation (awakening covered in blood, surrounded by torn open bodies), the dead rising across a whole planet, or other mind-wrenching events.
- **Fear (4) Terrifying:** Experiencing a full-scale daemonic incursion, discovering a personal failure is responsible for the wasted deaths of untold millions or an entire planet, staring unprotected into the Warp.

Shock and Snapping Out of It

Characters can try to shake off some of the effects of Fear after the initial shock has worn off. Where specified on **Table 8–11: Shock** that a character can "snap out of it," he makes a Willpower test in his next turn. If successful, he regains his senses, shrugs off the effects, and can act normally. If he fails, the effect continues and the character can try to snap out of it again in the following turn, and so on.

Insanity

Characters in Dark Heresy are at the centre of terrible events: battling indescribable horrors, uncovering shocking truths, and engaging in desperate struggles where countless lives and souls hang in the balance. Such are the stresses and terrors involved that the slow slide into insanity is a constant threat. No human mind, not even one hardened by the harsh rigours of life in the Imperium, is immune to the slow erosion of sanity by the horrors of the 41st Millennium, and Acolytes are no exception.

In Dark Heresy these dangers are represented by Insanity points. These represent the strain put on a character's mind by his experiences; the more Insanity points, the more fragile his mind has become. The cumulative effects of Insanity points are divided into Traumas, which represent the short term after-effects of particularly terrible experiences, and Disorders, which are permanent mental afflictions that mark a character's slide into total madness.

Table 8–11: Shock

Roll 1d100 and add +10 for every degree of failure after the first on the Fear test

Roll	Result
01–20	The character is badly startled. He can only take a single Half Action during his next turn, but afterward he acts normally.
21–40	Fear grips the character and he begins to shake and tremble. He suffers a –10 penalty on all tests for the rest of the encounter unless he can recover his wits (see Shock and Snapping Out of It, page 286).
41–60	Reeling with shock, the character backs away from the source of his Fear. He cannot willingly approach the object of his Fear, but can otherwise act normally, with a –10 penalty on all tests until the end of the encounter.
61–80	The character is frozen by terror. He can take no actions until he recovers himself (see Shock and Snapping Out of It, page 286). After snapping out of it, he makes all tests with a –10 penalty for the rest of the encounter.
81–100	Panic grips the character. He must flee the source of his fear, if able, as fast as he can, and if prevented from doing so, can only take Half Actions and is at a –20 penalty to all tests. Once away from the danger, he must successfully Snap Out of It (see Shock and Snapping Out of It, page 286) to regain control.
101–120	Fainting dead away, the character keels over and remains Unconscious for 1d5 rounds. Once he regains consciousness, he is still shaken and takes all tests with a –10 penalty until the end of the encounter.
121–130	Totally overcome, the character screams and vomits uncontrollably for 1d5 rounds. During this time he can do nothing, and drops anything he is holding. Afterward, until the end of the encounter, the character can only take a single Half Action each turn.
131–140	The character laughs hysterically and randomly attacks anything near him in a manic frenzy, firing wildly or attacking with whatever he has at hand. This effect lasts until the character Snaps Out of It (see Shock and Snapping Out of It, page 286), or until he is knocked Unconscious or otherwise incapacitated.
141–160	The character crumples to the ground for 1d5+1 rounds and begins sobbing, babbling, and tearing at his own flesh, and can do nothing else. Even after he returns to his senses, he is a complete mess, and suffers a –20 penalty on all tests until the end of the encounter.
161–170	The character's mind snaps. He becomes catatonic for 1d5 hours; for that time, he is Unconscious and cannot be roused.
171+	The character is so overcome with terror that his heart stops: he must make a Challenging (+0) Toughness test or die. If he succeeds, the character still falls Unconscious for 1d5 hours, and cannot be roused for that time.

Degrees of Madness

A character is classified as having a certain degree of Madness depending on how many Insanity points he has accumulated. This classification gives a player a broad idea of the state of a character's mind and how close to the edge he has become. A character's degree of Madness also determines the modifier that he applies to tests taken to avoid Mental Trauma.

Mental Trauma

Mental Trauma represents the relatively short-term damage to a character's state of mind that he suffers after experiencing a particularly horrific event. Each time the character's Insanity point total rises by another 10 points, he must make a Trauma test. This is a Willpower test, modified in difficulty by how many Insanity points the character has accrued in total (see **Table 8–12: Insanity Track**, page 240). If the character passes the test, he manages to cope with his experience without any ill effect. If he fails the test, roll on **Table 8–13: Mental Traumas**, adding 10 to the roll for every degree of failure. This result is applied in the aftermath of any encounter that inflicted the Insanity points.

Gaining Mental Disorders

Mental disorders reflect the permanent, long-term effects on a character's mind of the horrors of the battlefield. A character automatically gains a new disorder (or a more severe version of an existing disorder) each time he acquires a certain number of Insanity points. A character gains one Minor Disorder when he reaches 40 Insanity points, one Severe Disorder when he reaches 60 Insanity points, and one Acute Disorder when he reaches 80 Insanity points (these correspond to the character becoming "Disturbed," "Unhinged," and "Deranged" on **Table 8–12: The Insanity Track**, page 288).

Disorders can be selected by the GM, or the GM can allow the player to select one if he prefers. A character must have the preceding severity of a disorder for it to get worse, so for a disorder to become "Severe" the character must have the "Minor" version of the disorder first.

Disorders and Their Severity

The effect a mental disorder has on a character is left largely up to the GM, though the descriptions presented below provide some guidelines. If a character finds himself in a situation or encounter where his disorder will be immediately or dangerously detrimental, he can make a Willpower test. Success means that he is able to ignore the effects of the disorder for the remainder of the encounter.

All disorders are rated as Minor, Severe, or Acute, in ascending order of effect.

- **Minor Disorder:** The effects of the disorder manifest rarely or exhibit a fairly weak compulsion. Any test to overcome the effects of the disorder gains a +10 bonus.
- **Severe Disorder:** The effects of the disorder are stronger and may manifest regularly. There is no modifier to tests made to overcome the effects of the disorder.
- **Acute Disorder:** The effects of the disorder are very strong and will trigger at the slightest stimulation. Any tests to overcome the effects of the disorder are made a –10 penalty.

Table 8–12: The Insanity Track

ISP Total	Degree of Madness	Trauma Modifier	Disorder
01–09	Stable	N/A	None
10–19	Unsettled	+10	—
20–29	Unsettled	+10	—
30–39	Unsettled	+10	—
40–49	Disturbed	+0	1st–Minor
50–59	Disturbed	+0	—
60–69	Unhinged	–10	2nd–Severe
70–79	Unhinged	–10	—
80–89	Deranged	–20	3rd–Acute
90–99	Deranged	–20	—
100+	Terminally Insane—Character retires from play. *Your service will be remembered.*		

Table 8–13: Mental Traumas

Roll 1d100 and add +10 for every degree of failure after the first on the Trauma test

Roll	Result
01–40	The character becomes withdrawn and quiet. He suffers a –10 penalty to all Fellowship-based tests for 3d10 hours.
41–70	The character must compulsively perform an action (such as fevered praying, frantically cleaning a weapon, etc.) and pays little attention to anything else. He suffers a –10 penalty to all test based on Intelligence, Fellowship, and Perception. This effect lasts for 3d10 hours.
71–100	The character is constantly fearful, seeing danger everywhere, and is extremely jumpy. The character gains a +10 bonus to all Perception-based tests and is at a –10 penalty to Willpower tests for the next 1d5 days.
101–120	The character suffers from a temporary Severe phobia (see Gaining Mental Disorders, page 287). This effect lasts for 1d5 days.
121–130	The character reacts to the slightest stress or pressure by becoming extremely agitated. When performing any task that involves a test, the character must first pass a Willpower test or suffer a –10 modifier to the test. During combat encounters, he suffers a –10 penalty on all tests. This effect lasts for 1d5 days.
131–140	The character suffers vivid and extreme nightmares whenever he tries to sleep. The next day, and for a further 1d10 days, the character is exhausted by a lack of sleep and gains 1 level of Fatigue.
141–150	The character is struck dumb and is unable to speak. This lasts for 1d5 days.
151–160	Extremely distressed and unfocused, the character refuses to eat or drink, and looks to be in a terrible state. Reduce all of the character's characteristics by 10 (to a minimum of 1) for 1d10 days.
161–170	The character suffers a fit of hysterics, and becomes temporarily blind or deaf for 1d10 days.
171+	The character becomes completely traumatised and virtually unresponsive. He cannot initiate actions, but can be gently led. This effect lasts for 1d10 days.

Types of Mental Disorders

The range and scale of unpleasant disorders that might afflict a character is potentially limitless, and a few examples are presented here. GMs should also feel free to invent their own to suit individual characters and the terrible trials they've undergone. Below are a few examples of common battlefield disorders, any of which may progress during a character's development from Minor to Acute:

Phobia

The character has a deep fear of a particular thing or circumstance. A phobic character must succeed on a Willpower test to interact with the sources of his phobia. Enforced or gratuitous exposure to the source of his disorder may incur Fear tests. Examples of this disorder include:

Fear of the Dead: The character has an abiding fear and loathing of corpses and the dead, and can't stand to be around them for any length of time. Perhaps this is because sometimes they refuse to stay dead, or have others inhabit their flesh...

Fear of Insects: Scuttling, carapaced things with many legs are the stuff of this character's waking nightmares: faceless, numberless, and hungry, forever hungry.

Obsession/Compulsion

The character has a compulsion to perform a particular action or is obsessed with a particular thing. A character must make a Willpower test not to act in a compulsive way or pursue his obsession when the opportunity arises. Examples of this disorder:

Kleptomania: A character compulsively steals small objects if he has the opportunity. Often the character attaches no value to the items, he just feels the need to steal them.

Self-Mortification: The character feels the need to scourge and whip his flesh on a regular basis in order to purge away the sin of his actions through pain. This may be tied to a particular event, such as killing or thinking impure thoughts.

The Flesh is Weak: The character blames the limitations of his own body for his failures and problems. He becomes increasingly obsessed with surgical modification and bionic replacement.

Visions and Voices

The character sees things that are not there and hears things that others do not. Acute sufferers may experience visions into which they are totally immersed.

Dead Acolyte: The character hears the voice of an old ally now long-dead, perhaps a fellow Acolyte that he was unable to save or who sacrificed his life for the character. At a Severe level he may even have visions of his friend, or converse with him if his condition becomes Acute.

Flashbacks: The character relives traumatic moments from his life, often harkening back to a particularly vicious or harrowing battle with foul cultists. The length and vividness of these episodes varies according to the seriousness of his condition.

Delusion

The character suffers from a particular false belief that he must act on as if it were the truth, despite his better judgement or any evidence to the contrary.

Invulnerability: The character believes that he will never get severely injured, possibly through luck or divine providence. Such a character would have to pass a Willpower test to avoid taking on a vastly superior force instead of exercising due caution.

Righteousness: The character believes that his choices are right and justified, no matter the cost. Such a character may callously and needlessly send allies to their deaths in the pursuit of a failing attack plan, even when the evidence that a change in tactics is necessary becomes overwhelming.

Horrific Nightmares

The character suffers from vivid and recurring nightmares, like imagining the outcome of a failed Gellar Field, or being vivisected by masked men while paralysed and helpless. After any stressful day, he must pass a Willpower test in order to not succumb to his terrors while asleep. If he fails, he suffers 1 level of Fatigue (see page 233) on the following day.

Removing Insanity

With the GMs permission, a character may use xp to remove Insanity points. It costs 100 xp to remove a single Insanity point. A character cannot ever go down a degree of Madness, and so can never lose one of his disorders through this method. The removal of Insanity points should be properly represented as time and effort spent by the character in game (long-term palliative care, prayer, fasting, penance, recuperation in quiet and pleasant surroundings, etc.).

Only the Insane Shall Prosper...

The more insane a character becomes, the less horrific things seem. After all, what are the horrors of a blood-soaked sacrifice compared to the terrors an Acolyte sees when he closes his eyes? If the tens digit of a character's Insanity points total is double (or more) a creature's Fear level (see page 136), the character is unaffected by that source of Fear and does not need to make a Fear test.

Corruption

The corrupting taint of Chaos is ever-present in the galaxy, and even Acolytes are not immune to its insidious touch. Encounters with Daemons, dark rituals, and even the knowledge that such things are possible are all paths to corruption. The swirling tempest of psychoactive energies and pseudo-matter that makes up the fabric of Warp-space is more deadly than any radiation. It can instantly destroy, but it can also effect hideous transformations on material, body, and mind, far beyond anything found in a sane universe. To most, corruption is a doom to be avoided at all costs, but some, once they find themselves walking the path to damnation, will seek to embrace the darkness.

Corruption Points

Corruption points (CP) operate much like Insanity points, except they are gained through exposure to the Warp, dark rituals, cursed artefacts, and daemonic influence. The more Corruption points a character has, the more afflicted he becomes; this is reflected in the rules by the risk of Malignancies and Mutation on **Table 8–14: The Corruption Track** (see page 290).

Moral Threats

The exact level of Corruption points inflicted by a particular event, revelation, or encounter is determined by the GM. The following examples can act as guidelines:

Warp Shock: If the character suffers Insanity points resulting from a failed Fear test involving a Warp entity, he suffers a number of Corruption points equal to the being's Fear rating. Fear (2), for example, would mean the Acolyte gains 2 CP.

Rending the Veil: Characters caught in a full-blown intrusion of the Warp into corporeal reality gain Corruption points from the experience. The severity of the Warp breach affects how many Corruption points Acolytes exposed to it suffer (1d5 for a minor Warp intrusion, or 1d10 or more for a larger tear in reality).

Sorcery: Practicing sorcery, witnessing dread rituals, or invoking even the least of Daemons are all causes of Corruption. Minor sorcerous rituals inflict 1d5 Corruption points, while larger rituals inflict 1d10 or more.

Blasphemous Lore: Knowledge itself can corrupt. The study of certain foul tomes, malignant texts, or ancient pict-logs can cause an Acolyte to gain Corruption points even if he does not comprehend the unholy words or images.

Dark Deeds: Evil acts done in the furtherance of a malignancy, in pursuit of forbidden lore, or to appease a Daemon always cause the perpetrator to gain 1d5 or 1d10 Corruption points, depending on the actions or Daemon involved.

Profane Relics: Chaos devices and amulets are steeped with terrible energies. Merely handling a rune-encrusted weapon or wearing gore-soaked armour that a servant of the Ruinous Powers once used can corrupt. Minor instances should inflict 1d5 Corruption points, while prolonged use can inflict 1d10 or more.

Vile Persuasion: Many Daemons and cult leaders are masters of insidious temptation and of sowing the seeds of doubt in a faithful heart. Their words and arguments can corrupt where force alone would fail. Holding an extended conversation with such a being, or losing Opposed Social tests against him, can inflict 1d5 or more Corruption points on a character, at the GM's discretion.

Table 8–14: The Corruption Track

CP Total	Degree of Corruption	Malignancy Test	Mutation
01–30	Tainted	+0	—
31–60	Soiled	–10	First Test
61–90	Debased	–20	Second Test
91–99	Profane	–30	Third Test
100+	Damned—Character is removed from play. *Only in death can your soul be redeemed.*		

The Malignancy Test



For every 10 total Corruption points a character gains, he must make a Willpower test to see if his Corruption has manifested as literal damage to his body and soul. This roll is modified depending on the number of CP the character already possesses as noted on **Table 8–14: The Corruption Track**. If the character fails the test, his spiritual Corruption is given form. These metaphysical and psychosomatic scars are called Malignancies, and are randomly rolled on **Table 8–15: Malignancies**. If a player rolls a result that he has previously suffered for failing a previous Malignancy test, he must roll again until he receives a new result.

Table 8–15: Malignancies

d100 Roll	Effect
01–10	**Palsy:** The character suffers from numerous minor tics, shakes, and tremors with no medical cause. Reduce his Agility by 1d10.
11–15	**Dark-hearted:** The character grows increasingly cruel, callous, and vindictive. Reduce his Fellowship by 1d10.
16–20	**Ill-fortuned:** Chance seems to mock this Acolyte at the most crucial of opportunities. Whenever this character uses a Fate point, roll 1d10. On a result of 7–10, the Fate point has no effect but is spent anyway.
21–25	**Skin Afflictions:** The character is plagued by boils, scabs, weeping sores and other disgusting features across his body. He suffers a –20 penalty to all Charm tests.
26–30	**Night Eyes:** Light pains the character, echoing the growing stain on his soul. Unless he shields his eyes, he suffers a –10 penalty on all tests made in an area of bright light.
31–33	**Morbid:** The character finds it hard to concentrate as his mind turns increasingly macabre and he becomes prone to tortured, gloom-filled trains of thought. Reduce his Intelligence by 1d10.
34–45	**Witch-mark:** The character develops some minor physical deformity or easily concealable mutation. It is small, but perhaps enough to consign him to death if found out by a fanatical witch hunter.
46–50	**Fell Obsession:** This functions like the Obsession Disorder on page 288, but in this case the character is obsessed by something sinister or malign (such as collecting finger-bone trophies, ritual scarification, carrying out meaningless vivisections, etc.).
51–55	**Irrational Nausea:** The character feels sick at the sight, sound, or smell of something otherwise innocuous (such as prayer books and holy items, bare flesh, human laughter, fresh food, etc.). When he encounters an object of his revulsion he must make a Toughness test or suffer a –10 penalty to all tests as long as he remains in its presence.
56–60	**Wasted Frame:** The character's pallor becomes corpse-like and his muscles waste away. Reduce his Strength by 1d10.
61–63	**Night Terrors:** The character is plagued by daemonic visions in his sleep. This functions identically to the Horrific Nightmares Disorder on page 289.
64–70	**Poor Health:** The character constantly suffers petty illnesses and phantom pains, and his wounds never seem to fully heal. Reduce the character's Toughness by 1d10.
71–75	**Distrustful:** The character cannot conceal the distrust and antipathy he has for others. He suffers a –10 penalty to Fellowship tests when dealing with strangers.
76–80	**Malign Sight:** The world seems to darken, tarnish, and rot if the character looks at anything too long. Reduce the character's Perception by 1d10.
81–83	**Ashen Taste:** Food and drink taste foul and provide little sustenance to the character, and he can barely stomach eating. Recovering levels of Fatigue takes twice as long for him than normal (see page 233).
84–90	**Bloodlust:** Murderous rage is never far from the character's mind. After suffering damage (after Armour and Toughness bonus) in combat, he must succeed at a Willpower test to allow his enemies to flee, be captured, or incapacitated, rather than killing them outright, even if his intent is otherwise.
91–93	**Blackouts:** The character suffers from inexplicable blackouts. When they occur and what happens during them is up to the Game Master, who should inform the player the details of what (if anything) he remembers on awakening.
94–100	**Strange Addiction:** The character has a near-uncontrollable craving for some bizarre and unnatural substance (such as rose petals, fresh blood, widows' tears, etc.). This acts like a Minor Disorder for Compulsion (see page 288), but is freakish enough to cause serious suspicion if discovered.

Mutation

A character's Corruption points total is also used to determine the terrible effects of Chaos upon his body. As his Corruption builds, his flesh may revolt, twisted by the Dark Gods. Of course, such is the insidious nature of Chaos that it is constantly hunting for weakness in mind and body, testing a character's defences until it can find a way into his soul. For every 30 Corruption points a character gains, he must make a test against two Characteristics of his choice. He can never test against the same characteristics twice to resist mutation, and should make a note on his Character Sheet of which characteristics he has already used to resist mutation.

Failure on either test means he suffers a mutation. The unfortunate Acolyte rolls a 1d100 to gain a random mutation from **Table 8–16: Mutations** on page 292. Should this give him a mutation he already possesses, he must roll again until it results in a fresh mutation.

Note that the GM can alternatively select specific mutations and malignancies, to represent unique daemonic energies or the influences of Warp-tainted artefacts. He can also choose to simply apply specific traits as a mutation result, especially Amphibious, Blind, Burrower, Dark-sight, Fear, Multiple Arms, Natural Armour, Natural Weapons, Quadruped, Regeneration, Size (increase or decrease by one), Sonar Sense, or Toxic.



Roleplaying Corruption

Gaining Corruption should always be a significant event for an Acolyte. While Insanity represents his mind failing to withstand the horrors of life in the 41st Millennium, Corruption represents his soul slowly falling to Chaos—the very force he strives to combat—piece by piece. For one who knows the hidden, terrible truths of what Chaos represents, there can be no more hideous a fate than to feel his soul's destruction and the terrible future that awaits him. As such, this should be an important part of how the player conducts his character in games of Dark Heresy.

Mutations and malignancies are manifestations of Corruption; even when they are not visible or even present, though, the character is always suffering, as his soul is being rent apart in spiritual torment. A player should not wait for actual mutations or malignancies to occur before looking for ways to represent even slight accumulations of Corruption. It might start with subtle fears towards situations or objects similar to what caused him to gain the Corruption, or increasing self-loathing for lacking the moral strength to resist Chaos. His character could become increasingly defeatist, paranoid, and suspicious, or might even unconsciously seek out other opportunities to gain further Corruption as his soul slowly slides into blackness. Working with the GM, the player can use these to develop his character's personality and fate in ways to best reflect the terrors of this nightmare future.

Removing Corruption

The insidious touch of the Ruinous Powers represents a permanent taint on the soul, and is normally impossible to remove. It is this permanence that makes Chaos so difficult to combat, for once it is within someone, it grows and festers like a tainted wound. It is possible though, in very rare situations, for the effects of corruption to be lessened. This is always an extraordinary occurrence, and might happen once in a campaign at most. It could represent a visitation from a Living Saint after her shrine was successfully purged of foul cultists eager to perform a ritual desecration, the blessing from an Arch-Cardinal for the respectful recovery of a holy relic used millennia ago to banish a Greater Daemon, or some similarly powerful and singular event. This can only reduce Corruption by a small measure, usually no more than 1 or 2 points, though the GM can modify this depending on the nature of the event.

Table 8–16: Mutations

d100 Roll	Mutation
01–06	Bestial Hide: The character's skin becomes toughened with layers of thick scales or chitin, and he gains the Natural Armour (2) trait.
07–11	Unnatural Arms: Twisted appendages (shrivelled arms, hooked talons, or fleshy tendrils) emerge from this character's spine or torso. He gains the Multiple Arms (CB) trait.
12–17	Sightless Orbs: This character's eyes become sightless, cracked windows into a soul afflicted with a growing corruption. He gains the Blind and Unnatural Senses (CBx10) traits.
18–25	Swollen Brute: This character becomes bloated, his muscles expanding and his form becoming excessively corpulent or disturbingly muscular (or perhaps both). This character's Toughness and Strength characteristics are permanently increased by 10, but his Agility bonus is reduced by 1 for purposes of movement.
26–30	Deathsight: This character's mind becomes twisted, his eyes showing him countless possible annihilations of anything or anyone he gazes upon for more than a few moments. Once per game session, this character may increase the damage of one attack he has made by his Corruption bonus. If he does so, he gains 1 Corruption point.
31–36	Cursed Fleshmetal: This character's armour and cybernetic implants become fused with his flesh, and even regenerate. Removing any of these items requires a Challenging (+0) Medicae test; if the test fails, he suffers 1d5 Rending damage to a randomly selected limb that ignores Armour. He can make an Ordinary (+10) Toughness test to repair items merged with him, in the same manner as a Tech-Use test to repair the same equipment, but suffers 1 Corruption point.
37–43	Razor Fangs: This character's teeth grow long, turning into tearing fangs. This character gains an unarmed attack that inflicts 1d5+CB Rending damage, pen 2. He permanently reduces his Fellowship characteristic by 1d5.
44–49	Excessive Legs: This character develops extra legs that support his form, suspending his upper torso above a centauroid lower body. This character gains the Quadruped trait with a number of extra legs equal half to his Corruption bonus (rounded up).
50–54	Wings: Massive feathered or leathery wings erupt from this character's spine, and he gains the Flyer (CBx2) trait.
55–60	Serpentine Tail: This character's legs wither while his spine elongates into a serpentine tail that supports his body. He gains the Crawler trait and gains an unarmed attack that can strike for 1d10 Impact damage, Pen 0.
61–69	Searing Blood: This character's veins are filled with searing acids in place of blood, though somehow the corrosive effects do not burn his own flesh. Whenever he suffers Blood Loss, the foul liquid erupts and inflicts 1d5+CB Energy damage, Pen 0, to each other character within 1d5 metres.
70–77	Witch-Curse: A small stigma in the shape of a maddening rune appears on this character's body, marking him as touched by Chaos. He gains the Psyker trait (or adds 1 to an existing psy rating) and freely learns any 1 psychic power that costs 100 xp or less. Whenever he attempts to use this power, he gains 1d5 Corruption points.
78–84	Bone-Blades: This character's bones grow long, twisted spurs that sprout painfully from his flesh on his command. This character gains an unarmed attack that inflicts 1d10+CB Rending damage, Pen 0. Whenever he makes an attack with this weapon, this character suffers Blood Loss unless he passes a Challenging (+0) Toughness test.
85–89	Cannibalistic Urge: Blood and marrow become as wine and bread to this character, and normal food no longer sates the hunger of his soul. Once per game session, he can remove 1d5 damage by consuming human flesh. Each time he does so, he gains 1 Corruption point.
90–92	Corrupted Flesh: Instead of blood, when this character's flesh is torn asunder, horrific insects, worms, or flitting creatures spill forth. Whenever he suffers damage, this character gains the Fear (1) trait for 1d5 rounds.
93–94	It Will Not Die!: This character is touched by the power of the Warp, and fortune twists to keep him alive regardless of the terrible wounds he suffers, as if it is the will of some dark being that resides beyond the veil of reality. He can no longer burn a Fate point to survive lethal injuries. Whenever this character would die, he instead survives by the narrowest margin as if he had burned a Fate point and gains 1d10+5 Corruption points.
95–97	Warp Gaze: Whatever this character looks upon burns with the fire of the Warp, and all who see his eyes despair. This character gains a 20m ranged attack that strikes with 1d10+CB Energy damage and the Spray quality. Each time he uses this attack, he gains 1d5 Corruption points. Characters struck with this attack must make a Challenging (+0) Fear (1) test.
98–99	Warp Regeneration: Corruption seethes through this character's flesh, sewing his body back together time and time again whether he wills it or not. Whenever this character suffers damage, he makes a Challenging (+0) Toughness test. If he succeeds, he gains the Regeneration (CB) trait for 1 round and gains 1d5 Corruption points.
100	The Warp Made Manifest: This character becomes a Daemon-like creature, capable of reshaping reality itself at his whim. He gains the Daemonic (CB), Fear (2), From Beyond, and Warp Instability traits. He can also use his Willpower characteristic in place of any other characteristic for any test he is called upon to take.

The Role of Fate

"Surely the Emperor was watching over me that day."

–Juaquein Ditco, survivor of the Hive Perditio Massacre

Amongst the teeming billions of the Imperium, the Acolytes are some of those rare few destined for something greater. Whether refined nobles, intractable Arbitrators, or gutter-born scoundrels, Acolytes possess a special quality that sets them apart. Perhaps they are blessed by the Emperor, or born under auspicious stars. Acolytes are a cut above; they triumph where others would be doomed to failure, and they live where others would die. This is the role of Fate.

Fate Points

All Acolytes begin play with one or more Fate points, determined during character creation. At the beginning of each game session, an Acolyte receives his full complement of Fate points, as determined by his Fate Threshold. During the game, he can spend his Fate points to receive beneficial effects, helping him to succeed where an ordinary person could not.

Fate Threshold

Fate threshold represents the maximum number of Fate points that an Acolyte can have at any one time. Fate threshold both limits the number of Fate points available at any time to an Acolyte, and guarantees a number of Fate points at the beginning of each game session. An Acolyte's total number of Fate points can never exceed his threshold; any Fate points gained in excess of his Fate threshold are lost. For this reason, it is a good idea for players to not be too stingy with Fate points. By the same token, though, a player who spends Fate points too freely could find his character without one when he really needs it.

Increasing Fate Threshold

It is possible, but rare, for an Acolyte's Fate threshold to increase. The GM can bestow an increase in Fate threshold as a reward for a monumental accomplishment, to represent the unfolding of a great destiny, or perhaps in recognition of a selfless sacrifice on the part of the Acolyte. The GM should never grant such a reward lightly; Fate points are a powerful resource for players, and a high Fate threshold ensures a character's survival even when facing certain (and possibly justifiable) death.

Using Fate Points

Fate points allow Player Characters to manipulate situations by mitigating bad results or turning a mishap into fortune. Among other things, this allows players to take more risks, which makes the game faster and far more exciting. A character has a limited pool of Fate points, and when a Fate point is spent, that number is reduced by one. Spent Fate points are restored back up to the character's Fate threshold at the beginning of the next gaming session, or possibly, under special circumstances, in the middle of the game session if the GM deems appropriate.

A Fate point can be used at any time, either on the character's own turn or in reaction to the action of another character. Spending a Fate point is a Free Action, and allows a Player Character to do one of the following:

- Re-roll a test.
- Gain a +10 bonus to a test. This must be chosen before the dice are rolled.
- Add 1 degree of success to a successful test. This may be chosen after the dice are rolled.
- Count as having rolled 10 for Initiative.
- Instantly remove 1d5 damage from the character. This cannot be used to remove Critical damage.
- Instantly recover from being Stunned.
- Remove all levels of Fatigue.

Burning Fate

When an Acolyte faces certain death, he can choose to burn Fate in order to survive. This is most often a result of suffering a critical wound in combat, but could also be to survive a fall from a great height, the effects of disease or poison, or even the destruction of a void-ship which the Acolyte is aboard. Burning Fate permanently reduces the Acolyte's Fate threshold by 1, and he immediately loses any Fate points in excess of his new threshold. The Acolyte survives whatever it was that would have killed him, but only just. Generally, the Acolyte should be left incapacitated and out of the fight, precluding him from taking any further part in the fight, but also ensuring that his enemies overlook him, perhaps believing him to be dead. In cases where Critical damage was the cause, the Acolyte should likely suffer all of the effects from that result except for the actual inflicting of death.

It is up to the GM and the player to work out exactly how the character survives the incident. In the case of an injury sustained in combat, perhaps a holy icon worn on the Acolyte's breast deflects a blow, or a bullet passes cleanly through his chest, miraculously missing organs. Other situations, such as a Warp drive implosion, or being on the surface of a world during Exterminatus, require a greater degree of creativity to explain, and should seldom be without some consequence.

A player can burn Fate threshold regardless of the number of Fate points his Acolyte currently possesses. Even a player who has spent all of his Acolyte's Fate points during that session can burn Fate threshold; the Acolyte begins the next session with one less Fate point.

Gaining Fate Points

There are two primary ways by which an Acolyte can regain spent Fate points. First, at the beginning of each game session, all characters restore Fate points up to their Fate threshold; in other words, Acolytes begin each session with a number of Fate points equal to their Fate threshold.

Second, the GM can grant Fate points during game sessions as rewards for excellent roleplaying or achieving a major goal in the adventure. Examples include entertaining in-character dialogue, taking actions appropriate for the Acolyte that are not necessarily in the player's "best" interests, drawing successful conclusions based on the facts of a case, or an Acolyte risking his life for the sake of the mission or his companions. Such "bonus" Fate points are never guaranteed, and are always solely at the discretion of the GM. An Acolyte cannot gain Fate points in excess of his Fate threshold.

Reinforcement Characters

"I thought it was the end for us and the hive. Luckily we had some help."

–Karlon Feht, after the Scouring of Hive Orinocanna

Inquisitorial warbands can often find themselves facing opponents far beyond their capabilities, either due to terrible accident or diabolical ambush. Much of the time, the Acolytes might struggle simply to survive the encounter or root out a heresy. If they are prepared though, and have established connections, they might be able to call upon outside aid in their shadowy war for the fate of Mankind.

The Reinforcement system allows Dark Heresy players not only to call upon mighty personages of the Askellon sector to aid their warband in such dire circumstances, but also gives an opportunity for a player to become one of these powerful individuals for a session. These give players a sampling of play at higher levels, and can offer a fun narrative scene with the altered group dynamics. These new characters also provide opportunities to play individuals who might be unworkable for long-term roleplaying, but are ideal for singular sessions.

It is important to note that these Reinforcement Characters (abbreviated as RCs) should be used sparingly and not part of normal gameplay. One of the main themes for Dark Heresy is that the Acolytes should feel the weight of the sector is on their shoulders, and failure could mean a galaxy in flames. The GM should ensure his players do not use this system as a crutch against ineffective investigations and poor preparations for their foes. Such over-reliance might, for example, draw the attention of their Inquisitor who could depress their Influence or express his displeasure in their service through other, more painful, means.

Influence and Reinforcement Characters

Each Reinforcement Character has an Influence Minimum and an Influence Cost. The former indicates the minimum Influence score an Acolyte must possess in order to call on the RC's aid; the latter indicates the total Influence that the Acolyte spends to accomplish this action. Other members of the warband can also contribute Influence to this cost, as per page 295. When an Acolyte calls on an RC, he permanently reduces his Influence score by a number of points equal to the Influence Cost of the RC. The GM can also raise or lower the Influence Cost at his discretion based on other factors as mentioned below.

Reinforcement Characters are impressive and powerful beings who quickly draw attention to the warband, and so calling on one reduces the warband's Subtlety by the RC's final Influence Cost. Note that a Reinforcement Character is just that—a single character, who for a variety of reasons could be called upon for aid. Each acts on his own in this situation, perhaps even acting without official sanction from his comrades or superiors. Such is the nature of the many types and degrees of favours, debts, and other ties that bind the Imperium together.

Creating a Reinforcement Character

Players have several options when they fashion a Reinforcement Character. The most important factor, however is that all players (especially the GM) are in concordance on aspects of the RC. This is not just the final Influence Minimum and Influence Cost, but also the RC's background, motivations, and other character details to ensure the RC fits well with both the warband and the GM's plans for the campaign.

Using a Pre-Made Reinforcement Character

Players can select a preconstructed Reinforcement Character, such as the examples included here. Each is a template that players should use to create unique characters with special backgrounds to fit the warband's adventures.

Creating Original Reinforcement Characters

Players can also create their own Reinforcement Characters, such as a Tech-Priest Arch-Magos or Adeptus Arbites High Marshal. These are created exactly like normal Acolyte PCs, but with additional experience, which is spent to increase the RC's rank. There is no upper limit on how much extra experience these RCs can spend, and in addition to normal starting gear each RC can also Requisition items up to twice his Influence bonus. The Influence Minimum for Reinforcement Characters created in this way is equal to RC's Influence score or the number of extra experience points spent during its creation divided by 100, whichever is higher. The Influence Cost of RCs created in this way is equal to twice their Influence bonus or the number of extra Experience points spent during its creation divided by 1000, whichever is higher. These are only guidelines, however, and the GM has the final decision as to the values. Like all Reinforcement Characters, the Acolytes must establish a suitable backstory, name, and other details to fully flesh out this new character.

Player Characters from other *Warhammer 40,000 Roleplay* games can also be used as Reinforcement Characters, allowing players to take existing characters from Rogue Trader, Deathwatch, Only War, or even Black Crusade to use in Dark Heresy. The Influence Minimum and Influence Cost of such an Reinforcement Character should be generated from that character's current spent xp, as described above.

Lastly, the warband can create a new Reinforcement Character of their own designs, with backgrounds and motivations tailored to its particular adventures. This could be anything from a renegade xenos stranger aiding the players for his own inscrutable reasons to a captured heretic seeking salvation for his blasphemous past. In these cases, the players and GM must arrive at suitable values for the RC's Influence Minimum and Influence Cost, using the examples here as guidelines. New Reinforcement Characters could, in these cases, also encompass groups or squads and not just a single individual. A particular Astra Militarum Colonel might always bring his favoured squad of veterans, or powerful debt might call in not just a Rogue Trader but also his elite bridge crew. Such powerful groups should be used very sparingly, perhaps only against extraordinary threats requiring extraordinary resources.

Working a Reinforcement Character into the Warband

Just like Player Characters and important NPCs, Reinforcement Characters are unique creations that the group must bring to life. This means each must be given a name, background, and other details to make him a memorable character, worthy of the dangerous exploits that should be at the centre of each Dark Heresy adventure. This effort should be a joint one between the players and the GM, all designed to create a worthy addition to the warband's history.

The name, background, and associations of the RC that the group creates must establish a solid rationale for how the RC is linked to the warband, and why and how the warband could call on this RC for support. The RC might even be an NPC the warband encountered in an earlier adventure, and now perhaps owes the Acolytes a debt or feels they are worthy of his attention. Essentially, the players are creating another member of the warband in the same way they create their Inquisitor (see page 86), and should put as much work into fleshing out the RC as the group does for their Inquisitor.

Using a Reinforcement Character in Gameplay

The arrival of a Reinforcement Character should be a pivotal event in the warband's current adventure, and require the entire warband's consent. Should the situation demand it, then between games or while in narrative time one player can call upon the RC for support. That player must have an Influence score equal to or higher than the RC's Influence Minimum. The player then spends Influence equal to the RC's Influence Cost; this is permanently reduced from his Influence score. Other warband members can contribute Influence as well towards calling in the RC, but no more than half (rounding up) of the Influence Cost. For example, if an RC has an Influence Cost of 9, then the other members of the warband could spend up to a maximum of 5 Influence towards the cost and the calling player would only need to spend 4 himself. Note that each character who contributes Influence in this way reduces his Influence characteristic by the amount he contributed.

The players must also present a narrative rationale and method for the RC to arrive when and where desired. This should include the expected duration of his support; this might be until a certain foe is defeated or some other agreed upon objective, or even simply until the end of the current session. The GM then uses all of this in determining the final Influence Cost. For example, if the rationale is vague, poorly developed, or does not fit with the RC's pre-established background and motivations, the GM should feel free to impose additional points to the Influence Cost. Similarly, if the expected duration becomes extended, the cost should increase commensurately. The GM can also increase the Influence Cost in situations where the RC would not reasonably be available, or where a particular RC would have difficulty reaching the warband. Examples where additional Influence is required might be if the warband is trapped in the bowels of a forgotten Space Hulk, or requests the aid of a torch-wielding Canoness to furtively infiltrate a proudly loathsome cult.

While the Reinforcement Character is in play, the calling player uses the RC as his main Player Character, but also controls his original Acolyte as an additional character. This makes RCs useful for players to call on when their regular Acolyte character is unavailable, such as when undergoing Extended Rest, away being fitted for bionic replacement parts, or even imprisoned.

Reinforcement Characters do not gain experience, though the player's regular character can as normal. If the RC takes Critical damage that is not healed before he departs, or is for other reasons at the GM's discretion is impacted during his intervention, the GM can decree he is unavailable while recuperating, reporting to his superiors, or otherwise occupied. This period should be at least one gameplay session, though it can be not until the current campaign is completed for extraordinary circumstances. If the RC is killed during play, he can never be summoned again. The warband must "create" a new RC if it wants to call on a similar RC of that type in future sessions, complete with a different background and motivations for aiding the warband.



Sample Reinforcement Characters

The following Reinforcement Characters represent a sample of the many individuals the warband might call upon to aid them in their struggles. See **Chapter XII: NPCs and Adversaries** for details on the characteristic and weapon presentation formating used below.

Sister of Battle Canoness

Influence Minimum: 50 **Influence Cost:** 5

Peer (Adepta Sororitas) talent lowers Influence Cost by 2

The Adepta Sororitas is a powerful collection of religious orders that form the militant wing of the Imperial Ecclesiarchy, protecting its domains and enforcing humanity's arsenal—faith. The Ecclesiarchy's militant faction, the Sisters of Battle, are amongst the most fervent and devout in the Imperium. Leading them are the Canonesses, holy and divinely ordained warriors called to do the Emperor's Will: lead the faithful by example, and punish and destroy the heretic wherever and whenever it is found.

Sister of Battle Canoness 22

H 7 11 (01-10)	AR 7 11 (11-20)	AL 7 11 (21-30)	B 7 11 (31-70)	LR 7 11 (71-85)	LL 7 11 (86-00)

WS	BS	S 4
50	45	35
T	**Ag**	**Int**
44	40	32
Per	**WP**	**Fel**
31	60	55
Ifl		
41		

Half 4	Full 8	Charge 12	Run 24	Threat 28

Boltgun — Class Basic

Rng 100m	RoF S/3/–	Dmg 1d10+5 (X)		
Pen 4	Clip 24	Rld 1 Full	Wt 7 Kg	Avl VR

Special: Tearing

Power Sword — Class Melee

Rng —	RoF —	Dmg 1d10+9[5+SB] (E)		
Pen 5	Clip —	Rld —	Wt 3 Kg	Avl VR

Special: Balanced, Power Field

Frag Grenades (2) — Class Thrown

Dmg 2d10 (X)	Pen 0	Wt .5 Kg	Avl CM

Special: Blast (3)

Skills: Awareness (Per) +10, Charm (Fel), Command (Fel) +20, Dodge (Ag) +10, Linguistics (High Gothic), (Int), Common Lore (Ecclesiarchy, Imperial Creed) (Int) +20, Forbidden Lore (Heresy) (Int) +10, Lore: Scholastic (Imperial Creed +10), Scrutiny (Per)

Talents: Adamantium Faith, Ambidextrous, Faith Talents, Hatred (Heretics, Psykers), Hip Shooting, Halo of Command, Peer (Adepta Sororitas, Ecclesiarchy), Lightning Attack, Mighty Shot, Resistance (Psychic Powers), Strong-Minded, Two-Weapon Wielder (Melee, Ranged), Weapon Training (Bolter, Power)

Traits: Unnatural Strength (1)†

Gear: 2 Boltgun clips, several books and scrolls of the Imperial Creed, microbead, rebreather, recoil glove, Sororitas power armour

Fate Points: 4

†Sororitas power armour grants the Unnatural Strength (1) trait and does not increase the wearer's Size trait, and Heavy weapons count as braced.

Sisters of Battle Faith Talents

As a Free Action, a character with a Faith Talent may spend a Fate point to activate that talent until the end of the encounter.

Holy Light: The character burns with a bright inner light. Melee and Point Blank attacks against the character suffer a –20 penalty but Long and Extreme range attacks gain a +10 bonus. Creatures with 20 or more Corruption points, Daemons, and psykers within 5 metres of the character suffer 1d10 Energy damage with the Sanctified quality each round to their Head location.

Seal of Purity: Instead of a Free Action, the character must spend one hour drawing a blessed seal 3 metres in length. Once completed, the seal lasts for the encounter's duration, or for 1 hour of narrative time. Daemons and other Warp-spawn can neither cross, nor disturb the seal. Furthermore, psychic powers manifested by such creatures cannot affect anything within or beyond the seal.

Wrath of the Righteous: The character chooses a number of allies up to her FelB. She and these allies inflict 1d5 additional damage on Melee attacks, and these attacks gain Vengeful (9) quality.

Hand of the Emperor: The character and a number of allies up to her Fellowship bonus gain the Unnatural Strength (3) and Unnatural Agility (2) traits.

The Unforgiving Blade: The character's touch blesses a bladed melee weapon. The blade gains the Sanctified quality and increases its damage by 1d10 and its penetration by 2 for attacks against Daemons, psykers, and creatures with 20 or more Corruption points.





Deathwatch Space Marine

Influence Minimum: 55 **Influence Cost:** 7

Peer (Adeptus Astartes) talent lowers Influence Cost by 2

The Deathwatch is a unique organisation formed from Space Marines from Chapters across the Imperium, each one a mighty warrior hand-selected for this honour. Foremost amongst the myriad threats that imperil the Imperium of Man, it is the vile xenos that draws the attention of the Deathwatch. Each Deathwatch Space Marine is a veteran warrior, a hero with a legend and story of his own. His great accomplishments and strong personality have distinguished him from the Battle-Brothers of his home Chapter, and he has earned the honour of joining the Deathwatch. These Space Marines often work at the side of Inquisitors of the Ordo Xenos to eradicate alien threats across the Imperium and beyond.

Deathwatch Space Marine 26

H 8 01-10 16		
Ar 8 11-20 16	B 8 31-70 16	Al 8 21-30 16
Lr 8 71-85 16		Ll 8 86-00 16

WS	BS	S 10
55	50	65
T 8	Ag	Int
45	40	40
Per	Wp	Fel
42	44	40
Ifl		
45		

Half 5	Full 10	Charge 15	Run 30	Threat 30

Astartes Bolt Pistol — Class Pistol

Rng 30m	RoF S/2/–	Dmg 1d10+9 (X)		
Pen 4	Clip 8	Rld 1 Full	Wt 7 Kg	Avl Er

Special: *Reliable*

Astartes Chainsword — Class Melee

Rng —	RoF —	Dmg 1d10+13^{3+SB} (R)		
Pen 3	Clip —	Rld —	Wt 10 Kg	Avl Er

Special: *Balanced, Tearing*

Frag Grenades (2) — Class Thrown

Dmg 2d10 (X)	Pen 0	Wt .5 Kg	Avl Cm

Special: *Blast (3)*

Krak Grenades (2) — Class Thrown

Dmg 2d10+4 (X)	Pen 6	Wt .5 Kg	Avl Cm

Special: *Concussive (0)*

Skills: Athletics (S) +10, Awareness (Per) +10, Common Lore (War) (Int), Dodge (Ag) +10, Forbidden Lore (Adeptus Astartes, Xenos) (Int) +10, Intimidate (S) +10, Linguistics (Chapter Runes, High Gothic) (Int), Navigate (Surface) (Int), Operate (Surface) (Ag), Parry (WS) +10

Talents: Adamantium Faith, Ambidextrous, Bulging Biceps, Deathwatch Training, Hatred (Xenos), Heightened Senses (Hearing, Sight), Peer (Adeptus Astartes, Inquisition), Quick Draw, Resistance (Cold, Heat, Poisons), True Grit, Unarmed Specialist, Two-Weapon Wielder (Melee, Ranged), Weapon Training (Bolter, Chain)

Traits: Amphibious, Size (5)†, Unnatural Strength (4), Unnatural Toughness (4)

Gear: 2 Bolt pistol clips, 2 clips Tempest bolt shells, 2 clips Amputator shells, red-dot laser sight and fire selector on bolt pistol (weight included with pistol), Astartes power armour††

Fate Points: 3

Deathwatch Training: All members of the Deathwatch receive special training against the many xenos threats facing Mankind. Their weapons gain the Vengeful (9) quality when used against such alien enemies.

†*Due to the Black Carapace linked to his armour, enemies do not gain any bonus to hit due to his Size trait.*

††*All characteristic modifiers from power armour included in profile.*

Eversor Assassin

Influence Minimum: 60 **Influence Cost:** 11

Peer (Officio Assassinorum) talent lowers Influence Cost by 2

The Officio Assassinorum maintains several Temples of assassins, each dedicated to a different art of dealing death. While other temples specialise in infiltration or long-ranged death, the Eversor Temple utilises unparalleled violence to leave a message for all those who would threaten the Imperium. Eversors are used in shock attacks, dispatched to rip the heart out of cults or heretical factions and leave nothing but terror in their wake. They are highly-trained, mind-wiped death machines, crafted to kill as quickly and brutally as possible. They have been neuro-programmed to such an extent that there is little humanity left in them save the darkest vestiges of a berserk killing machine. As likely to eviscerate their allies as their enemies, each Eversor must be imprisoned in cryo-tubes between missions, their bodies kept in a state of imposed stasis while their minds burn with dreams of slaughter and mayhem.

Eversor Assassin 24

H 3 01-10 10		WS 70	BS 75	S 7 45
Ar 3 11-20 10	Al 3 21-30 10	T 7 44	Ag 58	Int 30
B 3 31-70 10		Per 52	Wp 50	Fel 01
Lr 3 71-85 10	Ll 3 86-00 10	Ifl 12		

Half 5	Full 10	Charge 15	Run 30	Threat 33

Executor Pistol (Bolt) — Class Pistol

Rng 30m	RoF S/2/–	Dmg 1d10+5 (X)	
Pen 4	Clip 8	Rld 1 Full	Wt 5.5 Kg	Avl NU

Special: Tearing

Executor Pistol (Needle) — Class Pistol

Rng 30m	RoF S/–/–	Dmg 1d10 (R)	
Pen 0	Clip 6	Rld 1 Full	Wt —	Avl —

Special: Accurate, Felling (1), Toxic (5)

Neuro-Gauntlet — Class Melee

Rng —	RoF —	Dmg 1d10+10 (R)	
Pen 8	Clip —	Rld —	Wt 2.5 Kg	Avl ER

Special: Tearing, Toxic (3)

Power Sword — Class Melee

Rng —	RoF —	Dmg 1d10+8[1+SB] (E)	
Pen 6	Clip —	Rld —	Wt 3 Kg	Avl VR

Special: Balanced, Power Field

Melta Bombs (3) — Class Explosive

Dmg 6d10 (E)	Pen 12	Wt 12 Kg	Avl VR

Special: Blast (2), Flame, Melta

Skills: Athletics (S) +30, Awareness (Per) +20, Dodge (Ag) +20, Operate (Ag) +20, Security (Int) +20, Stealth (Ag) +20, Tech-Use (Int) +20

Talents: Deathdealer (Melee), Constant Vigilance, Temple Assassin, Unarmed Specialist, Two-Weapon Master (Melee, Ranged), Two-Weapon Wielder (Melee, Ranged), Weapon Training (Exotic [Executor Pistol], Power)

Temple Assassin: An Imperial Assassin has supreme physical and martial training, allowing him to re-roll on any Acrobatics or Athletics tests. Additionally, he has a number of additional Reactions each round equal to his Agility bonus (5) that can only be used to make Evasion tests. He can still only attempt to Evade a given attack once. At the GM's discretion, this talent also allows him to attempt Evasion tests when they might not otherwise be possible, letting him Dodge massive explosions, a descending Warlord Titan's foot, or an invisible psychic attack.

Traits: Fear (2), From Beyond, Unnatural Strength (3), Unnatural Toughness (3)

Gear: Eversor helmet (preysense goggles, micro-bead, rebreather, and respirator), 4 reloads for Executor Pistol (two of each ammo type), Eversor combat drugs†, sentinel array††, magnoculars, personal medi-kit, pict-recorder, vox-caster, synskin bodyglove

Fate Points: 2

†Eversor Combat Drugs: The Eversor has autorig injectors filled with potent combat drugs designed to boost his performance. These injectors use minute amounts of extremely potent drugs (meaning he does not run out of drugs unless cut off from supplies for months). If he is ever killed, his body explodes from the bio-toxins erupting from his metabolism, inflicting 2d10+5 Energy damage with the Blast (5) and Toxic qualities. At the beginning of each of his turns, he may choose one of the following effects:

- **Hyper-metabolics:** The Eversor can perform one additional Full Action (or two additional Half Actions) this turn. He can still only perform one action with the Attack subtype this turn.
- **Berserker-Slaught:** The Eversor gains the Brutal Charge (3) trait until the end of his turn. Until the end of his turn, whenever he uses the Charge action, he inflicts 1 additional hit on a target in range per degree of success after the first on the Weapon Skill test.
- **Auto-coagulants:** He makes a Challenging (+0) Toughness test. If he succeeds, he immediately removes 4 damage.
- **Shock-stims:** The Eversor ignores all penalties from Fatigue, Critical Effects, or being Heavily Damaged until the end of the turn.

††Sentinel Array: This highly advanced sensor pack is tied directly into the Eversor's brain, and combines motion trackers, heat sensors, and other target acquisition systems. While active, the user gains +30 to Awareness tests and the Unnatural Senses (50m) trait, can "see" in all directions, and can detect targets through walls, undergrowth, trees, or other obstructions. Solid walls at least one metre thick (and without openings) block the array. The user may also use the array to "lock on" to a specific target as a Half Action (or he may load a specific bio-metric readout into the array beforehand, in which case the array locks on automatically). The array can track that target up to 100m away, and always distinguishes between it and other targets. Due to the mental strain caused by this invasive device, when activated, the user must immediately make an Ordinary (+10) Willpower test. Should he fail, he suffers 1 level of Fatigue.



Grey Knights Space Marine

Influence Minimum: 65 **Influence Cost:** 16

Peer (Inquisition) talent lowers Influence Cost by 2

The Grey Knights are shining paladins who defend Mankind against the Daemon, the stalwart bulwark against the darkness of the Warp. Selected from only the most promising psykers taken by the Black Ships of the Adeptus Astra Telepathica, these Space Marines are rumoured to have received their geneseed directly from the Emperor himself. Each is a holy warrior and psyker, supremely powerful in both body and mind.

To the common man, the Grey Knights are beyond legend, folk tales told to ease the cares of a fearful populace. Few ever have the chance to witness these mythic figures in the flesh and fewer still live to tell the tale. Amongst the tides of the Immaterium, the Grey Knight is a feared legend, terrifying those to whom fear is otherwise unknown.

Grey Knight Space Marine 27

H 14		
01-10 22		
AR 14 11-20 22		AL 14 21-30 22
B 14 31-70 22		
LR 14 71-85 22		LL 14 86-00 22

WS	BS	S 11
55	45	75
T 8	Ag	Int
45	20	43
Per	WP 7	Fel
42	56	40
Ifl		
57		

Half 3	Full 6	Charge 9	Run 18	Threat 39

Astartes Storm Bolter — Class Basic

Rng 100m	RoF S/2/4	Dmg 1d10+9 (X)	
Pen 4	Clip 60	Rld 2 Full	Wt 26 Kg	Avl ER

Special: Forearm Mounting, Razor Sharp, Reliable

Nemesis Force Halberd — Class Melee

Rng —	RoF —	Dmg 1d10+21[8+PR+SB] (E)	
Pen 4[2+PR]	Clip —	Rld —	Wt 9 Kg	Avl NU

Special: Force, Sanctified, Tearing (when used two-handed)

Skills: Athletics (S) +10, Awareness (Per) +10, Common Lore (War) (Int), Forbidden Lore (Adeptus Astartes) (Int) +10, Intimidate (S) +20, Linguistics (Chapter Runes, High Gothic) (Int), Parry (WS) +20, Psyniscience (Per) +20

Talents: Adamantium Faith, Bulging Biceps, Hatred (Daemons, Chaos Space Marines), Heightened Senses (Hearing, Sight), Peer (Adeptus Astartes, Inquisition), Quick Draw, Resistance (Cold, Heat, Poisons, Psychic Powers), Swift Attack, True Grit, Two-Weapon Wielder (Melee, Ranged), Unarmed Specialist, Weapon Training (Bolter, Force)

Traits: Amphibious, Psyker (PR 2), Size (5)†, Unnatural Strength (4), Unnatural Toughness (4)

Psychic Powers: Dominate, Erasure, Foreboding, Hammerhand, Psychic Shriek, Telepathic Link, Terrify, and Warp Perception

Hammerhand: The psyker hardens his muscles and brings down the wrath of the God-Emperor of Mankind in powerful strikes with his melee weapon.

Action: Half Action

Focus Power: Challenging (+0) Willpower test

Range: Self

Sustained: Free

Subtype: Concentration

Effect: While active, this power adds 4 to the Unnatural Strength trait of all Grey Knights within 10 metres.

Gear: 5 storm bolter clips, holy texts, Astartes Terminator Armour††

†*Due to the Black Carapace linked to his armour, enemies do not gain any bonus to hit due to his Size trait.*

††*Characters in Terminator Armour cannot Run or Dodge. This power armour includes a Best quality force field (Field Rating 35). All characteristic modifiers from the armour are included in profile.*



Chapter IX: The Imperium and the Inquisition

The Imperium of Man has stood for ten thousand years, but only because of the daily sacrifice of countless souls. Mankind is engaged in a ceaseless war against the universe itself. The galaxy of the 41st Millennium is a roaring cauldron of slaughter and anarchy, as entire species drive themselves to extinction upon the pyres of war. Few, if any, call for mercy or cooperation, for such concepts are weakness at best and base treachery at worst.

On every side are those who would see Mankind eradicated, and the carrion eaters of the galaxy eagerly wait to pick the bones of humanity clean. Xenos species battle man everywhere, seeking to reclaim their fallen empires or carve out new ones from conquered systems. Even the most seemingly benign aliens are threats, no matter their innocuous pretences, for dealings with them mean corruption of flesh and spirit surely follow.

The denizens of the Warp are horrific threats whenever they emerge from the Sea of Souls, destroying minds and bodies alike with each abominable visitation. They also harm through their very existence, for if knowledge of the Warp's nature were allowed to spread, then men would covet its power even as they doom their souls. To allow dabbling in sorcery and all the other fell blessings of the Warp is to invite the tearing down of reality itself, and the transformation of the domains of the Emperor into the feeding ground of Daemons.

Faced with such perils, the Imperium demands total subjugation and unquestioning acceptance of its harsh laws, though that is not to say such due is always paid. The battle for survival is not a personal one, or even a planetary one; it is a matter of the survival of the entire human race. It is a battle fought in trench lines girding entire planets and between city-sized warships in the cold depths of space. It is a battle fought between spear-armed savages in the dense jungles of feral worlds, and between genetically engineered, superhuman warriors who descend from orbit upon wings of fire. It is a battle fought in the foetid underhive between hyper-violent gangers, and one fought in the shadows between assassins armed with venom-coated blades. It is a battle, however, that Mankind is losing.

But Mankind refuses to accept its fate. While still the Emperor sits upon his Golden Throne at the heart of the Imperium, countless hosts do battle in His name. Every loyal servant of the Emperor is raised to understand his place in the eternal war. From the benighted savage bellowing his adoration to his newly revealed Star-God to the pampered spire-dwelling noble offering thanks for his latest blessing, all understand their place in the war for the future of the human race. To be human in the 41st Millennium is to know that there can be no peace amongst the stars, only an eternity of carnage and slaughter and the laughter of thirsting gods.

No world beyond His Rule; no enemy beyond His Wrath.

The Imperium of Man

"There can be no bystanders in the battle for survival. Anyone who will not fight by your side is an enemy you must crush."

–Scriptorus Munificantus

Long ago, when the Emperor Himself walked among His people, it was declared that all of Mankind would be united under the banner of the Imperium, bound as one as an entire species, which together would realise its destiny to rule the stars. The Emperor knew that only by every human being standing shoulder to shoulder against the countless foes of the galaxy would the species have any hope of survival. Some say He knew other things too, things that the masses were not ready to hear, and so withheld knowledge of the true enemies of Mankind. Whatever the truth, and despite the Emperor's ascension to the Golden Throne, the Imperium still endures and claims sovereignty over the souls of every living human. Even though countless lost or isolated worlds lie beyond the knowledge and power of Terra, still the High Lords strive to draw the entire species together as one. To do otherwise would be to surrender the future of humanity, a fate that the Inquisition in particular is sworn to avert at any cost.

The Imperium is a vast realm, yet one spread impossibly thinly across the stars. In extent it covers two thirds of the known galaxy, a volume of space corresponding to the distance the sacred light of the Astronomican shines out from Terra across the void. Beyond the extent of the Emperor's psychic beacon, navigation becomes all but impossible, as a vessel's Navigator becomes unable to plot his route through the surging madness of the Immaterium without reference to its guiding light.

Terra and the Sol System

At the heart of the Imperium is Holy Terra, the crucible of the human race and capital of the greatest human empire ever to hold sway over the galaxy. Here the Priesthood of Earth—the Adeptus Terra—rules, the highest-ranked lords passing proclamations that touch the lives of untold billions every day, albeit indirectly. Endless divisions of the Adeptus Terra are represented on Terra, as are numerous other bodies, such as the Adeptus Ministorum.

Aside from the billions of scribes and administrators that make up the multitudes of Terra, this mightiest of hive worlds swarms with pilgrims of every stripe. Some are hyper-wealthy nobles, come to honour the birthplace of Mankind and to breathe its sanctified air. Most are desperate penitents, come to Terra with no greater intent than to voice their adoration of the Emperor with their dying breath. Many are the descendants of the faithful who set out upon their pilgrimage many generations before, not caring how arduous the journey truly was. Having perished along the way, these pilgrims passed their holy quest on to their heirs, who grew up knowing nothing more than the trail upon which thousands more fall each day.

Other wondrous places are to be found within the Sol system, bathed in the same light that incubated Humanity at the earliest stages of its pre-history. The red planet, Mars, is the greatest of forge worlds and the heart of the Cult Mechanicus. Terra's moon, Luna, is host to the mightiest of defences, in the face of which no foe can hope to assault Earth. Jupiter is host to the Jovian Shipyards, where some of the most gloriously feted warships in the Imperium's service are wrought. Saturn houses countless dark secrets, held secure by the most determined of the agents of the Inquisition. Saturn's moon, Titan, is the secret home of the Grey Knights Chapter, the elite Daemon-hunting Space Marines of the Ordo Malleus, and their impregnable fortress-monastery.

The Segmentae Majoris

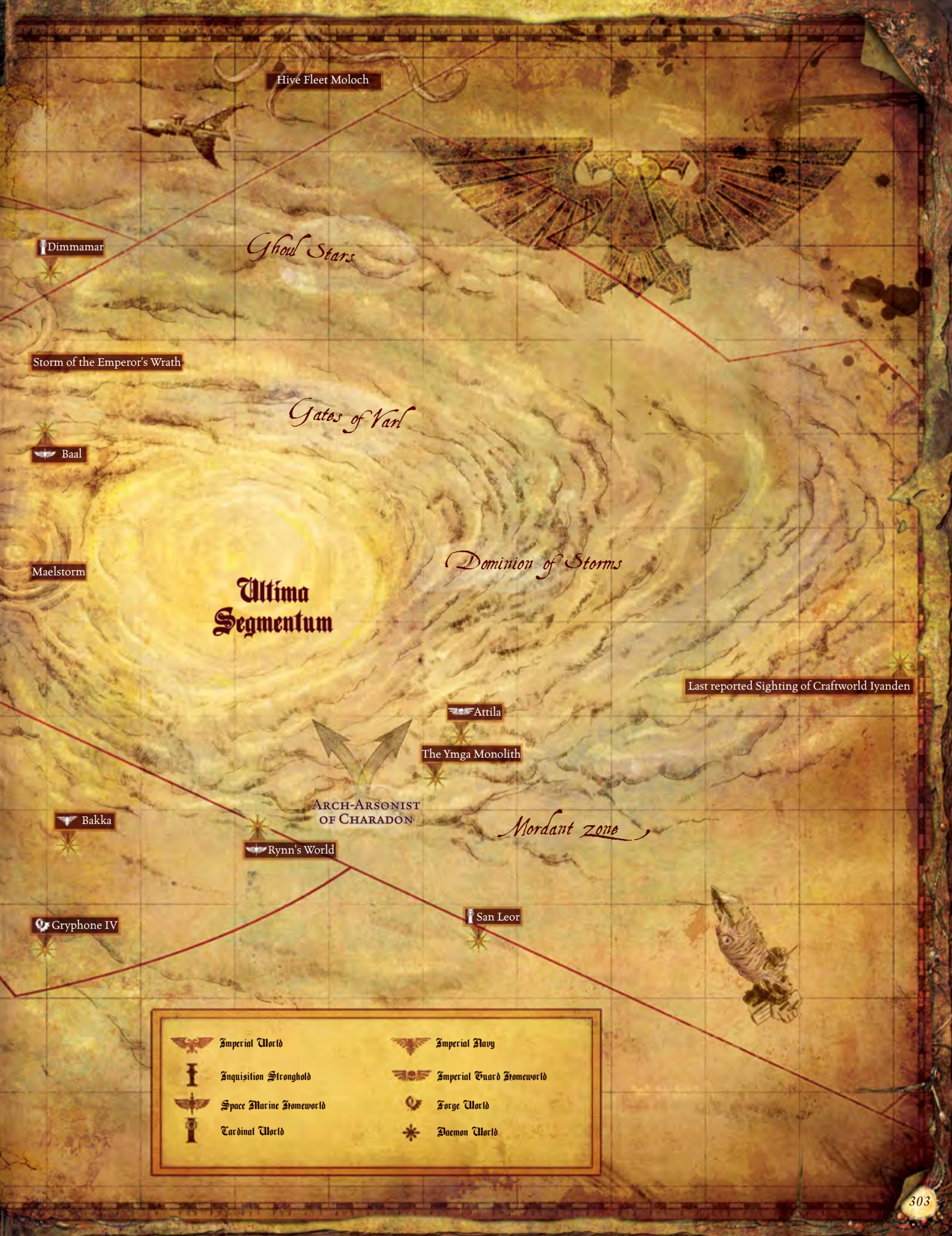
The Imperium is simply too vast for Terra to have any direct control over its million and more worlds. Interstellar travel and communication, relying as it does on the Warp, is so unpredictable as to be an impediment to administration rather than a boon, and travel between even relatively nearby systems is subject to the capricious whims of the Empyrean. When vessels flounder in the Warp, it is rare that they are simply delayed. Rather, the soul of every being aboard is cast to the Daemon-haunted depths to be consumed for all eternity. When an astrotelepathic communiqué becomes garbled, it does not simply lose its meaning. Instead, the denizens of the Warp often twist and alter the message in a myriad of subtle and not so subtle ways, sowing discord, confusion, and outright terror from world to world. Control of the Imperium's many domains is an intrinsically hopeless task given this, yet there is no other alternative if the Imperium wishes to continue its existence.

To impose some small measure of order, the Imperium is divided into five great Segmentae, each of which is centred upon a segmentum fortress. These worlds entered service many millennia ago as fleet bases, but have since evolved into centres of military and administrative power. The segmentum fortresses provide strategic command in times of great need and serve as the mustering point for the great wars, invasions, and crusades launched in the name of the Emperor.

Sectors

The million and more worlds of the Imperium are not spread evenly across the galaxy. Rather, they are clustered into sectors, generally of between one hundred and two hundred settled systems. The capital of a sector may represent the very first planet settled in the region by colonists from Terra or some other, long forgotten world of humanity's dim and distant past. Over many generations, the original colony might have spread its influence, the descendants of the settlers in turn colonising other nearby worlds. Each sector is connected to the next by a web of Warp routes that stretches across the length and breadth of the Imperium and even beyond, each route passing through dozens, hundreds, or even thousands of light years of so-called Wilderness Space. The vast majority of those regions between sectors are unexplored and host to all manner of horrifying threats. Some harbour entire alien empires that are only ever discovered when they boil from the darkness to fall upon the worlds of man, triggering wars of extermination that might rage for generations before the enemy is cast down.


Imperius Dominatus
Medrengard
Talismans of Vaul
Remnants of Hive Fleet Tiamet
Ruins of Caliban
Segmentum Obscurus
Cypra Mundi
Halo Stars
Port Maw
Mordian
Caularis Terribus
Nemesis Tessera
Inert Necron Tomb World
Cadia
Valhalla
Fenris
Hydrapur
Sementum Pacificus
Segmentum Solar
Armageddon
Chiros
Joura
Holy Terra
Catachan
Necromunda
Inert Necron Tomb World
Overfiend of Octarius
Arch Maniac of Calvera
Macharia
Tarsis Ultra
Segmentum Tempestus
Hell-Stars of the Garon Nebula
Segmentum Obscurus
Quarantined: Transit Forbidden
Eustis Majoris
Scarus Sector
Juno
Askellon Sector
Scintilla
Calixis Sector
Ichabarr
Ixaniad Sector


Hive Fleet Moloch
Dimmamar
Ghoul Stars
Storm of the Emperor's Wrath
Gates of Varl
Baal
Maelstrom
Dominion of Storms
Ultima Segmentum
Last reported Sighting of Craftworld Iyanden
Attila
The Ymga Monolith
Arch-Arsonist of Charadon
Mordant Zone
Bakka
Rynn's World
San Leor
Gryphone IV
Imperial World
Imperial Navy
Inquisition Stronghold
Imperial Guard Homeworld
Space Marine Homeworld
Forge World
Cardinal World
Daemon World

Worlds of the Imperium

"Across the void of space, men live as they have lived for millennia upon the sand, rock, and soil of worlds bathed in the light of alien suns. So is Humanity's seed cast far and wide beyond the knowledge of Man, to thrive bitterly in the darkness, to take root and cling with robust and savage determination."

–Anon

Mankind's planets are impossibly varied, in terms of environment, culture, technology, and countless other factors. The most ancient might have developed populations in the billions, while others are sparsely populated. Some remain technologically regressed, never achieving higher levels or having fallen due to apocalyptic disaster or war. Many crawl their way from primitive, tribal savagery to a pre-industrial state, but there halt their development, content to reject the numerous curses technology might call down upon their heads or simply unable to obtain the more advanced trappings of civilisation. Other populations are only able to exist at all because of technology, such as orbital hive-cities or sub-oceanic agricultural facilities, having no choice but to pray each day for the continued functioning of the machines that sustain them.

The Administratum employs an impossibly complex system of categorising the numerous worlds, labelling them according to function, population, technology level, predominant environment, and many other factors. A world's category serves as little more than a convenient label, for each planet is in reality utterly individual and possessed of countless unique features.

One of the more common categories is that of hive world, planets featuring towering, metal cities to maximise the exploitation of natural resources and manpower. Invariably, the surfaces of these worlds are polluted wastelands, lands made barren by generations of mining and used as dumping grounds for the toxic by-products of industry. The populations are densely compacted, their lives a short and miserable toil unless they reject it entirely and throw in their lot with the numerous gangs and other outcasts that feed off such places or exist in the cracks.

Another label often used is civilised world or simply Imperial world, though the former term is disingenuous in a galaxy entirely consumed by war, insanity, and barbarity. Here, continent-spanning cities can feature gigantic Administratum datavaults that fill hollowed-out mountains, or grassy mustering fields where millions gather to raise a new Imperial Guard regiment. All are firmly part of the Imperium, though their technological level can vary so widely that one world might rely upon steam for power while another uses ancient and revered plasma reactors.

Agri-worlds are also relatively common, and necessary to feed humanity's hungry masses, entire worlds devoted to the raising of crops and livestock. While some worlds mine metals and ores, these worlds exist only to produce foodstuffs, and their inhabitants live only for the harvest. There is no standardisation to the foods produced, and they might range from concentrated larva-meal gruel to exotic fruits, or anything in between. Without the agri-worlds, other planets would soon starve and the Imperium would crumble into internecine conflict for food.

Some planets have never discovered technology, or have regressed to a lowly state, and are categorised as feral worlds. Many are marked by prolonged seclusion from the Imperium due to Warp storm activity, war, natural disaster, or perhaps wilful isolationism. Over many generations, society fails, laws break down, technology grows silent, and coarse brutality claims the world. Invariably, the psyker cull is neglected. Where psykers are allowed to prosper, it is inevitable that possession follows, and in its wake, daemonic incursion. A world overrun by Daemons is lost, and if the incursion is drastic enough it may even be transformed permanently and irrevocably into a Daemon world.

Far less common are those planets classed as death worlds. Such planets are possessed of life forms and environments so predatory or otherwise hazardous that only the most foolish or desperate would attempt to explore or settle them. Some, however, are host to such valuable or unique resources that the Imperium still attempts to establish a presence there, seeking to extract or harvest the treasure no matter the cost. Some death worlds appear so inimical to intrusion that it is as if every life form on their surface is driven by a single, indomitable will, its singular intent to expel offworlders.

Still more classes exist in the archaic data-archives of the Administratum. Forge worlds are vast planets entirely turned over to the production of technological materials, most destined for the endless wars of Mankind. Many worlds are subsumed into warzones, their original classifications long lost as generations-long battles absorb every facet of their existence. Dead worlds perhaps once thrived, but have long since been scoured of life by war or some other calamity. Shrine worlds are devoted to worship, venerating the many saints and fallen whose blood has ensured the Imperium survives another day. Those designated as quarantined are rarely spoken of; covered with xenos relics or the burnt husks of worlds that have undergone Exterminatus, they are anathema to the Imperium.

These and countless other classes of world make up the glorious domains of the Emperor. Each is unique, though the legions of scribes strive yet to impose some order on the riotous variety that is the Imperium of Man. Despite the staggering range of differences, the peoples of each are united in their devotion to the Master of Terra and stand together in the battle for the very soul of humanity.

A Thousand Thousand Tongues

Most of the millions of Imperial worlds have existed for countless millennia and are host not to a single society, but to many sub-groups. As such, every planet and culture has its own set of languages, some with common roots with those of old Terra, others entirely novel. Most people never hear an off-world tongue nor have any need to learn one.

There exists a common Imperial tongue of sorts, though it is spoken with great variation across the galaxy. This is Low Gothic, the language of ships' crews and other menials. The professional classes such as the Adepts often speak a more rarefied, noble tongue called High Gothic, the language of worship and of law. Needless to say, countless specialised tongues are also spoken, from the techna-linqua of the Tech-Priests to the secret codes of sector-wide crime syndicates.

Forged in Blood

"No army is big enough to conquer the galaxy. But faith alone can overturn the universe."

–Ecclesiarch Deacis IX

The Imperium is an empire built upon foundations made from the calcified bones of countless billions of martyrs. It has stood for ten thousand years, not one of them untouched by death and strife on a galactic scale. With the ebb and flow of war, legends are made, legends that in time obscure the truth. Even as the ink on ancient tomes of history fades away, the deeds of long-dead heroes echo down the ages. The Imperium is founded upon such legends, for they drive it forward as the martyrs of today seek to emulate the saints of yesteryear. So obscured by war and destruction are the facts of the Imperium's history that few—if any—amongst the Adeptus Terra or any other body know even a fraction of the truth of the Imperium's origins, and all but nothing of the age that precluded it. The most privileged learn not history but mythology, while most remain entirely ignorant.

Throughout the ten thousand year reign of the Emperor of Mankind, war and disaster have waxed and waned, the death and destruction growing ever more intense with each passing century. The Imperium has endured calamity after calamity, yet, with the Emperor watching, it endures. From being split in twain during the Nova Terra Interregnum to the invasion of the Tyranids from the darkness of intergalactic void, the Imperium has stood firm.



With the closing of the 41st Millennium comes what many term the Time of Ending. Psyker births are reaching epidemic levels, and the League of Black Ships cannot possibly keep them all under control. Cults and heresies fester below the surface of every world, boiling over to bring rebellion and anarchy. Aliens descend from the void to enslave, consume, and slay. Worst of all, the Warp grows ever more turbulent as the passions and woes of Mankind feed the fell beings that dwell in its depths. So tumultuous has the Warp become that all over the Imperium it bleeds through the unseen barriers and spews forth into realspace, bringing with it Daemons and rampant insanity.

And all the while, unknown to all but a few within the upper tiers of the Adeptus Mechanicus, the arcane systems of the Golden Throne grow cold, one by one. None can say what might befall the Imperium should it fail, for without the Emperor to watch over it, humanity is surely doomed.

The Pillars of Imperium

"Give yourself fully to all duties and routines as have been allotted to you. Attend to these to the best of your skill and of your endeavour. Be earnest in your praise of the Emperor. Be vigilant in the scrutiny of your fellows. When called to fight, do so with fervour and righteousness. Do not submit to fear!"

–Words of wisdom recorded upon south flank of the Tower of Martyrs, Terra

The Imperium of Man endures through the unimaginable weight and mass of its institutions, and the power they exert upon the lives of the teeming masses. Many of them are riddled with unimaginable corruption, incompetence, and idiosyncrasy, yet through the sheer inertia of a billion billion men they continue and the Imperium continues. Divided into countless arms, each often at odds with the others, the Imperium grinds along in its quest to fulfil the Emperor's will.

The High Lords of Terra

With the Emperor interred in the wondrous life-sustaining machineries of the Golden Throne, His attentions turned towards the defence of humanity's very soul, others must rule the Imperium in His name. It falls to the Senatorum Imperialis—the High Lords of Terra—to conduct the essential business of governing the galaxy-wide Domains of the Emperor. It is by the order of the High Lords that the mighty armies and fleets of the Imperium are raised, mustered, and sent to war, and theirs is the task of conquering the galaxy according to the manifest destiny of Mankind. By the word of the High Lords, worlds burn and xenos species are exterminated. When the situation demands it, the High Lords appoint the mightiest of leaders to command vast armies to conduct crusades against the enemies of the Imperium, conferring the auspicious, and not always welcome, the title of Warmaster upon men whose name will be etched in history for all time.

The Adeptus Terra

The High Lords of Terra are but twelve men and women, and so they must confine their attentions to the very highest levels of strategy, policy, and war. An individual planetary ruler might occasionally draw their interest, but even then only briefly. The countless tasks that must be carried out simply to ensure the Imperium continues then fall to any one of numberless institutions into which almost all of the servants of the Imperium are divided. The Adeptus Terra is in effect the government of the Imperium, the overall structure that controls and oversees at the very highest level everything from the conduct of decades-long wars of attrition to the exploration of newly discovered worlds. The Adeptus Terra is sometimes referred to as the Priesthood of Terra, or simply the Priesthood, for it has a hand in almost every aspect of life, even it is not a specific department in itself. Rather, the Adeptus Terra is divided into a staggering array of divisions. Some are ubiquitous and known to every world in the Imperium, such as the Adeptus Administratum and its endless adepts and scribes. The Astra Militarum, more commonly known as the Imperial Guard, is also ubiquitous as it raises new regiments and defends the Imperium across the galaxy. Others operate in secret, such as the Officio Assassinorum, its agents moving unseen and visiting death wherever the High Lords will it. Some are figures of legend, such as the Space Marines of the Adeptus Astartes, the greatest of champions, who most men will never be blessed to witness. Still more divisions exist, their purpose so esoteric or anachronistic as to defy reason.



The Adeptus Administratum

The Adeptus Administratum is the central bureaucracy of the Imperium, the structure by which information is gathered, processed and, in theory at least, disseminated. Each and every day, the data-mills of the Adeptus Administratum churn out titanic mountains of information for reasons and purposes few now remember. Across the length and breadth of the galaxy, it charts, reticulates, categorises, and records every type of measurement imaginable, from the number of lasgun power packs expended in a war to the exact nutritional intake required to keep a serf-worker at the optimal level of productivity for a given length of service. The Adeptus Administratum is further sub-divided into myriads of other departments, many of them largely unaware of their own place within this impossibly vast machine. Some are responsible for measuring the output of other departments, and are themselves measured by others still.

Over the millennia, its size and form have expanded and contracted to such an extent that entire divisions have become divorced from the main body, yet they continue to collect and process data and to transmit it onwards with no regard for its destination. In the most extreme of cases, desperate pleas for deliverance from starvation, disease, insurrection, or alien invasion have been despatched to some central authority such as a segmentum high command or even Terra itself, only to arrive late or horribly garbled due to interference with the astrotelepathic message. Sometimes such a plea might be received intact, only to vanish into the vast reaches of the Adeptus Administratum's bureaucracy for so long that by the time it is considered, the disaster has long passed and the originator is long dead. To add to these difficulties, most planets have their own languages, units of measurement, and even modes of thought to make each utterly unique and communication between them all but impossible. Such obstacles the Adeptus Administratum must face each and every day, and few indeed are overcome except through truly inspired effort.

The Adeptus Arbites

Each of the million and more worlds of the Imperium rules itself by its own body of laws, codes, mores, and traditions, and most employ their own, locally-recruited body of Enforcers to ensure such laws are adhered to. It is necessary, however, that a higher tier of laws applies on every world in the Imperium, and the task of enforcing these galaxy-wide rulings falls to the judgement of the Adeptus Arbites.

Almost every world in the Imperium is host to a mighty bastion-precinct of the Adeptus Arbites, a grim fortress of obedience from which the laws of the Adeptus Terra are imposed upon the local populations. The Arbitrators stationed in these precincts care little for infractions that might invoke the ferocious wrath of local Enforcers, but are instead concerned with crimes against the Emperor and his duly-appointed officials. The most serious of crimes are those such as harbouring unsanctioned psykers or other similar threats, for such dangers can doom a planet. Arbitrators also keep vigil for failures in gathering the proper tithes each world owes the Imperium, and watch for any signs of consorting with aliens, traitors, and other enemies of Mankind.

The Adeptus Astra Telepathica

Mankind is at once blessed and cursed by the presence within its teeming ranks of individuals able to tap into the raw power of the Warp and to use it in the form of psychic powers. It is the task of the Adeptus Astra Telepathica to oversee the recruitment and training of psykers, a mission it achieves by the efforts of its two major sub-divisions—the League of Black Ships and the Scholastica Psykana. The Black Ships ply the space lanes of the Imperium on a continuous circuit, laying over at each world at least once per generation in order to lay claim to those psykers born to the local population and caught up in the regular sweeps that the rulers are required to conduct. Some are slain once aboard the Black Ships, judged too dangerous to live another day more. Most are locked within the bleak holds to be transported back to Holy Terra for ritual testing. Some are only useful to burn brightly, albeit briefly, in the most glorious service to the Emperor. Others might go on to become Astropaths, linking worlds together through psychic means, or Battle Psykers, living weapons who accompany the Imperial Guard into war. Some might be judged worthy of service to a Space Marine Chapter as a Librarian, marking them out as truly rare champions of the Imperium, able to serve as formidable warriors and psykers.

The Adeptus Astronomica

The Imperium is held together by virtue of the fact that Warp-capable vessels may voyage from one world to the next in the span of weeks rather than the many generations such journeys would take by conventional means. Such a feat is only possible because of the Astronomican, a psychic beacon guided by the will of the Emperor Himself and sustained by the souls of those psykers condemned to ritual death by the Adeptus Astra Telepathica. Having been delivered to Terra aboard the Black Ships, these psykers are made pure, so that when their time comes they may add their very essence to that of many thousands of others, and in their way know a blessed unity with the Emperor that no others will ever experience. As their souls burn within the spirit-cauldron of the Astronomican, they fuel the fire that shines out across two thirds of the entire galaxy. By that brightest of beacons, the Navigators of the Navis Nobilite are able to assay their positions and guide their vessels through the churning Sea of Souls.

The Adeptus Custodes

Only the most blessed may enter the Emperor's Palace, a vast structure that spans an entire mountain range on Holy Terra, and only a handful of these have cause to enter the throne room itself, the holy of holies at the very heart of the Imperium. Guarding the Golden Throne are not only a pair of towering war Titans, but a cadre of the most puissant of warriors ever known to Mankind. These are the Adeptus Custodes, the golden-armoured sentinels who form the ultimate, unwavering line between the Emperor and the doom of humanity. Were these few to fail in their duty, Mankind would fall, and so they rarely leave the Emperor's side and almost never leave Terra. Alongside a select few of the Adeptus Astartes, the Companions are ranked amongst the very pinnacle of martial achievement, their strengths matched only by the utter dedication to their duty.

The Adeptus Astartes

When the Emperor set out to re-unite the lost tribes of Mankind at the very dawn of the Age of Imperium, he knew that he could only do so with a mighty corps of warriors at his side who were as strong, skilled, and dedicated as he. To this end, he created twenty perfect beings in his own image—the Primarchs—and from the genetic legacy of each of these he created an entire legion of superhuman warriors.

The Space Marines of the Adeptus Astartes are the inheritors of the original Primarchs, whose blood still flows in their veins. Their bodies enhanced by implants that boost their abilities far beyond the human and their hearts steeled by unmatched courage and devotion, it is truly said of the Space Marines that they know no fear. They are the Angels of Death, bearing the most formidable of weapons and wearing the strongest of armours. Such blessings come at a cost however, for the Space Marines are recruited at a young age and know nothing other than war before eventually and inevitably falling in battle against the endless foes of the Imperium. They are at once far more than human, yet removed from Mankind, their entire existence one of sacrifice, duty, and death.

Chapters of the Adeptus Astartes operate apart from the bulk of the Imperium's power structure. Each is led by a Chapter Master who is considered a peer of the Imperium, an equal to the highest-ranked servants of the Adeptus Terra. They may be petitioned for aid against invasion or insurrection, or to spearhead the many wars and crusades launched against the foes of Mankind, but they are a power unto themselves and may very well reject such a plea with no reason given as to why. Though it is said there are only a scant million or so Space Marines, the speed with which they attack—and the devastation they cause—makes them rightly feared across the galaxy.

The Imperial Guard

Each planet in the Imperium must look first to its own defence against the numerous foes that assail the Emperor's domains, and to this end almost all maintain some form of local defence force, whether standing army or irregular militia. When war comes and the world in question cannot contain the enemy on its own, it broadcasts the call for aid, a call that is answered by the raising of Astra Militarum regiments from amongst the defence forces of neighbouring worlds. In addition to these emergency situations, the worlds of the Imperium are all subject to a regular tithe, often a rendering of manpower to serve in the ongoing, relentless wars of the Imperium, in the multitudinous ranks of the Imperial Guard.

Drawn as they are from a staggering array of worlds and cultures, some well used to technology and others living in primitive squalor, no two regiments of the Imperial Guard are exactly alike. Even its signature weapon, the ubiquitous, mass-produced lasgun, is subject to variation depending on the manufactorum, munitorum pattern, and local forge traditions that guided their creation.

Regardless of the specifics, the Imperial Guard represents the hammer that crushes the enemies of the Emperor. Its ranks are unending, for Mankind is blessed in manpower above all other resources. Each and every day, untold thousands of Guardsmen give their lives in the service of the Emperor, a pious battle cry upon their lips and a devoted prayer within their hearts.

The Imperial Navy

Every vessel bound to the service of Mankind is ultimately subject to the control and regulation of the Imperial Fleet, its masters registered with the segmentum fortresses. The greatest part is the Imperial Navy, the body responsible for fighting the enemies of the Emperor in the depths of the airless void and supporting His armies on the ground.

It falls to the warships of the Imperial Navy to conduct a wide range of missions. Many spend long months, even years, on extended patrols of Imperial space, their presence deterring pirates and alien raiders. Some squadrons are engaged in continuous operations against known concentrations of slavers, and fight ongoing campaigns to keep the Warp routes clear and commerce flowing. Occasionally, warships gather into massive fleets in order to prosecute wars against alien empires or defend crucial systems against invasion. These confrontations see the warships of both sides unleash weapons of unimaginable destructive potential, slaying thousands of enemies with each fusillade. The largest of the Imperial Navy's warships are host to hundreds of thousands of crew, for machines are venerated relics of history often impossible to replace, while men are many and without limit.

The Navis Nobilite

Without the Navigator Houses of the Navis Nobilite, there would be no Warp travel, and without that, there would be no Imperium. The Navigators are a breed apart from Mankind, a stable mutant strain blessed of a third eye that is capable of seeing into the unreal depths of the Immaterium and discerning a navigable path through its depths. Using their third eye, they are able to perceive the true face of the Warp and to sense its most subtle of movements. The soul of the Navigator is warded against the stark insanity of the Warp, so that, unlike all other mortals, he may look into it and not have his soul blasted to ashes in the process. Navigators usually only open their Warp eye whilst guiding a vessel through the Sea of Souls, for any mortal who falls under its terrible gaze looks into the depths of the Empyrean and is likely slain in an instant.

Because of the vital role that Navigators play within the galaxy-spanning Imperium, the Navigator Houses occupy one of the highest of positions. They are led by the Paternova, a patriarch blessed of supreme power over all his kind but invariably cursed with the most awful of mutations. The Paternova is represented in the Senatorum Imperialis by the Paternoval Envoy, a permanent seat that grants enormous influence in the workings of the Imperium of Man.

The Officio Assassinorum

The Imperium has numerous means of making war upon its numerous enemies, from the relentless assault of countless thousands of Imperial Guardsmen to raining virus bombs upon them from orbit. The very subtlest, however, and one only unleashed upon the express word of the High Lords themselves, is the Officio Assassinorum. This secretive order trains and deploys the most deadly assassins alive, each a member of a different Temple. Each Temple specialises in a specific expression of the art of death, from those that deliver it from afar using the pin-point accuracy of a high-powered sniper rifle to those that kill silently by poisoned blade.

The High Lords of Terra wield the Officio Assassinorum as a precision weapon, wielded only for the furtherance of grand strategy or the most terrible of vengeance. It is well known that a single bullet placed between the eyes of a rogue Planetary Governor as he addresses his followers can forestall an attempt at secession and avert a costly war of suppression. A sufficiently skilled infiltrator might spread such distrust and disorder within the ranks of an enemy army that it is split asunder, making it a far simpler task for the Imperium to defeat. No figure is immune to or safe from the Officio Assassinorum, from the highest ranked general to the most hidden of criminal lords.



Planetary Governors

The majority of worlds in the Imperium are ruled by a local leader granted the rank of planetary governor, though the title for each varies with the world's traditions and society. The means by which a planet is ruled are usually of no interest to the Imperium, so long as the tithes are met, the psyker cull conducted, and Imperial Law followed. Most leaders gain their position by hereditary succession, and as such they fulfil the role of feudal kings and queens to their people. Some are elected, though probably from the ranks of the elite such as a local nobility or other class such as martial orders. Some worlds are ruled by mercantile concerns, the prime executive holding the simultaneous rank of governor. In each case, the appointment of a new ruler must be ratified by the Adeptus Terra by way of the chain of command starting at the High Lords of Terra themselves and extending down through segmentum, sector, and sub-sector administrations. As it is not unusual for worlds to remain apart from the Imperium for decades, even centuries at a time, some appointments never get ratified, but regardless, no governor should be under any illusions that he governs under anything other than the sufferance of the Adeptus Terra.

Rogue Traders

The Imperium is ever expanding—as one world, system, or region is lost to the tides of war or calamity, so another is claimed in its place. Rogue Traders are the agents of this expansion, and their task is to do what is utterly forbidden to almost all other classes of men. They are tasked with voyaging into the void and claiming what they may for the Imperium. By setting their seal upon unclaimed planets or by conquering those harbouring life, Rogue Traders take the rule of the Imperium to the dark places beyond the charted stars.

Rogue Traders possess a degree of power and influence almost inconceivable within the Imperium. They owe this power and authority to their Warrant of Trade, a document bestowing the right to travel beyond the bounds of the Imperium, and claim what resources can be found in the name of the Emperor. Their Warrant also grants them the power to make judgements regarding the xenos races and isolated human civilisations they encounter beyond the light of the Astronomican. Outside of Imperial space, a Rogue Trader's word is law, and he may establish colonies, wage war, and exterminate civilisations as he desires. Many also travel within established sectors, exploring uncharted space and discovering new systems. In order to accomplish their mission, Rogue Traders possess voidships to rival those of the mighty Imperial Navy; many of their vessels are indeed modified warships.

Rogue Traders are often incredibly idiosyncratic, even downright eccentric in their personalities, modes of dress, and countless other matters. Through contact with numerous different peoples and species, they assimilate all manner of ideas. Some wear wildly exotic clothing, while others wield arcane weapons recovered from dusty xenos tombs. Some are zealous firebrands keen to take the light of the Emperor to benighted human civilisations who have never known His beneficence. Others are little more than pirates, wielding their Warrant of Trade as a Letter of Marque and conducting themselves as flamboyant and carefree rogues. All, however, are powerful individuals and always ready to use their power as they see fit for glory and profit.

The Adeptus Mechanicus

With progress a thing of the dim and distant past in the 41st Millennium, what relics of the superior science Mankind once possessed that remain are guarded jealously by the Priesthood of Mars—the Tech-Priests of the Adeptus Mechanicus. The vast majority of the technological wonders that propelled Mankind's very first wave of expansion into every corner of the galaxy are all but lost, and those that remain are understood by a vanishingly small number. Technological understanding has long ago given way to superstition, and learning to ritual. Much technology has been lost in Mankind's incessant wars for survival, strewn across the million worlds of the Imperium and the ruins of a million more. Advancement is regarded with supreme distrust and innovation is all but unknown, leaving each world with its own unique mix of surviving technology. Some worlds harbour ancient atmospheric processors that filter out poisonous elements, but the populace employs no tool more advanced that a flint-tipped arrow. On others, advanced weaponry is commonplace, but must be used to hunt local wildlife or else the population starves because of some irreparable failing in food processing systems.

The Adeptus Mechanicus is a religious order devoted to technology, and exists as an almost autonomous segment of Imperial society. The servants of the Cult Mechanicus worship the Machine God they designate as the Omnissiah, although many hold that this being is simply one facet of the Emperor Himself. The Adeptus Mechanicus is ruled from Mars, the oldest and greatest of humanity's many forge worlds, where the Fabricator-General, the titular head of the order, resides. As one of the very first planets settled by Man upon exploring outwards from ancient Terra, the red planet is strewn with the ruins of many thousands of years of industry, and incredible secrets are said to reside beneath its shifting, rust-coloured deserts.

Aside from Mars, the Adeptus Mechanicus controls numerous forge worlds as an empire within the Imperium, manufactorums operating on planetary scales. Each churns out an endless stream of technological goods to sustain the Imperium's endless appetite for materiel, and in return receives a steady stream of raw materials, foodstuffs, and other forms of payment. Though each forge world is—in theory at least—subservient to Mars, many guard their own secrets, and occasionally war breaks out between rivals. Many hold a particular expertise in one or another technology, and most employ their own subtle (yet to the experienced eye, distinctive) variations of common designs, so it is possible to identify a plasma gun as the work of one specific world, for example, or a tank as the work of another.

In addition to furnishing the Imperium with the fruits of its forge worlds' industrial output, the Mechanicum sends its servants to every corner of the Imperium to aid in the operation and maintenance of all forms of technology. The common soldier might be entrusted to change the power pack in a standard-issue lasgun (so long as he recites the correct litanies), but he can scarcely be expected to repair a faulty field-cogitator. Thus, the Tech-Priests of the Cult Mechanicus are to be found wherever Mankind—and more importantly, Mankind's technology—goes, conducting the rites of operation and repair over the war machines of the Imperium, assisted by legions of cybernetic servitors and lesser menials.

The Mechanicum also includes the mighty war machines of the Collegia Titanica, and has ancient bonds of trade and technological assistance to many of the Knight worlds, where nobles rule from within powerful, one-man Titans. These and other powerful forces ensure that few can withstand the Titan Legions when they march to war.

The servants of the Omnissiah are consumed by the drive to acquire knowledge. The ultimate expression of this is the hunt for lost examples of human technology, but some amongst their ranks see fit to study the works of the alien as well, perhaps in the hope of learning some underlying and unifying truth. Such deviations in outlook often lead to doctrinal strife between the countless sects and sub-groups within the Cult Mechanicus, causing some to be cast out from the order entirely. For those denied access to the greater truth embodied by the Machine God, only the worship of other, darker beings awaits, as does the damnation of what remains of their shrivelled souls.

Standard Template Construct Systems

When Mankind first voyaged to the stars, it went equipped for any eventuality. Knowing that when a colony fleet eventually arrived at its destination the settlers might find themselves cut off from aid and unable to obtain certain natural resources, many took with them the nigh mythical Standard Template Construct (STC) systems. These marvels of technology held details of every single advancement Mankind had ever made, from the tinderbox to the means to re-ignite cold stars. Wherever a colony might be founded, it could be sure that its STC system would provide it with instructions and the means to create the tools necessary to survive there. Should a population find itself without a certain metal, the STC would furnish it with the means to manufacture items from some other, locally available resource, meaning, even at the height of the Age of Technology, planets varied enormously in the levels of technological advancement displayed.

Sadly, no complete STC systems are known to have survived the countless wars and disasters that have befallen man since first he went to the stars. At the most, the only trace of the STC systems are transcriptions of hard-copies, or surviving blueprints and manuals intended to instruct the users in their operation. To obtain an actual STC system, even one long dead, is the dream of every servant of the Machine God. Entire crusades have been fought and worlds have burned upon the mere suspicion that some newly-discovered planet contained such a device. From time to time, traces of some STC design are located, and these studied in impossible detail to ensure they are pure and free of corruption. If and when declared so, such designs enter the canon of the Adeptus Mechanicus as re-discovered wonders from the far-distant past. Such discoveries are rare, however, and just as likely to describe an item of farming equipment as a mighty weapon of war.

In many ways, it is the search for lost devices collectively known as archaeotech that drives much of the Imperium's expansion. The Adeptus Mechanicus operates numerous Explorator Fleets, which plunge into the darkness beyond and within the Imperium's borders in search of even a trace of such venerated technology. The same is true of the Rogue Traders, who constantly search for new sources of profit and power. Far beyond the gaze of Holy Terra, the two factions often come to blows over even a rumour of a Standard Template Construct system.

The Adeptus Ministorum

While he walked among His people, the Emperor denied His own divinity, yet His miraculous reincarnation upon the Golden Throne served to prove His godhead to the bereaved masses. In the aftermath of the Horus Heresy, the Emperor came to be worshipped by a staggering array of different groups, often possessed of highly divergent ideas regarding the Emperor's life, death, and continued existence. It was perhaps inevitable that conflict should ensue between these divergent sects, but within a thousand years of the Emperor's ascension, one had risen above them all. The Ecclesiarchy proved itself the strongest faction by a process of absorbing all other groups it came into contact with, adapting doctrines and forging links in order to make it appear they had been there all along. It was eventually recognised as the one, true faith of the Imperium, its status confirmed with the title Adeptus Ministorum; other sects that refused to bow down to its rule were declared heresies and marked for destruction.

In the 41st Millennium, the Ecclesiarchy holds sway over the hearts and minds of all but a few of the Emperor's subjects. The Adeptus Ministorum is a galaxy-spanning order based on Terra, but with cardinals, preachers, and countless other officials tending to their flocks across the galaxy, the Imperial Creed is subject to countless local and regional variations and idiosyncrasies. By dint of its ubiquitous presence across the entire Imperium, it has its own culture and traditions evolved over the centuries. Thus, the people of a given world might once have worshipped some long-dead ancestor-hero as their god, but with the coming of the Ecclesiarchy it is revealed to them that this ancestor was in fact the Emperor, to whom they must pray in the rearing, gothic cathedrals erected in His honour by the Adeptus Ministorum.

The Imperial Creed teaches that the Emperor is a jealous god who brooks the veneration of no other. In the galaxy of the 41st Millennium, this sanction is vital, for all other modes of worship ultimately lead to the altars of other, darker gods who crave only to devour mortal souls. At times, the entrenched religions of entire worlds are declared heresies, and an Arch-Confessor preaches a War of Faith against them. Fired by his words, the faithful rise up as one and march to war in conflicts that can rage for centuries.

There exist but two exceptions to the Ecclesiarchy's domination of faith. The first are the Space Marine Chapters, for each has its own body of beliefs and traditions sometimes called its Chapter Cult. The doctrines of these cults vary enormously and most have their roots in the pre-Great Crusade culture of the Chapter's home world. The most common factor in almost all is the fact that they venerate the Emperor not as a god, but as a man, albeit the greatest man ever to have risen from the ranks of humanity. In the Emperor, most Chapters see a glorious forbearer, for he created the Primarchs, and their blood has flown in the veins of the Adeptus Astartes for ten thousand years.

The Cult Mechanicus is the second exception, and diverges greatly from the proscribed dogma of the Ecclesiarchy, with the two bodies having come into conflict on numerous occasions. The truth is, however, that the Adeptus Ministorum is as beholden to the Adeptus Mechanicus as any other arm of the Imperium, for without them, they would be left bereft of such marvels as voidships to travel between stars.

The Inquisition

"Some may question your right to destroy ten billion people. Those who understand realise that you have no right to let them live."

–Exterminatus Extremis

The Inquisition occupies a unique position amongst the numerous arms of the Imperium, and its mission is just as singular. The role of the Inquisition is to guard the very future of humanity, to ensure that Mankind continues to exist in a galaxy bent upon driving it to extinction. To accomplish this aim, many Inquisitors quite willingly sacrifice the past and the present. Some care nothing for existing structures and institutions, even those that have stood since the dawn of the Age of Imperium, regarding all human achievement as transitory. To them, no sacrifice today is too great if it ensures there is a tomorrow, even if when that tomorrow comes, still more sacrifices must be made. Here lies the heart of the matter, for to make such grave decisions, an Inquisitor must be entirely inured to the suffering of countless innocents, as well as certain that from that anguish some benefit will emerge. Even as he sets in motion acts that will lead to the death of entire worlds, an Inquisitor must know that in doing so he averts some far worse future calamity.

What homogeneity does exist within the Inquisition is largely a matter of necessity. The most effective methods become established, while those that fail get no chance to do so. This has helped ensure the continued survival and success of the Inquisition, for otherwise it would surely have fallen to one or other of the countless enemies it has garnered over the millennia. Every Inquisitor pursues his mission according to his own methods and agenda, but they come together enough that some more enduring institutions have risen and survived the passing of their founders. Such structures range from the great Ordos to individual holdings or operations, and are comparatively rare examples of concentrations of effort that have become entrenched over time. Nonetheless, most operations and holdings do not survive the passing of their originator, unless taken up by a disciple ascended to the rank of Inquisitor who deems it worthwhile to do so.

Inquisitors are a class apart from humanity in every sense of the word. The Inquisition itself is answerable to no authority other than the Emperor, and even the High Lords of Terra fear an Inquisitor's scrutiny. The Inquisition does not even exist as an institution, rather as a collection of individuals tasked with a mission and possessed of the will and the authority to see it through. They are independent agents with few practical limitations to their power, and no concern other than the continued existence of Mankind. There are no limits to an Inquisitor's remit and no boundaries to his jurisdiction. Should he deem it necessary, an Inquisitor could cast his eye across the entire Imperium in search of foes and conduct operations that take him from one end of the galaxy to the other. In practise, the realities of Warp travel and the finite lifespan of even one with access to the most effective juvenat protocols limit the extent of an Inquisitor's actions. Nonetheless, the names of some long-dead Inquisitors are still spoken in hushed tones on hundreds of worlds across the Imperium, their pogroms having turned them into figures of legend for generations to come.



Becoming an Inquisitor

The number of Inquisitors operating in the Imperium at any one time cannot be known, but certainly it is vanishingly small compared to the endless masses of humanity spread out across the galaxy. The Inquisition does not propagate itself by any formalised charter or centralised chain of command. It does so in myriad other ways, perhaps the most common by existing Inquisitors gathering together and conferring the same authority they themselves enjoy upon one of their servants. Others are created by direct order from the very highest level, or by other, more esoteric processes. The Inquisition operates according to a complex mass of inherent and often unstated checks and balances, as well as political and strategic realities. Unburdened by any form of constitution, Inquisitors are free to pursue their mission according to the realities of what must be done. If an Inquisitor's actions are deemed in error, it is the responsibility of his peers to rein him in.

The chances of any individual man or woman even being possessed of the characteristics needed of an Inquisitor are miniscule, and the chances of such individuals ever being noticed and selected to serve are still smaller. Those few who do get the opportunity invariably do so because they became involved, at least peripherally, in an Inquisitor's operation. Through exceptional actions, an individual might become an essential component in an Inquisitor's mission, and at the conclusion of that operation be selected to take part in another.

The few that prove themselves strong enough to survive the arduous missions their master sends them on—as well as useful enough to his cause—sometimes become permanent agents. As a member of his extended household, an Acolyte enters an entirely new existence, passing from his old life into one unimaginable before. Most citizens never leave their own world or even know that such a thing is possible, but in the service of an Inquisitor, an Acolyte may visit dozens of different planets, encountering cultures varying from hyper-violent warriors fighting for domination over the ruins of long-dead xenos civilisations, to penitent monks living in deep space monasteries far from the crowded masses. Acolytes face such foes as would reduce most men to quivering wrecks, and witness the darkest secrets of the universe. They even catch glimpses of the true horror that awaits Mankind should their master fail in his mission, though none other than those chosen to ascend to the rank of Inquisitor can know the full, horrific truths.

Power of an Inquisitor

The vast majority of the Imperium's subjects know of Inquisitors only as distant figures of dread, if they know of them at all, but such is the power of the Imperium over humanity that all recognise the authority such men and women bear. Some Inquisitors display their power with a seal or icon when they choose to operate openly, which instils all that lay eyes upon it with deep-seated awe and fear. Others bear rosettes, sigils, or fluttering scrolls on which are written the articles of their faith. For many, it is simply their bearing, weaponry, and the puissant nature of those who follow them that ensures cooperation. Be it a physical item or intangible force of will, they indicate the bearer is to be obeyed in all regards, for to disobey him is to invoke the wrath of the Emperor Himself.

An Inquisitor wields the power to requisition entire armies, to drain the coffers of an entire world, to go anywhere he must, and to uncover any secret he seeks. Even should an Inquisitor come alone and seemingly unarmed before a rebellious planetary governor or traitor general, it would be a foolish opponent who assumed he was powerless. Should anyone deny an Inquisitor his due, they are sure to know wrath beyond their imagining.

In truth, whatever symbol the Inquisitor bears is as nothing to the power he carries within himself and amongst his peers. The only practical limit upon an individual Inquisitor's power is the degree to which his peers approve of his actions. An Inquisitor who acts in such a way as to attract the disapproval of other Inquisitors very quickly finds himself at odds with them, and less able to wield his power. He might be called to account for his actions and even tried by a court of his peers. In the most extreme of cases, such courts might judge a wayward Inquisitor as having overstepped the bounds of his mission in some way, and attempt to punish him. There being no formal structure to the Inquisition, individual members are not required to attend such hearings or accept what punishment they might hand down, the entire process itself being a matter of political reality. An Inquisitor who moves so far beyond the accepted bounds of his power is likely to find himself in direct confrontation with other Inquisitors. Sometimes these escalate into terrible wars in which the combatants use their authority to mobilise the resources of entire sectors to settle the matter, countless thousands of innocent and ignorant subjects falling in a conflict they have no way of understanding.



Structure

The Inquisition is a topic rarely spoken of amongst those who know of its existence, and even then almost invariably in great ignorance. This suits Inquisitors well, reinforcing their position of unseen power. In truth, there is no Inquisition as a formal organisation, at least not in the same way that other institutions within the Imperium exist. The Inquisition is simply the sum of all Inquisitors, but despite its nebulous state of existence, there are some characteristics of the whole it is possible to define.

Firstly, the Inquisition has no single leader, and no headquarters. It does, however, maintain a permanent seat on the Senatorum Imperialis. This seat belongs to no one individual Inquisitor, and shifts from Inquisitor to Inquisitor as influence shifts or necessity dictates. Nevertheless, the Inquisitorial Representative is held to speak for his peers, a feat that can only be achieved by a complex web of power and fealty that extends far and wide indeed.

There are also the Inquisitor Lords, though as with so much about the Inquisition, this title is not a formal one, but one of respect. An Inquisitor Lord holds no rank above any of his peers, but is simply a powerful and experienced individual whose peers use the title to set him apart from others. While he might hold no formal seniority, it would be a foolish Inquisitor indeed who acted against an Inquisitor Lord or failed to show him due respect.

How many Inquisitors serve the Imperium is not, and indeed cannot, be known. In some regions Inquisitors operate openly and in force, establishing long-standing power structures through common endeavour. In others they are all but shadows, or operate in such a clandestine manner that their passing goes unheralded and their deeds unrecorded. Some areas appear to draw the attentions of the Inquisitors far more than others. Notably, those sectors located near to Warp anomalies like the Eye of Terror attract the withering stare of the Inquisition, due in no small part to the vast number of cults and heresies spawned by the insidious taint of Chaos. Likewise, those systems built upon the ruins of conquered or extinct xenos species might harbour all manner of conspiracies, as the dreams of long-dead alien civilisations infect those humans who dwell within.

The Inquisition consists of no permanent or standing force other than the individual Inquisitors themselves. Each Inquisitor is free to build what alliances and networks of peers he deems necessary, sometimes establishing vast households or private armies that bear his colours or the dread sigil of the Inquisition itself. The ordinary man might look upon such holdings and assume they are servants of the Inquisition and that it must represent a huge and far-reaching power indeed. In fact, the opposite is true. An entire army raised by order of an Inquisitor is likely to be abandoned the instant he turns his attentions elsewhere, unless he puts in place the structures required to support it. Often it is not worth doing so, for he can always raise another force when next he requires it.

Aside from armies and other overt bodies, many Inquisitors choose to maintain networks of agents, servants, and contacts. These individuals are not vested with the authority of an Inquisitor, and the true extent of their own power depends very much on how far their master trusts them and his own position within the shifting webs between his peers. They expand an Inquisitor's power and range of operations, combating Mankind's enemies and rooting out heresies where he cannot.

The Ordos

The most outwardly visible manner in which the Inquisition might be considered to have any form of structure is in the idea of Ordos. It would be a mistake to regard the Ordos as formal divisions within the Inquisition, however, for in reality they are more akin to schools of thought. If each Inquisitor is a nigh unique example of an individual blessed (some would say cursed) with the perspective to see the true threats to the future of Mankind, then each has his own idea of how that future should be guarded and doom averted. Some regard the worst peril to the soul of humanity as traitors within its own ranks, whether heretics, mutants, or witches. Others regard the alien as the single most terrible obstacle to the future of the human race. Many know that the true threat comes from the Warp, for by dabbling in its secrets and courting its denizens mortals threaten the very fabric of reality and one day, the boundaries between the realms of the real and the unreal might collapse entirely. A few perceive other existential threats to humanity's manifest destiny, though these are generally so esoteric or arcane that individuals adhering to such beliefs are rare or heralded as madmen.

It is perhaps inevitable, given the perspective an Inquisitor possesses, that he should come to regard one of these threats as greater than the others. Thus, he comes to devote much of his resources to combating the threat that he himself perceives as most dire. This never precludes an Inquisitor from seeking other foes, for his purview is truly without limit. Sometimes, such threats are interlinked, one enemy of Mankind hiding behind another. A heretical cult might secretly be enthralled of some insidious alien will, which itself utilises the power of the Warp to exert its control across light years of space. In a lifetime of service combating the myriad foes of Mankind, an Inquisitor faces all of these threats and more, and never yields nor fails to stand against them.

The three great Ordos are the Ordo Hereticus, the Ordo Xenos, and the Ordo Malleus, the members focusing their efforts against the enemies of Mankind within, without, and beyond. These broad schools of thought as regards the identity of the true enemy of Mankind's future have, to a degree at least, become somewhat entrenched over the millennia, leading to a certain continuity down the ages.

One defining factor of the Ordos, and what sets them apart from mere doctrines, is the threat they perceive in their foes on a far deeper level than the physical. Clearly, an alien species allowed to exist on the borders of a sector presents the risk of invasion and the associated loss of life, territory, and resources. But the true threat is a spiritual one, a matter of how the enemy might eventually win. The heretic brings about the end by undermining the authority of the Emperor himself, turning man against man where all of humanity should be united as one. The alien is an especially fearful prospect to many, as exposure to it risks corruption down to the very genetic level. The Daemon represents a very literal threat to the soul of Mankind, for by possession that soul is destroyed, consumed by the denizens of the Warp.

Conclaves

Inquisitors sometimes convene gatherings known as conclaves. These might be huge affairs of pomp and ceremony with a great many Inquisitors and their servants in attendance, and lasting many days or even years. Conversely, they might be an ad hoc or secret affair between a few solitary Inquisitors in an abandoned hab..

There are numerous reasons for conclaves to be called; a common reason is to scrutinise the deeds of an Inquisitor for correctness or effectiveness of action. These conclaves might take the form of courts, with one Inquisitor acting as judge, others as advocates and prosecutors, and still more as jury. Heated debate might rage back and forth, and should the accused be found guilty by his peers a battle might erupt, for few Inquisitors are likely to walk willingly to the execution block.

Another type of conclave is that tasked with watching over a specific region, whether to protect it against some as yet unknown threat, or perhaps in response to specific intelligence. Such conclaves might come to resemble parliaments and take place in grand palaces constructed at the Inquisition's direct order. As with all such holdings, these facilities are not formally a part of the Inquisition, and they are unlikely to outlive the conclusion of their founding mission. Most likely, when the threat is passed and the conclave dissolved, any holdings built will be left to ruin, a grim reminder of the Inquisition's mission.

Other reasons can be to determine the most effective response to presented evidence of new threats or worrisome trends, or even decide whether such threats warrant their attention. Two or more Inquisitors might find themselves on the trail of the same enemy, for example, and must settle how, or indeed whether, to pool their efforts. Conclaves might also be conducted to declare new Inquisitors, determine areas of operation, or any number of other reasons. No matter their size or scope, their outcomes can send repercussions across the Imperium and down through the ages.

Cabals

A cabal is an alliance of Inquisitors come together to pursue some common goal. It might be no more than two Inquisitors, aided by their own followers, or it could see several dozen come together. Small cabals are not uncommon, for Inquisitors are rare individuals and cannot confront all of Mankind's foes alone. Larger cabals are far less common, as there are so few Inquisitors who would agree to its goals and also be available at any one time.

Most cabals are formed on a temporary basis and in response to some emerging threat. It is rare that an Inquisitor is unable to mobilise or requisition sufficient forces to combat an enemy, and so many cabals are formed for more political reasons. Perhaps a former Acolyte ascended to the rank of Inquisitor owes his erstwhile master a debt. Perhaps an ally must prove his devotion to his peers by exposing himself to risk. Perhaps each Inquisitor in the cabal knows a portion of some overall truth, none entirely trusting the others with his own hard-won wisdom. These and a thousand other concerns govern the formation of Inquisitorial cabals, and no two are exactly alike. One thing they have in common is that almost all are temporary in scope, formed for the duration of some mission or operation, and invariably dissolved upon the attainment of that goal.

Factions

The Inquisition is in effect a collection of individuals, each of them possessing the rare ability to perceive and act upon the direst threats to the future of humanity itself. As a collection of individuals, the Inquisition is prone to powerful and driven ideologues influencing their peers in matters of exactly how their mission should be pursued and differences concerning the final goals of their duties. Far from being a weakness, this is one of the Inquisition's greatest strengths. By examining each and every doctrine put forward, only the most effective propagates into the future. Factional doctrines demonstrated to be erroneous, weak, or damaging are usually weeded out by a process akin to natural selection, so that only the very strongest survive. By common accord, that which the majority agree upon must be the correct way, for a time at least. The form this process takes ranges from convivial debate between old friends to outright war between the bitterest of rivals.

Factions are usually formed of individual Inquisitors commonly adhering to a particular philosophy concerning their missions and goals. Some factions number only a handful of adherents, while others hold sway over many. Some are based upon the teachings or writings of a specific individual, sometimes an Inquisitor, but occasionally a legendary saint or savant. Factions rise above Ordos, as they describe not which peril is the greatest but how it should be defeated.

Countless factions have come and gone over the millennia, some limited in scope and others taking hold of great swathes of the Inquisition's servants. Some have proven so repellent to the bulk of Inquisitors that they have been crushed before taking hold, while others have spread almost without note. Some are so extreme in their dogma that great conclaves have been held to examine them, resulting in the faction and all its adherents being declared outcast. Though no individual or body of Inquisitors holds the authority to expel another from its ranks in any formal way, adherents of such extreme factions might be forced to hide their beliefs behind the veil of another, less extreme doctrine.

Despite the enormous variation in specifics of doctrine, most factions can be broadly described as either Puritan or Radical. Though both terms invoke certain preconceptions, neither is considered the true or proper way. To be a Radical is not to be an enemy of the Imperium, even when the individual's actions appear entirely at odds with the norm. Equally, to be a Puritan is not to adhere to the tenets of the Imperial Truth as might the common citizen. Both strive for the very soul of Mankind, and both are as strident in that goal.

Puritan Factions

Those factions considered Puritan often look to the past to shape the future. They exalt the deeds of the Emperor and of other mighty figures and, by and large, hold that Mankind's future is to be won by strict obedience to well-established methods. Puritans often regard the institutions of the Imperium as essentially correct, especially when those institutions have their origins in the age in which the Emperor walked among His people. They are naturally suspicious of drastic change, unless it is a reversal to an earlier mode of thought or governance.

Puritans are often regarded as firebrands and ideologues, though this is not universally the case. Certainly, they are quick to condemn and brook no consideration of divergent doctrines. Some would say that Puritanism is the natural path for the newly-ascended Inquisitor. It is at heart an optimistic mode of thought, for it holds that most of what Mankind has built is worth saving. In reality, such optimism is almost always proven misplaced, for the institutions of the Imperium are in fact riddled with corruption and on the verge of collapse. Ideal by ideal, step by step, many Inquisitors of a Puritan mindset find their beliefs upturned. Eventually, they may settle upon a doctrine that fits the truths revealed to them in the endless fight against the darkness, but some experience such a crisis of faith that they tread the path of the Radical, turning against all they once held dear when faced with such truths that only an Inquisitor can bear.

Many of the more extreme Puritans hold themselves as possessing a special duty within the ranks of the Inquisition. These regard it as their mission to seek out the activities of the most extreme Radicals and to oppose them in their schemes. These individuals are often greatly resented by their peers, further fuelling the fires of conflict within the ranks of the Inquisition itself.

Thorians

The Thorian faction holds sway in the hearts of many Inquisitors and represents something of a religious calling to many who regard themselves as above matters of spiritual doctrine. The faction has its roots during the tumultuous period known as the Age of Apostasy, when the insane tyrant High Lord Goge Vandire plunged the entire Imperium into war and anarchy. Vandire was cast down by Sebastian Thor, a preacher who went on to be hailed across vast reaches of the Imperium as one of Mankind's greatest saints. Many of those Inquisitors who witnessed Thor's deeds and heard his words recognised in him something of the Emperor Himself. They came to believe that the Emperor was acting through Sebastian Thor, and further reasoned that if He could do so once, He could do so again.

Over the centuries the Thorians have expanded their doctrines, reaching the conclusion that when the arch-traitor Horus wounded Him unto death, the Emperor was shorn of what mortal limitations He possessed. His spirit freed, He drew strength from the adoration of teeming masses of the faithful and His power swelled. Now, the Thorians believe, the Emperor is as a god, His unknowable will firmly established within the realm of the spirit.

The Thorians spend much of their efforts seeking out those through whom the Emperor is acting. They term such individuals Divine Avatars, and they use every means at their disposal to predict and detect their appearance ahead of the enemies of Mankind. What exact purpose the Thorians intend to put a Divine Avatar to remains a mystery and a question that divides many in the faction's ranks. Some might seek to use the individual as a weapon, while others might raise him or her up as a figurehead behind which the entire human race can unite, and as one drive away the countless enemies that clamour for its demise.

Monodominants

The creed of the Puritan Monodominants has its roots in the 33rd Millennium and the writings of an Inquisitor whose experiences fighting numerous xenos species led him to one realisation: if Mankind is ever to realise its manifest destiny to rule the stars it must actively seek and bring about the extinction of all other species. Far from the usual imprecation most subjects of the Imperium are well familiar with, the teachings of Inquisitor Goldo in *Monodomination—the Right of Man to Rule the Galaxy in the Emperor's Holy Name* preached fiery doom upon the xenos. Though Goldo died in relative obscurity, his teachings were eventually taken up by others, and the principles he espoused extended to include not just the xenos, but all enemies of Mankind wherever they might lurk. Monodomination became the doctrine of a new breed of Inquisitors who believe that no possible compromise can ever be made, and that all of Mankind's efforts must be focused on scouring the galaxy of all of its foes. As Inquisitors, and therefore possessed of unique perspective and authority, Monodominants regard it as their absolute right and responsibility to bring such an end into being.

Inquisitors of a Monodominant mindset are often highly militaristic in their methods. They regularly use their authority to mobilise (and arm) the faithful, or take command of entire Imperial Guard regiments. Some lead the battles in person, while others remain a concealed power guiding strategy from the shadows. Some deliver bombastic sermons, exhorting the masses to turn upon those in their midst harbouring sin and heresy. Others conduct highly formal trials in which entire populations are forced to account for themselves, often culminating in mass executions of thousands. Many forego the formality of a trial and instigate mass destruction in the name of their creed, certain that in so doing they are taking another step towards Mankind's ultimate domination of the galaxy.



Amalathians

The Amalathian faction has its roots at the opening of the 41st Millennium, when, charged by a renewed sense of purpose, many great figures assembled at Mount Amalath on the world of Gathalamor. There, the highest leaders of many institutions renewed their vows of piety and devotion, and in so doing spurred their peers to do the same. It is said that alongside the cardinals, admirals, generals, lords, and praefects were as many as eight hundred Chapter Masters of the Adeptus Astartes; if true, by far the greatest number to assemble in one place in many millennia. Also in attendance were a number of Inquisitors, who were as inspired by what they heard and saw as the others.

In the aftermath of the sermons at Mount Amalath, the Imperium entered a phase of expansion and renewal, perhaps the greatest achievement of which was seen when Lord Solar Macharius led the Macharian Crusade and claimed a thousand new worlds for the Imperium of Man. The Inquisitors present were inspired to sow the seeds of what would become the Amalathian faction.

The Amalathians hold that the Imperium is, essentially, set upon the correct path and that its institutions, even those riddled with decay, are worth saving. They battle to preserve these ancient structures and to purge them of the systemic weakness many have endured for countless centuries. Only by doing so, the Amalathians hold, can the Imperium truly be prepared to meet its future.

Radical Factions

Few Inquisitors start out adhering to this faction, as most radical doctrines embody such drastic ideals that a newly ascended Inquisitor would probably denounce them as outright heresy, ignorant as even he is of the full horror of the galaxy. Even if an Inquisitor of a Radical faction has selected one of his own Acolytes to become an Inquisitor, he is unlikely to reveal his true leanings until such time as his disciple has trod the path for himself, though a master might subtly guide his protégé along the way.

Though the specifics vary enormously, one point that unites many Radical doctrines is that little, if anything, is held as sacred. A Radical Inquisitor regards himself beyond all law and above reproach, and while this is technically true of all Inquisitors regardless of their leanings, Radicals take it to the extreme. They pursue researches and teachings held as forbidden by other Inquisitors, especially those of a Puritan leaning, in the belief that they and they alone have the strength of will to resist any dangers such pursuits engender. A Puritan might hold that contact with the alien is forbidden and even an Inquisitor should hold no truck with them; a Radical might reason that such small-mindedness denies humanity valuable opportunities, seeking to learn the secrets of the xenos and even to take up alien weapons. Sometimes the Radical seeks to turn those weapons against the alien that provided them, while at other times he seeks knowledge not known to Mankind at all. While ultimately the Radical might seek to scour the very stars of the taint of the xenos, he is quite prepared to bide his time until the time is advantageous.

At the very extremes of Radicalism are those all but cast out by their peers who act, or at least appear to act, against humanity itself. In all likelihood, such Inquisitors still regard themselves as acting in Mankind's ultimate interest, even if they appear no different from its most terrible enemies. Some Radicals prove unable to resist the taint of Chaos or whatever other fell powers they court and do in fact turn to the service of Mankind's enemies. Even these are still Inquisitors; unless moved against by their peers, they are still willing and able to wield the power they were granted when first they ascended to that position.

Xanthites

The Xanthites trace their origins to the beliefs of Inquisitor Zaranchek Xanthus, who taught that Chaos could, and indeed should, be harnessed by Mankind. This lead to a trial by his peers, and he was burned at the stake. Despite this fate, his teachings prevailed, for while held as Radical, they speak directly to many within the Inquisition. Xanthites hold that humanity's greatest potential lies in the Warp. For proof, they point to the many psykers and Navigators the Imperium utilises daily, and to the Emperor Himself, who many believe to be the greatest psyker of all time. They see in Mankind's evolution an inexorable progress towards a new being, one able to wield the power of the Warp and with it sweep away all of Mankind's enemies.

There are many within the ranks of the most influential Inquisitors who are sympathetic towards these teachings, even if they do not fully subscribe to the Xanthites' methods. Those methods appear to the unschooled as outright heresy, and to run counter to all the Imperium and the Imperial Creed hold as truth. Xanthites seek out the most forbidden of knowledge and enact dread rituals. They summon Daemons and bind Daemonhosts; they even wield Daemon weapons and other artefacts imbued with the power of the Warp, lending them a fearful appearance from which most sane men flee.

For obvious reasons, many amongst the Puritan factions are horrified by what they regard as monstrous hubris. Mortals often spread the taint of Chaos, believing that they and they alone are strong enough to resist its curse while mastering its power. While cabals might make allies of even the most diametrically opposed Inquisitors, some Xanthites are so extreme in their doctrines none will stand beside them. The most extreme are the Horusians, a sub-faction that holds that the arch-traitor Horus might have succeeded in bending the Warp to his will had he not been opposed by his brother Primarchs. Most Horusians carefully hide their true beliefs behind the mask of the Xanthite and are especially cautious of contact with Thorians.

Recongregators

The Recongregators see that the Imperium is a vast, decaying mass of corruption and sin, and rather than seeking to prop up the crumbling edifice, they work to tear it down. They do this in order to purge the Imperium of its weakness and propagate strong regrowth, though others see them as nothing more than iconoclasts and anarchists.

Recongregators rarely announce their factional leanings openly, preferring instead to work in secret in order to bring about the effect they desire. Should a world be threatened with alien invasion, for example, and an Inquisitor of the Recongregators faction judge the incumbent administration too weak to resist it, he may provide aid to a strong rival, and so foster rebellion with the ultimate goal that the strong should be allowed to prosper while the weak should be left to their fate. Some Recongregators go beyond even these drastic methods and openly work against the established institutions of the Imperium. Such individuals see weakness, and therefore heresy, everywhere they look. They come to resent much that Humanity has raised up, cleaving instead to the notion that the Emperor never intended much of what has been done in His name. These Radicals see corrupt divisions of the Adeptus Terra as every bit as dangerous to Mankind as, for example, an invading alien species. Where able to do so, they treat both with equal ruthlessness, mobilising any and every weapon available to purge the unfit. Recongregators are often opposed in their mission by Puritans, especially Amalathians, adherents to these bitterly opposed doctrines fighting a continuous and bloody war for the soul of Humanity even as they seek its numerous foes.

Isstvanians

On the surface, the doctrines of the Isstvanians appear similar to those of the Recongregators, but they are in fact subtly different. The faction derives its name from the virus bombing of the planet Isstvan III and the galactic civil war known as the Horus Heresy that erupted in its wake. The Isstvanians hold that without the terrible events of the heresy, the Emperor would not have ascended to the Golden Throne and attained godhead. They point to numerous other milestones in the Imperium's turbulent history, linking each and every disaster to a subsequent achievement. It is only by constant conflict and calamity that Mankind can ever hope to attain its full potential, the Isstvanians believe, and they hold themselves as the catalysts of that change.

While Isstvanians pursue the same missions as any other member of the Inquisition, they never relent in their efforts to sow the seeds of calamity. They welcome the threats their investigations uncover and instead of quashing them, meld them to their own purpose. Having uncovered a plot by cultists to open a portal to the Realm of Chaos, for example, an Isstvanian might allow it to proceed. Instead of dispatching a cell of specialised operatives to slay a group of cultists, or even deploying the elite Grey Knights to defeat the tide of daemonic filth sure to spew through the portal, he might wait still longer so that the entire world is lost to the denizens of the Warp. He might then foster or even lead the effort to retake the world, a conflict in which many thousands, even millions are sure to fall before the world is retaken, if it ever is at all. Regardless of the final result, Isstvanians believe that only through such strife can Mankind prevail and be strengthened.

His Master's Vice

Inquisitors employ the services of many and varied individuals, a small number of whom might eventually be drawn into their inner circle and perhaps, if they survive long enough, serve at the side of an Inquisitor themselves. In the main, Inquisitors care very little for the beliefs and opinions of their servants, demanding only that they obey their directives. Most Acolytes are entirely unaware of their master's factional leanings, being ignorant that such things even exist amongst the ranks of the Inquisition. None save another Inquisitor can judge an Inquisitor, though few Inquisitors would accept any judgement, even from their peers.

Eventually, however, an Acolyte might come to learn of his master's factional beliefs and to be drawn into an entirely new—and probably unwelcome—realm of rivalry and conflict. Even then, the exact loyalties of the master might remain unclear beyond the broadest category of Puritan and Radical. It is only when an individual is judged worthy of ascension to the rank of Inquisitor himself that the matter becomes relevant. It is unlikely, for example, that a Puritan Inquisitor would sponsor the ascension of an Acolyte whose beliefs might lead him towards Radicalism, and neither is he likely to support a peer seeking to elevate such a would-be Inquisitor himself. Thus, it is likely that master and servant will be in broad concord in matters of factional doctrine, even if the servant is not aware of the fact for some time to come.



The Ruinous Powers of Chaos

Being a Treatise on the Agencies most Foul

The unnatural realm of the Warp is home to the four great Chaos Gods, who rule this terrible domain even as they vie with each other to dominate all of existence. Each has his own demesne where he creates his daemonic legions, and as their forces clash, the titanic battles shake Immaterium and reality alike. These gods war on mortals as well, using brutal force, delicious seduction, insidious schemes, and malignant diseases to further their own goals and machinations, and to recruit souls to their causes with offerings of power. They are eternal, as is their war upon Mankind, and their victory would mean the final midnight for humanity.

Tzeentch, the Fate Weaver



Tzeentch is the God of Fate, the great architect of unending plots and schemes that entangle mortals throughout the galaxy. He watches over all with a devious gaze, subverting ambitions, thwarting goals, rising the lowly, and smashing the powerful, all for his own dark amusements and impossible intrigues that no mortal mind could comprehend. He is the Changer of Ways, lord of mutation and metamorphosis, and through his grace the many Gifts of Chaos flow to alter flesh and devastate sanity. He is also the Master of Sorcery, for magic is but changing reality to twist with whim, and patron of psykers, even those who do not worship him directly. His talons grasp the threads of destiny entwining all living beings, his Daemons and minions acting as his puppets to enact his enigmatic will. With each hope, with each decision, with each grasping attempt to change situation or improve fortune, there is Tzeentch, and none can say where blind chance ends and his wishes begin.

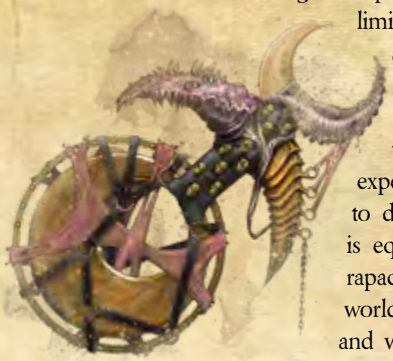
Khorne, the Skull Lord

Khorne is the mightiest of the Ruinous Powers, and his powerful minions carry his blood-drenched banners across the galaxy. He is the god of crimson ferocity, of murderous carnage, and of mighty clashes of arms and shouted battle cries. In his name, untold millions are slain each day, their blood and skulls offered up in sacrifice. For his glory, battles without end wage across the galaxy. Even those who fight and kill with no knowledge of the Blood God serve him, some even through his myriad aspects throughout mortal lands. His followers lead armies of rage and ruin that leave nothing but corpses and destruction in their paths. Khorne is also the god of martial prowess, and prizes combat excellence in all, even in his foes. Should his champions fall in worthy battle, his final blessing is to place their fresh skulls high atop his Skull Throne, there to bear witness to the endless wars that fuel his terrible might.



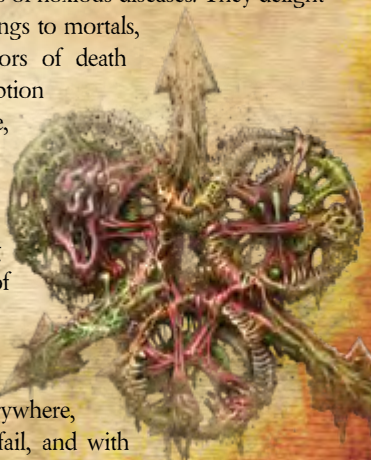
Slaanesh, the Dark Prince

Brought into life through the fall of the decadent and prideful xenos race known as the Eldar, Slaanesh is the Lord of Excess, and the pursuit of perfection and sensory gratifications in all things. His own appearance is beyond limits, existing as both male and female, always the epitome of impossible beauty and desire no matter who gazes upon his form. He offers the limitless bliss of endless passions and insatiable appetites to his legions of depraved followers. For his debauched adherents there are no boundaries in experience, and their eagerness to draw others into his worship is equally limitless. In his name, rapacious hordes degrade entire worlds with unspeakable rites, and warlords seduce systems with honeyed promises of unimaginable essences. Wherever there is desire, he exists. Desire for power, for knowledge, for conquest, for life eternal—all these and more drive morals, but once the drive becomes the goal itself, then their lives belong to Slaanesh. Once desire is fully embraced, it becomes inflamed until there is nothing but overwhelming cravings, and thus does Slaanesh seduce another to his insatiable cause.



Nurgle, the Plague Father

Nurgle is the Chaos God of blight and decay, the final end that awaits all mortals. From his pestilent garden within the Warp, where virulent fungi writhe and black flies fill the thick, polluted air, he brings forth endless afflictions and rejoices with each successful plague. Despite embodying entropy and the most loathsome of appearances, he and his Daemons are filled with vitality, enthusiastically offering their gifts of noxious diseases. They delight in sharing these infectious blessings to mortals, offering escape from the horrors of death but at the price of utter corruption to their flesh. Each new disease, each new mortal brought low, is carefully recorded in a never-ending tally. His apostles often become little more than rotting corpses, pestilent shambles of purifying flesh and dripping sores, but with unnaturally resilient flesh that vigorously resists death. Nurgle exists everywhere, for all living things erode and fail, and with each fall his power grows.





Chapter X: The Askellon Sector

The Askellon Sector is a mass of systems located in the benighted depths of space of the Segmentum Obscurus, between the infernal Eye of Terror and the cold, xenos-haunted Halo Stars. Situated towards the end of a ragged stellar cluster that includes the Calixis, Ixaniad, and Scarus Sectors, it is long past its glorious apex, and few but the mad, the desperate, or the outcast dare travel there. The reasons for this isolation are many, and made all the worse by a curse that has its origins in a time before even the Emperor of Mankind rose to power and reunited the scattered remnants of humanity.

As the 41st Millennium draws to a close, Askellon exists as a guttering flame burning alone in the darkness of the void. Once, it was mighty. Its worlds were prosperous and its armies strong, its fleets were far-ranging and ever victorious. From the ranks of its ruling classes rose all manner of heroes, from saints to scholars, mighty lords all. Yet, these great men invariably fell too early, or at the moment of their triumph veered away from the path of the righteous. Some fell to madness, others to hubris, sometimes damning entire worlds to share their sins in the process. Others were lost to ignominy and failure, their names struck from the annals of the Imperium's great histories for all time.

As if to compound its woes, the sector is afflicted with a seemingly unending Warp storm—known as the Pandaemonium—that waxes and wanes across the millennia, but is growing ever more intense and dangerous with each passing generation. Such discharges from the Immaterium touch every region of the galaxy, but most abate in time, and Askellon itself has seen its share of minor storms throughout its history. The Pandaemonium's multi-faceted eruptions, however, seem to exist independently of other storms, more akin to a living creature seeking to devour the entire sector. Already, several of the major Navigator Clans have withdrawn their holdings from the region, allowing lesser houses to grow in dominance. Many Chartist Captains plying the lonely Warp routes in this area of the galaxy prefer to avoid Askellon when possible, and some have marked the area as anathema or refuse to even admit its existence in times when the Pandaemonium waxes in virulent intensity.

Yet, Askellon has stood since before the Age of Imperium, and its foundations are sunk far deeper than even its most senior rulers are aware. The oldest worlds in the sector are steeped in power, their cities and infrastructure built layer upon layer over generations beyond counting. The ruling classes have held sway since long before the rise of the Adeptus Terra or even the ascension of the Emperor to the Golden Throne, and they wear their authority like a mantle of invulnerability. From gilded throne rooms atop towering spires, the nobles of Askellon look down upon their realms, certain in the knowledge that they have stood for so long that nothing can possibly cast them down. They nibble upon delicate morsels while pronouncing declarations that needlessly crush millions of lives with futile wars or vainglorious

constructions. The situation grows ever more desperate as the raw stuff of the Warp itself boils the void away. While the masses yet adore the Emperor, the preachers grow ever more strident in their declarations that He has abandoned Askellon, turning His beatific face away from them, so unbearable are they to look upon.

There are many who would agree with this assessment. The astropathic choir-masters of the sector's lynchpin worlds report that the screaming insanity of the rising Pandaemonium often drowns out the mind-songs from other sectors. Navigator Clans dismay that the light of the Astronomican gutters as the foul storm dilates. Many Rogue Traders still journey through the sector to pillage the untamed reaches surrounding it, or explore the still-hidden mysteries within its own borders, but even the bravest shudder when facing even a tendril of the baleful energies. Ancient legends, long suppressed and burned, hint of terrible events that awakened the Infernal Storm and its role in the damnation of Askellon, but none dare even contemplate such unbearable myths as truth. Perhaps the preachers are correct and the Emperor has abandoned Askellon to its ruinous destiny after all, unless heroes once again come forth to stay this most terrible of fates.

The Apocrypha Askellios

"Gather tears for the sins of ye fathers, o children of Askellon."

–Saint Valerius, Introit to the *Apocrypha Askellios*

Like the origins of the Imperium itself, historical truths surrounding the beginnings of the Askellon Sector have long since devolved over the millennia into myths and legends. Even these tales have become splintered, with many worlds and denominations holding their own unique beliefs. Most of the legends, though, hold certain areas in common, to an extent that most across the sector believe them as uncontested truths. These cherished beliefs on the origins of Askellon help bind the sector together in its continual and unstinting service to the Emperor. Taught on almost every world herein, they show a history older than the Imperium itself, that only became more grand once it united with the Emperor's divine purpose. It is one of uninterrupted loyalty, faithfulness, and devotion to the Emperor and His subjects, and none would dare whisper otherwise.

The Founding

Though the founding of the sector is shrouded with the ashes of history, most of the endlessly copied records indicate it occurred during the ages before the Imperium rose, when humanity seeded itself across the stars. The epic saga *Lay of Askellios* contains this commonly held recital, though many hold it to be allegory and not a factual accounting. Its most famous copy, a gilded tome many metres tall enshrined in a massive stasis chamber on Juno, relates of a huge fleet arriving after a long, perilous journey to a region of space unmarred by storms. Finding the area peaceful and unsullied, they decided to build a grand civilisation and await other ships to eventually arrive. Stable Warp routes connected a handful of worlds, and the fleet split to settle them.



For reasons that many of the tales refuse to codify, one ship refused this scheme and the others turned on it, refusing to allow it to hinder this grand vision. Myths state it was filled with sinners and heretics, and though heavily damaged it managed to get away, never seen again. The settled worlds grew and prospered, though, mastering the space around them into a stable union that managed to weather the terrible Age of Strife. For generations it remained isolated, until the blessed day when the one of the nascent Imperium's Expeditionary Fleets arrived as part of the Great Crusade.

Compliance brought the region, now named Askellon, into the Imperium. Some of the legends of this time consist of nothing but tales of the grand ceremonies that many hold lasted several years and included the unnamed Space Marine Legions accompanying the Imperial fleet. They also relate of scattered worlds attempting to resist the Emperor's Will, but that they were swiftly crushed. Of them, no more is spoken and none know of their names, though several still-charred planets perhaps give some evidence of their fate. No world living now would ever admit to such unthinkable betrayal in its past, and all are content knowing that none from those planets still live.

The Rise of the Pandaemonium

The time of peace was brief, as soon civil war on a scale undreamt of erupted. Many tales speak of how the sector's people fought valiantly during the dark times when the Imperium was nearly split asunder during the Great Heresy. Though much of the region faced horrific damage and many of its main worlds were reduced to ruin, Askellon, like the Imperium, survived.

Almost unnoticed amongst these early days of unification and rebellion were the first recordings of terrible Warp storms raging across the once-peaceful region. Twisted legends began that the storms were growing in appetite, and only abated after they had devoured sufficient ships or worlds to sate themselves temporarily. It was not until millennia later that Argo Kappellax, then Arch-Magos of Cerix-Magnus, established they were not legion but instead a singular storm, rising and falling, though no aerythmatical formulae could fully predict its actions. The name the Navis Nobilite Houses of Askellon cursed it with ages ago, Pandaemonium, soon became commonplace amongst those who ply the Warp routes across the sector and beyond.

The Infernal Storm continues to ravage the sector to this day, with periods of relative calm only to be followed with times so tumultuous that interstellar travel and communication become nigh impossible. With each generation it appears to grow stronger, though most assume this is more a reflection of Askellon's earlier, more golden ages than any true measurements. Some scholars believe that the Pandaemonium is once again growing in fury, this time to a level that reality itself might not withstand the storm surge.

The Time of Ending Approaches

In the ten millennia that have passed since the founding of Askellon, the sector's fortunes have waxed and waned many times. It has risen to the heights of power and prestige, only to be hurled into the depths of the abyss by the secret hubris of its leaders. Juno, the sector's pre-eminent world and the seat of its Sector Praefect, has been overrun by alien invasion, torn apart by bloodthirsty rebels, and crushed by wars with neighbouring powers. Askellon's peoples have been enslaved, butchered, and bombarded from orbit. Each time the sector has rebuilt itself atop the ruins, though never so high nor so proud as before. In current eras, many look back at past ages as golden periods and can only see darker times ahead.

Xenos threats are certainly on the rise, from raiders attacking vessels across the sector to entire armies seeking to conquer Imperial worlds. The sector contains the remains of many long-dead alien civilisations, and even their ossified artefacts can cause irreparable harm in the wrong hands. There are tales of cults that dare worship the inhuman, befouling human souls with the taint of the alien. Worse still, there are rumours of the resurrection of races thought dead and forgotten, though only the gullible or fanatical give these credence.



Using the Askellon Sector

The Askellon Sector is presented here as a ready-made setting GMs can use with a minimum of preparation, with each future Dark Heresy supplement expanding on the worlds, denizens, and threats covered here, as well as presenting new ones for Acolytes to explore. This does not mean GMs should feel constrained in using it, as every group essentially plays in their own iteration of Askellon and even the Imperium. Game Masters should therefore feel free to use the information provided however they wish, and to develop it in any way they can imagine. The setting is designed to play to the themes of Dark Heresy, and GMs will no doubt find plenty to draw from when it comes to designing adventures. Especially creative Game Masters might decide to set their adventures in another sector entirely, and of course this is entirely within the spirit of the game. Such bold schemes might range from changing a few names and locations, all the way to introducing entirely new planets or even setting the action at any point in the ten-thousand-year history of the Imperium.

The Pandaemonium has only added to the sense of doom. For several millennia, Navigators and Chartist Captains have considered the region, ever traitorous and poorly charted, as ill-aspected and in some manner cursed. Instances of vessels cast violently off course, barely surviving passage or vanishing entirely, are growing. Already, numerous charts state simply "Access Denied," where before they listed the details of the cursed sector, a warning that some who enter it might never return. Though it is a period of seeming calm, it grows in rage and hunger, but for what none dare say. Its power is limited not only to Warp travel; entire planets have been engulfed or lost behind its storm front, becoming isolated for generations. Doomsayers cry that the storm is drawn towards those worlds with the greatest populations of psykers, or worse might be itself causing the increasing number of these and other mutants. Heretical texts claim it is a manifestation of ancient sins revisited on the living, or the spirit of betrayed souls screaming for vengeance, and is so deeply entrenched within the stones of the sector's fortresses and the souls of its people that it may never be excised. Though none would openly countenance such beliefs, few Askellians disagree that it holds the sector in a vice that is ever closing.

The pervasive sense of coming doom has led many to turn away from their Emperor to other gods, and heresies grow across the sector. Wherever there is darkness they fester, from within the shadows of tall, gleaming spires or the foetid black of buried ruins, though many operate openly behind façades of the respectable or sanctioned. No world or system is safe from the touch of Chaos, and no soul proof against its many temptations. Only through faith in the Emperor, and the actions of His servants, can the sector survive these apocalyptic times.


Thule Sub-Sector
Hulee V (Hive World)
Enkidu (Feral World)
Aventine (Civilised World)
Asphodel Depths Sub-Sector
Port Lokhart (Naval Station)
Ossuar (Shrine World)
Orinoca (Hive World)
Snope's World (Civilised World)
Trailing
The Askellon Sector
Rhodin IV (Forge World)
Kalto (Agri-World)
Vouxis Prime (Civilised World)
Terminus Prime (port World)
Ferrom (Factory World)
Rubicon Sub-Sector
Coreward


Rimward
Stygies Cluster Sub-Sector
Hrax (Feudal World)
Yanth (Death World)
Pellenne (Mining World)
Laran 9K (Munitorum World)
Juno (Sector Capital)
Cel (Agri-World)
Spinward
Myros Kappa (War World)
Core Theta (Forge World)
Havarth (Hive World)
Desoleum (Hive World)
Thaur (Shrine World)
Cerix Magnus (Forge World)
Selvanus Brinary (Forge World)
Gregorn (Feral World)
Port Aquilla (Void Station)
Cyclopia Sub-Sector

The Domains of Askellon

"Worry ye souls, for the Storm rages anew."

–Saint Valerius, from the *Apocrypha Askellios*

Numerous Warp routes cross the Askellon Sector, the most important of which is the Grand Processional. It is easily the most widely-used and reliable route, and in many ways it is the lifeblood that sustains the sector. Lesser routes branch away from its way, diverting into ever-fragmenting paths that line Askellon like some mad tattoo. The settled worlds of the sector are connected via these routes, with the stability of a route often determining its influence. The handful of systems where the Grand Processional visits are known as the Grand Worlds, though not all are the most powerful of Askellon. The Tributary Worlds are greater in number, and though only linked via lesser routes, they are perhaps the sector's mainstay systems and ruled through a complex web of aristocracy bound together with chains of fealty, marriage, and other, less obvious, ties. Only tenuous and hazardous routes reach the Low Worlds, though they are still very much part of the sector's rule. The Lost Worlds, however, exist only in rumour and legend; lacking charted routes (or at least routes not kept as jealously guarded secrets), they are hidden and abandoned—sometimes by design.

There are seven Grand Worlds of Askellon along the Processional: the sector capital Juno; Desoleum, perhaps the oldest of Askellon's many hive worlds; the dark, feral world of Enkidu; Kalto, the bountiful agri-world; the foetid swamp-world of Orinoca; Pellenne, the enormous mining planet; and Vouxis Prime, home of continent-spanning cities. The Grand Processional is not itself an eternal pathway, and decaying parchments from millennia ago show other worlds along its trail than those currently listed. Legend has it that Juno and Desoleum have, as best can be told, always been Grand Worlds, and such is their power that none gainsay this. Should the Processional change its path, there could be new Grand Worlds, something many Tributary Worlds eagerly pray for.

The Askellian Sub-Sectors

Like most sectors in the Imperium, Askellon is divided into a number of administrative regions called sub-sectors. Each of these smaller regions has its own ruler often called a Sub-Praefect Askelline, an adept of the Priesthood of Terra charged with coordinating interactions between the worlds under his purview. He has no direct power over the planetary commanders of those worlds, except in areas pertaining to the payment of tithes and the culling of psyker populations. The sub-sectors of Askellon are the Stygies Cluster, Cyclopia, the Asphodel Deeps, Thule, and Rubicon, all regions mapped out according to the flow of shipping along the major Warp routes of the sector. Currently, Thule is without a Sub-Praefect, the prior incumbent having been assassinated by a previously unknown psyker cult calling itself the Brothers of Celestial Enlightenment.

Worlds of the Processional

"The ambitious are driven to attain power, but they are so often entirely unsuited to holding on to it. It falls, then, to us, the unseen Lords of Askellon, to guide the hand that rules."

–From the suppressed writings of the cult leader Johas Zadok

While most of the systems along the Grand Processional are in some way important to the sector, whether from a military, economic, or governmental perspective, they are only bound through their proximity to the great Warp route that ties the sector together. As such, though, they are important beyond measure as stopping points for interstellar travel, and have been forced sometimes into becoming greater worlds than they would have been if their system had been more remotely located. They are Askellon's way stations, and few who cross its space have not stepped onto their soil at some point.

Juno

Population: *15 billion, plus a huge but uncounted outcast population*
Tithe Grade: *Exactus Extremis*
Geography: *Temperate, barren, seas polluted beyond recognition*
Government Type: *Proxy council of ministers subservient to Praefectrix Charlotta Anastasia XX*
Planetary Governor: *Proxy High Minister Lord Alphax Duss*
Adept Presence: *All major sub-divisions of the Adeptus Terra represented in missions in the Pellucid Tower, plus numerous headquarters and fortress-vaults across the planet.*
Military: Grand Army of the Sovereign
Trade: *Major importer of luxury goods to the numerous nobles quartered on the world. Other elements of the world's economy based on provision of administrative services, via bonded stipends dating back many thousands of years.*

The world of Juno has stood as the capital of the Askellon Sector since time immemorial. It is commonly held as the first of the Founding Worlds to have been settled. The planet's ruling classes regard themselves as the elite of the sector, claiming the colony vessel that seeded their civilisation was the one carrying the finest of the fleet. Whether this is truth or fantasy, the rulers of Juno have always comported themselves as aristocratic masters, and place enormous stock in preserving what they regard as the purity of their labyrinthine bloodlines. While the aristocracy live artificially-extended lives of unimaginable luxury, their world cracks apart and their claimed control over the sector becomes more precarious. Each year, more shards of the cyclopean edifice sheer away, eroding the aristocracy's power, though they have yet to realise how badly. Their retainers dare not speak such truths to them, as the majority care little for such things and are concerned only that their existence should continue uninterrupted. An increasingly small number amongst them are still loyal to the greater Imperium and struggle to maintain Askellon, though most fear it is in vain.

As the Pandaemonium grows in this era, the aristocracy of Juno grows ever more distant and detached. Their balls and banquets become ever more decadent and outré, their costumes ever more flamboyant, and their behaviour ever more outrageous. Those who have witnessed these excesses whisper of the Emperor's judgement being brought down upon their pampered heads, while

rebellion simmers amongst the teeming masses. Indeed, some masked harbingers of doom preach sermons blaming all of the sector's woes on the debauchery of the aristocracy, holding that only by casting the ruling classes down might the fall of the entire sector be averted. Life on Juno is fast approaching a tipping point, though its rulers appear entirely unaware of their own peril.

The surface of Juno reflects the planet's long and war-torn history. Nothing of its original environment remains, the seas having been replaced by swamps of toxic sludge, and every shred of native biomass having been consumed in one manner or another. Numerous sprawling cities exist on the surface, but only a minority are occupied at any one time, officially at least. The world has been assaulted or invaded so many times throughout its long history that its cities have each been abandoned, re-occupied, levelled, or rebuilt many times over.

The world's ruling classes, as well as the headquarters of various branches of the Adeptus Terra and other Imperial institutions, occupy structures that resemble mighty bastions. The roads are lined with statues many metres high, and ragged banners sway in the breeze along processionals hundreds of miles long. The skeletal remains of cities lost to long-forgotten wars fill the war-torn wastes between those cities currently thriving. Within these wastes are said to exist all manner of outcasts: mutants struck low by the taint of genetic corruption from the toxins saturating the very ground, Warp-worshipping cults, recidivist enclaves, and even infiltrators of any number of xenos species. Periodically the rulers order such areas purged, partly out of paranoia and disgust, but as much because it is inevitable that they will have to be rebuilt at some point as the tides of war sweep their existing cities away.

The cities are places of enormous contradiction. The weight of power and age rests heavily upon them, even as new structures are thrown up to replace those entirely torn down. The greatest edifices of Juno are riddled with craters and plasma fractures many thousands of years old. All is dilapidated grandeur, grand balls and banquets being thrown in towering halls where walls are pock-marked and the cracked roofs are open to the pollution-streaked heavens. Despite the damage wrought upon its fabric, the world still retains a palpable air of age and power that few can deny.

Sector Government

Juno is the pre-eminent world in the Askellon Sector and seat of the Adeptus Terra's sector-wide bodies of government. While each world has a planetary governor to rule it in the Emperor's name, there are matters that require the exercise of power at the sub-sector and in particular the sector level, and in Askellon these are vested in the person of the Sector Praefect. For as long as the records recount, this office has been allotted according to a complex tradition of inheritance within the Askellian nobility, but its fulfilment has always been subject to ratification by the Senatorum Imperialis, for it confers on the Sector Praefect a senior rank within the Adeptus Terra—one imbued with great responsibility. The Sector Praefect's role is to oversee affairs between its worlds, as well as represent the sector in its dealings with external bodies, whether these are neighbouring sectors, Segmentum authorities, or even the High Lords of Terra themselves. The Praefect has no direct power to interfere with the planetary rulers, but in practise exercises enormous influence. Should he deem it necessary, trade routes could be redirected or closed, plunging systems into misery and condemning millions to death.

The incumbent is Praefectrix Charlotta Anastasia XX, whom the planetary governors of Askellon fear and adore in equal measure. She rules from the Pellucid Tower, one of the most ancient structures on the surface of Juno, where numerous representatives of the Adeptus Terra's many divisions are gathered along with countless thousands of officials, scribes, and functionaries to support her rule. Her control is not limited to the wider sector, as she rules Juno itself through a sycophantic coterie led by a hand-picked high minister.

While she has been in power for several decades, the Praefectrix appears to be slowly withdrawing from public life, her appearances at her own court growing ever more infrequent so that they are now almost entirely limited to the grandest of state functions. Many fear she has become increasingly paranoid and secretive to such an extent that it is rare for any but her most senior counsellors to interact with her in any official capacity. The Praefectrix now resides in a sprawling complex of armoured chambers and crypts deep within the foundations of the Pellucid Tower, chambers that are likely to have been constructed impossibly long ago in the forgotten Dark Age of Technology. From this subterranean sanctuary, the Praefectrix issues declarations and receives reports from her most trusted advisors and underlings, many of them bearing scant resemblance to any sort of reality beyond its armoured doors. What fantasies she now clings to remain a mystery to all but the inner circle, for she has been known to order the raising of entire legions against imaginary foes or order a system long since lost to host a grand visitation. Juno itself has lost her attention. Her advisors feed her a steady stream of lies and half-truths, and jealously guard access to their mistress. Despite this, the Praefectrix does occasionally hold court in closed session with mysterious emissaries her counsellors have failed to bar. Who these emissaries are and what powers they might represent remains a secret known to only a select few.



The Black Fleets

The Black Ships of the Adeptus Astra Telepathica ply the space lanes of the Imperium in an endless circuit, laying over at its worlds to collect those psykers swept up in the regular culls every planetary governor is required by most solemn obligation to enact. None can say how many Black Ships exist, and none can predict when one will next arrive in any given volume of space. At times when a world's psyker population grows so unmanageable the authorities are threatened with being overwhelmed, a governor may order a pogrom. This is a risky gamble indeed, for should the Black Ships arrive and find no psykers rendered up, the governor might forfeit his life as punishment.

This has not stopped many of Askellon's worlds from lethally culling suspected psykers, for in recent times their numbers have grown to dangerous levels and overflowed the iron cells customarily used in Askellon for imprisonment. Some worlds have not been visited for several generations, cut off as Warp routes in Askellon dry up or change paths; unchecked psyker populations can only cause the Immaterium to grow ever more turbulent and give the Ruinous Powers easier access to reality.

Vesuna Regis

The capital city for the last three generations, Vesuna Regis is believed to have been founded soon after the original wave of colonisation over ten millennia ago. It is a sprawling metropolis housing close to a billion souls, though no true census has been taken for many centuries. Vesuna Regis is an assemblage of impossibly ancient constructions, battle-scarred with statues weathered to vague outlines. New structures have been thrown up to replace those that have come crashing down due to the weight of age and the ravages of war, but with each generation the refined forms and masterful techniques of the past are lost to these pale imitations of the originals.

It is said that beneath the ancient foundations of Vesuna Regis lie even older chambers sunk deep into the crust by the first wave of colonists, crypts possibly containing all manner of archaeotech and other relics of the Dark Age of Technology. Needless to say, these rumours draw all manner of treasure hunters, as well as worshippers of forbidden powers and hooded agents of the Machine Cult. To reach these subterranean layers, an explorer would have to pass through horrid under-strata populated by countless outcasts and mutants, and there are no records of anyone discovering these supposed riches. Organised expeditions are discouraged, for they often trigger horrific uprisings amongst the feral denizens. The last time this undercity rose up, the city was set aflame, millions were slaughtered or dragged below, and it required a protracted campaign to finally end. The city has not been consumed by war in quite some time, which has only served to increase tensions above and below, and it seems that every hab corner is host to a maniac street-preacher prophesying imminent doom.

The Basilica of Valerius Risen

The centre of the Imperial Creed on Juno, and indeed in the sector, is the Basilica of Valerius Risen, a colossal structure so tall its highest spires pierce the lower atmosphere and only remain intact because they are held aloft by archaeotech anti-gravitic generators. The Basilica's main nave is spacious enough to accommodate tens of thousands of worshippers at any one time, and its inner walls are lined with tiered gallery-chapels set aside for the use of the ruling classes. The spires are host to the most senior of the Ecclesiarchy's officers and at its very summit, so high up that its chambers are sealed against the near vacuum beyond, is the Sector Synod. From here, Askellon's Arch Cardinal Harus rules over the synods, each of which corresponds to one of the region's sub-sectors and several other, lesser holdings. He is a devout follower of the cult of the sector's pre-eminent saint, Valerius, a legendary figure about which very little is actually known, but who appears to have been instrumental in converting the people of the sector to the worship of the Emperor early in its history.

Harus believes that the Emperor is on the verge of abandoning Askellon, so tainted are the souls of its people, and he believes that only by following the teachings of Saint Valerius can disaster be averted. Every day, services are held in which Harus and his subordinates preach the oncoming doom to the masses, many of which have been rounded up and herded into the basilica's grand nave by an army of stave-wielding Ardentii Zealots. The wails of lamentation cast up by the gathered faithful in response to the sermons are broadcast across the city from mighty vox-hailers mounted upon the basilica's spires. Further afield, countless vox-channels relay the sermons and the cries of those that hear them to the entire planet, sometimes deliberately overloading the vox-casters so the broadcasts bleed into every channel and none can avoid them.



Adeptus Terra Presence on Juno

As the capital world of an entire sector, Juno is host to the missions and holdings of a wide range of the Imperium's countless institutions. Many have been allowed to become reduced or degraded, with senior officials caring less for even the appearance of control. Some offices have been vacant for many years, awaiting replacements that may never arrive due to garbled or lost astropathic transmissions.

The Adeptus Arbites maintain several formidable Bastion-Precincts on Juno. The majority of these are located in and around Vesuna Regis, the headquarters located in the notorious Bastion-Precinct Omega. This is also the seat of power of Arbiter Lord Wilhelm, High Marshal of the Askellon Grand Precinct, the most senior officer in the region. His life extended by juvenat treatments, Wilhelm is well into his second century, but the mind and body of this once much-feared officer have degraded drastically in recent years. As the situation in Askellon has grown ever darker and Wilhelm's mind has slipped further into the depths of decrepitude, he has become ever more strident and extreme in his pursuit of the sin, conspiracy, and damnation he sees in every shadow. He has unleashed countless purges upon the sector, often with no shred of evidence of any wrongdoing. Nonetheless, Wilhelm holds firmly to the notion that the execution of one recidivist is worth the incidental suffering of thousands of the supposedly innocent, a state he holds to be at best temporary in any case.

Vesuna Regis is also the home of the sector's principle astropathic choir, housed in an ancient complex on the very edge of the city, overlooking a ragged coastline of noxious swamp. Its master Astropath died in the course of his duties a decade ago, his mind ravaged by Daemons during an unexpected surge in the Pandaemonium. No successor has yet been named, and so the task of directing the mind voices rotates amongst the senior members, resulting in erratic communication to and from the capital. Only those messages coded with the highest levels of priority and clearance gain the choir's full attention and power, but even then there are difficulties. Some claim their messages have been twisted out of all recognition, and blame fell powers intent upon seeding anarchy and madness across the domains of Askellon.

The single largest division of the Adeptus Terra present on Juno is the Adeptus Administratum, its headquarters located at the mighty Regis Chancellery near the centre of Vesuna Regis. This and numerous subsidiary locations house many millions of scribes, factors, and overseers, many of whom live out their lifetimes within a few metres of their ink-stained desks. Lord High Comptroller-General Avak Numinor leads the mission, and is responsible for cataloguing the sector's resources so that proper tithe levels can be maintained for each world. It is said that the staff of the Regis Chancellery never cease in their efforts to record every possible detail of the sector's holdings, and given the massive datavaults that litter the planet and other worlds in the Juno system, this is likely true. While it has been dutifully transmitting tithe-data to Terra, there have been few responses in recent years, and the Chancellery grows ever more worried the tithe-levels are now generations out of date. The atmosphere within its basalt walls is one of fear and desperation, as the countless sub-divisions and bureaus slip ever further from their targets of agglomerated tithe-data. All are terrified that emissaries from distant Terra might arrive at any moment and demand explanations, determined to execute any they deem to have failed in this sacred duty.

The numerous other pillars of the Imperium maintain holdings on Juno, but not always in plain sight. Such huge divisions as the Departmento Munitorum tend to be headquartered in other areas of the sector, though they maintain missions on Juno for ease of interacting with the sector's highest authorities as well as the numerous other bodies. Some, like the Adeptus Mechanicus, distrust and are in turn are distrusted by the many planetary and sector authorities, and choose to remain aloof and apart, even if their presence is vital to the administration of the region. Such tensions only serve to hasten and multiply the effects of the growing Pandaemonium and bring the collapse of the entire sector one day closer.

The Vigil

Most worlds in the Imperium maintain a body responsible for punishing those who contravene its laws, broadly referred to as Enforcers. The Vigil, as Juno's Enforcers are known, project a demeanour of propriety and civility, yet this is known to all but the most ignorant of offworlders as a thin veneer. In reality, its officers are callous to the point of sadism, seeing crime and disrespect wherever they wish to find it. The majority of the populace of Juno know that to seek the help of the Vigil is to court punishment for wasting its time, and while on some worlds the native Enforcers blatantly favour the ruling classes over the multitudes, even the nobility appear to earn nothing more than the scorn of the Vigil. Indeed, it has existed for so long that it has become a separate class of its own, one whose members are born into its ranks and to whom almost all outsiders are rivals. To the surprise of many offworlders, the Vigil is neither corrupt nor venal, for the surest way to earn a punishment in the Excoriation Cubes is to offer an officer any sort of bribe.

The Grand Army

Juno also maintains a local defence force to protect the planet against both external invasion and internal uprising. The Grand Army of the Sovereign, also known simply as the Grand Army or colloquially as the Oldbloods, is imbued with many millennia of tradition, pomp, and grandeur. It has a standing force of several million troops, the majority infantry but including other types from shock cavalry to heavy artillery. Its members are possessed of a fearsome esprit de corps, and many companies are tithed en masse to the world's Imperial Guard regiments such as the Juno Grand Fusiliers, where they find glory across the sector and beyond.

Members wear a distinctive gold-chased cuirass wrought with all manner of ornate texts and traceries, complemented by a spiked helm, tan britches, and sleeves of deepest royal purple. The officers' uniforms are still more refined, with mantles of rare fur and pelisse jackets, resplendent with gleaming golden buttons and braided fasteners. Though the Oldbloods might be mistaken for mere ceremonial troops intended more for showy displays of power than actual combat, nothing could be further from the truth. The Grand Army is highly experienced, its units bearing the brunt of the near constant purges of the ruined wastes in order to cull the populations of mutants and recidivists that lurk within. Furthermore, because the world has been invaded so many times throughout its long history, the Grand Army has developed a deeply ingrained institutional memory. It has at some point in the past fought against almost every enemy of Mankind, and retains much of the knowledge on how to do so again.

Despite its splendour and status, the Grand Army is regarded with deep contempt by the average member of the citizenry of Juno. Oldbloods are often used to bolster the Vigil when large scale civil disorder threatens the status quo. With the world and the sector at large experiencing a slow, inexorable slide into damnation and anarchy, instances of such disorder grow ever more frequent, and the Grand Army has recently engaged in several pitched battles against large, armed groups of rebels in the depths of the ruin-strewn wastes.

Outcasts

While official census enumerations list the population of Juno at approximately fifteen billion, it is feared that the true figure is far higher. This is due to the fact that Juno has been consumed by war so many times over its impossibly long history that entire sub-populations have risen from those made refugees and outcasts. Over the centuries, these groups have multiplied and taken over wide stretches of the ruin-strewn wastes between the major cities, despite the regular purges unleashed against them. Some in the Grand Army claim that the constant strife that the planet is subject to keeps its bloodlines strong, but for most, constant war and uprising is simply how Juno exists, and they cannot imagine any other manner of life.

Myriad are those counted amongst the hordes of outcasts, from fallen priests to cannibal mutants. There are entire gangs of psychic wyrds, as well as adorii cults that venerate them. Untold numbers of mutants scour the ruins as they fight their rivals for the smallest scrap of food, while archaeotech hunters sift through the rubble of countless thousands of years of war and rebuilding in search of priceless relics from more puissant ages. In recent decades, an entire population of religious zealots has risen up, their founder cast out fifty years ago for his extreme views in denouncing the ruling classes for their decadence and arrogance. Now, that same message is gaining traction, but the descendants of his disciples roam the wastes, forcibly converting any and all they encounter and amassing an ever-increasing host of frenzied fanatics. Few of the nobility seem aware or caring of this growing threat, sure in the knowledge that eternal Juno has prevailed for ten millennia, and no wasteland rabble can disturb their rule.

The Bleak Pits of Juno

The so-called Bleak Pits are a series of gaping depressions carved into the surface of Juno during ancient promethium mining operations. With regular cells often overflowing between Black Ship visitations, these have been repurposed to house the world's ever-increasing population of psykers, literally casting them into the pits along with the countless thousands of others found suspect or undesirable. With psyker rates at unprecedented levels, the pits have become so overpopulated that the very air overhead burns with unrestrained psychic force, and the sleep of all within dozens of miles is haunted by the insanity that boils within them. Uncontrolled Warp-energy discharges are common in the seething pits, forcing the guards to purge them with fire when the terrors of the beyond threaten to burst through. None can imagine the stark horror of even a single day of existence in the Bleak Pits, nor the doom that might befall Juno should their occupants ever break out in force.

Desoleum

Population: *300 Billion +*
Tithe Grade: *Exactus Prima*
Geography: *Polluted wastes covering planetwide plains of hardened silicate flows. Numerous alien structures across entire surface.*
Government Type: *The Consortium, a ruling council of mercantile houses with major holdings across the sector.*
Planetary Governor: *Lady Aud Killian*
Adept Presence: *High, but limited to areas specifically set aside for outsiders and offworld interests.*
Military: *Desoleum Involute Cadres*
Trade: *Major exporter of silicate derivatives mined from the plains and used in numerous military and voidship applications. Secondary export trade in ration packs.*

Desoleum is a planet dominated by three enormous hive cities, into each of which a population of dozens of billions is crammed, though accurate counts are impossible to undertake and the true figure is likely to be several times greater. The planet's pre-eminent hive city is the eponymous Desoleum, sometimes called Desoleum Primus or colloquially elsewhere as Prime. The triad of Hives Desoleum, Jarvin, and Suzzum, the latter two named for the nigh-legendary figures said to have founded them, account for the bulk of the industry on the planet, while countless lesser hives and manufactorums are to be found throughout the wastes.

The planet's surface is barren in the extreme and apparently once hosted a xenos species. Savants disagree over details about the race, but look to the blasted landscapes of liquefied sand and hundreds of bizarre cyclopean structures seemingly sculpted from the kernels of long-vanished mountains as evidence it destroyed itself with terrifyingly potent weaponry, and is safely long extinct. The destruction dates back many millions of years, when large expanses of the world's outer crust were subject to such terrific heat that the mountains themselves ran liquid before cooling in glass-like plains of exceptional, if mildly radioactive, purity. Much of the glass now exists as a subterranean layer beneath drifting silicate deserts. When the first settlers made planetfall and discovered this rich resource, they recognised its value instantly and established what is generally held to be the second of the Founding Worlds. For many thousands of years, the glass of Desoleum has driven an industry that produces a wide range of derivatives, especially the sector-renowned lasweapon-focusing lenses.

As its population soared and the hives grew, a secondary industry processing ration supplements has developed over the millennia. Bulk organics harvested from the seas of other worlds are imported, and rendered into thick, protein-rich gruel that is used to feed the larvae of the Irokian bile-fly. Having reached the optimal stage in their life cycle, the larvae are pulped, compressed, and shaped into notoriously greasy (and universally loathed) ration biscuits used to feed worker-serfs and military forces across the sector. The processing plants where these ration bars are manufactured consist of gigantic air-sealed breeding pens thick with countless trillions of larvae. Each of the planet's hives has its own facility, usually located at the very lowest habitable level of its structure. Needless to say, only the very poorest and most downtrodden of serfs are willing to work or live near to these facilities, for the levels all about are steeped in the vilest of stenches and vibrate with the constant drone of the creatures bred within.

Desoleum is served by four major void stations. Kappex Orbital is in geostationary anchor above Desoleum Primus, and serves as the system's main spaceport, as well the as location of much underhanded deal-making and smuggling. Two others in low orbits are defence stations manned by the Desoleum Involute Cadres, the world's native defence force. The fourth is in a high, elliptical polar orbit, and is actually a natural body that somehow attained this unnatural orbit. It has a large luxury facility for those with wealth and means, and services a clientele that ranges from the nobility from below to visitors from afar, both legitimate and criminal. The truths of what happens here are far worse than any of the gossip told by the envious.

Out in the shifting sands beyond the walls of Desoleum is Port Gyre, the world's primary transportation field. Vacuum transit-tubes and bulk roadways connect the sizeable port with Primus and the other great hives. A ragged circle of ramshackle settlements here caters to a nomadic population of workers, traders, and down-and-outs. There are also lesser starports near the other hives, but their operations are limited to serving bulk lifters; these import gigatonnes of raw materials, such as organics to produce the hated ration packs, so there is always much traffic both in and out of the system.

The Wastes of Desoleum

The lands all around each of the three great hives consist of wide areas of desert and acidic seas formed from waste liquid spills. Further afield are dune seas covering glassy plains; the colossal ruins that puncture these areas are often dangerously radioactive and infested with foul creatures or worse. Littering the wastes are slagheaps the size of cities, mined for exotic raw metals and ancient technologies, with vicious battles between groups eager to claim any riches inside for themselves. Great toxic oceans connect the continents; each is filled with mutated life, and the depths are rumoured to contain creatures larger than battleships slowly drifting along the glowing bottom.

In the depths of the planet's wastelands are also lawless tribes that raid transport convoys and loot the ruins for their own purposes. Most are barbaric, while a few use highly advanced weaponry, but all are extremely dangerous. Some are amenable for trade or to act as expedition guides, but they can quickly turn violent depending on the destination or relics discovered.

Hive Desoleum Primus

Legend has it that the eponymous and most populous of the three great hives of Desoleum was founded during the Great Crusade. The plains of solidified minerals attracted industry very quickly, and it became a major foundry for the war effort, producing lasguns by the millions. The hive contributes large numbers to the Desoleum Involute Cadres, and at least one division is permanently stationed near the great hive for the city's defence from threats from both within and without. Those Cadres drawn from Hive Desoleum are highly regarded, providing manpower to the Desoleum Oathsmen Grenadiers, the world's Imperial Guard regiment known for its expertise in prosecuting urban threats.

The Consortium of Desoleum Primus

The ultimate masters of the hive city of Desoleum Primus, the Consortium, exist at the apex of a rigid system of fealty and servitude. The hive is ruled by the maintenance of unimaginably strict bonds of obedience, enforced by the implementation of a network of oaths that intertwines every single level of its highly stratified society. This complex web links every possible sphere of life, regulating everything from the subtlest of manners to the span of years a worker-serf can expect to live. All hivers carry a special cogwork device that indicates their work area and their oath of servitude. Those above them hold these oaths in their own oath-cogs, micro-embedded as tiny wheels, each an intricate snowflake of brass and wire. The more dominions under an oath-holder, the more elaborate the device. Lady Desoleum's oath-cog, encompassing the entirety of oaths throughout the hive and across the planet, is supremely ancient and dense, a massive snowstorm of whirling cogs that takes years to alter for new oaths. It is brought out only for affairs of state, as it is far too heavy for normal wear. Entire cloisters of Mechanicum drones exist purely to maintain its proper functioning, and legend says that should it freeze up, the hive would surely collapse.



Travel in Hive Desoleum

Travelling on foot, it can take days or weeks to cross Desoleum City, longer if the journey involves much in the way of vertical distance. Movement through the hive varies greatly depending on the section being traversed.

As with every other facet of life in the Apex, methods of travel are intended to demonstrate opulence and position as much as efficacy. Each noble family sees to its own transportation, taking great pains to present an image of luxury and wealth. Skimmer carriages of crystal and carnwood are highly prized, and skilled pilots are always in high demand. These relics of bygone ages hover on anti-grav plates of forgotten technology, and Tech-Priests painstakingly maintain each in accordance with ancient pacts. For some noble families fallen from their former stature, these conveyances are an enduring reminder of their former glory, though the vehicles are often in poor condition and prone to erratic behaviour—but then, the same could be said of the owners.

For the affluent merchants and guilders of the Upper Hive, travel is a luxury not unlike that of the nobility of the Apex. However, without the long history of the noble houses, skimmers are all but unknown here, despite the great wealth present. Opulent private autocarriages, servitor-palanquins, and cyber-equines are all common methods of locomotion. For Consortium representatives with frequent business in the main hive and nearby voidports, vacuum transit tubes provide swift, if less-than-luxurious, transportation.

Within the main hive, Hectin autocarriages and Veloxic bikes are commonly seen on habways. The masses usually rely on extensive mag-rails, some hidden from view in massive tunnel systems layered between the hive walls, others on elevated rails passing straight through the middle of hab-domes and rattling domiciles. If a labourer's place of work is not near his hab—a regrettable inefficiency sometimes caused by changes in ownership of oath-bonds or facilities—his oath-holder can make arrangements for daily mag-rail transport, and the requisite modification is made to the worker's oath-cog. Large and slow-moving lift-plats are used for vertical movement between hive levels. Most lift-plats are contained in wide shafts, slick with the grime of ages. Some are open, leading to numerous casualties in cases of over-crowded platforms.

The treacherous terrain of the Underhive makes the use of vehicles a losing proposition in all but the most well-settled areas. Guides offer their services for a fair price, but travellers must be wary, for some of them make their real profit by leading clients into dangerous situations or stranding them, coming back later to loot the bodies. Riding beasts are sometimes used for their ability to traverse the scrap-canyons and effluent rivers, including oversized mutant creatures that crawl up periodically from the depths. Travel in the Gorges is slow and extremely dangerous; cannibalistic mutants, gangers, toxic lakes, and hive quakes are all potentially deadly hazards facing travellers.

The higher up the pyramid of oaths, the more formalised these oath-bonds become, the most ancient and binding of them set out in charters written millennia ago on parchment so old they are stored within impregnable stasis caskets. At the very bottom of the pile, even the lowliest beggar is bound by the oaths of his station, and any deviation from convention is met with righteous indignation, soon followed by brutal retribution. Strangely, even behaviour outsiders might regard as criminal is regulated by the strict codes, for oath-bonds are far more binding than any rule or law could ever be. To be cast outside of the oath is the ultimate punishment for any hive native, and most would prefer death than to be known as oathless.

The hive's oath-bonds manifest most powerfully in the systems by which its industries are managed, and by extension, how society itself is regulated. At the most seemingly mundane level, the actions of each individual worker-serf are a matter of profound oath, dictating the fulfilment of his work quota and every aspect of his duty to his overseer. That overseer is himself answerable to his own masters by way of a still-more complex web of oaths, and just as easily removed from his position should the terms of those oaths be broken. Higher up still, the numerous industrial and mercantile bodies that rule over entire regions of the hive impose their oaths upon countless millions of subjects, and are bound to one another and to the highest echelons by still more. All of these interests are bound together in the form of the Consortium, from whose ranks is elected the city's ruler. Of course, the web of oaths that tie society together make universal suffrage entirely unnecessary: the only individuals entitled to vote are the Lords and Ladies of the Consortium themselves.

At present, and indeed for much of the world's history, the pre-eminent ruler of Hive Desoleum has held the office of planetary commander by dint of the sheer weight of power. The other two great hives are reluctant subjects, however, and at times their own leaders have conspired to usurp Primus' position through subtle assassination or outright war.

The Consortium is made up of several hundred mercantile interests of many different types. Some are small dynasties controlling relatively minor concerns; others are mighty indeed, controlling many and diverse segments of Desoleum's industry. The largest of these are referred to as the Great Houses, and account for around a dozen interests. The most well-known of the Great Houses of the Consortium are Gotha, Rhomana, Kotromahn, Elden, Konstant, Grym-Zollern, and Rosa. All other than Rosa have held their seniority for many generations, while Rosa is a new entry into the ranks of the Great Houses. Exactly how it engineered its meteoric rise is unknown, though vicious but unsubstantiated rumours abound.

Many believe that the Consortium is dominated by factions dabbling in things illicit or illegal for the common hiver, far beyond the casual petty cruelty or pleasurable indolence in the clouded heights. There are indeed many shadowed societies amidst the ruling interests, adherents of all manner of debauched and forbidden pursuits. Many in the Cascades and other dark under-levels know of one; named after their prized raptors, the perfumed butchers of the Feathered Pinions are infamous for the savage sport they make upon their human prey.

Manners Maketh the Menial

To the worker-serf of Hive Desoleum, life is an endless ritual where every single gesture, intonation, and deed is undertaken according to the rigid codes of the oath-binding. An entire class of scribes called the Oath-Factors exist to record every possible variation, and to formalise new ones as they arise. Many outsiders come to regard the oath-binding as far harder to learn than the most outlandish of planetary dialects, and most employ specialist translators when dealing directly with the hive's merchant houses. Indeed, even the most lucrative of contacts has been known to collapse in utter ruin because an outlander angled his head to the wrong degree or imbued a single word with the incorrect intonation, thus shattering an oath-ritual. While some natives are used to the ignorance of outsiders, others are unforgiving in the extreme and refuse to brook even the slightest oath-breach, no matter how innocent.

The Sanctionary Bondsmen of the Oaths Involute

Given Hive Desoleum's impossibly strict canon of oaths and codes, it is hardly surprising that the city should employ an especially uncompromising law enforcement body. The Sanctionary Bondsmen of the Oaths Involute, more often referred to as the Sanctionaries, act to maintain order in the hive, but this is in practise the lesser part of their duties. Rather, the Sanctionaries are ever vigilant for lapses in the rituals of the oath-binding. Should a Sanctionary witness a Desoline act in any way counter to the strictures of his oath, the offender is summarily censured, often brutally. Those offenders occupying the lower rungs of the hives' society are punished by the immediate application of a highly ritualised beating, while those further up the scale are more likely to suffer other fates, such as a ritualised dismissal from their post. Those at the upper echelons of society are just as likely to be punished for their transgression as those at the bottom, but the punishment must be administered by a Sanctionary of sufficiently senior rank. The Sanctionaries themselves wear large and ornate oath-cogs that act as badges of office, but also as brutal melee weapons, a visible reminder to any would-be oathbreakers.

Outworlders in Hive Desoleum

On the face of it, there is scant reason for outsiders to visit Hive Desoleum, and every reason for them to conduct their business through brokers experienced in the myriad subtleties of the oath-binding. In fact, a great many outsiders come to Desoleum Primus, for the profits to be made are simply so tempting they would be foolish not to. The hive has several "stranger's quarters," where offworlders feel relatively safe to conduct their affairs, and these have grown into highly cosmopolitan and exotic places themselves.

While many come to Desoleum Primus to engage in perfectly legitimate mercantile ventures, there are plenty that come there to take advantage of something entirely different. The Faceless Trade in illicit xenos relics and other heretical items rules here, for the wastelands are host to more than raw materials and inert xenos ruins. Deep beneath glass strata are often found crystalline tunnels leading to the cached remains of the dead race that once ruled the planet, and these items find their way back to the hive city and beyond, reaching nobles eager for new thrills or vile cults seeking icons for their blasphemous deities. Smugglers here take enormous risks, the least of which being the implications should the Sanctionaries catch them. Of far greater danger is the threat to their souls, for Chaos almost universally befouls the artefacts. Some even claim that the reason the long dead xenos destroyed themselves was not war, but a desperate act to forestall some terrible doom and vanquish the powers that sought to claim them. If true, it was woefully in vain, for evidence of their contagion spreads far and wide in the secret cargo holds of ambitious traders.

Others come to Desoleum as an act of pilgrimage, for sector lore states that its wastelands were the scene of a mighty battle fought during the dark days of the Great Heresy. Innumerable tales are told of the sacrifices made by the people of Desoleum to throw off the shackles of the Warmaster and aid the Emperor's legions in casting out the traitors, each different and each a glorious recitation of Desoleum's valour against those who would conquer it. Thousands of devout worshippers arrive each day as part of a grand pilgrimage that takes them across the plains and through the hive, from there travelling to Thaur and the other Holy Stations of Askellon. Countless vessels run this route. The mightiest is the *Oath Unspoken*, flagship of the Anzaforr Rogue Trader Dynasty. This Dauntless-class light cruiser passes frequently between Desoleum and Thaur as part of its ongoing penance for its blood-soaked trade war with the rival Surena Dynasty decades ago. Most pilgrims die along the way, but are content knowing their souls will complete the journey even if their bodies could not.

Anatomy of Hive Desoleum Primus

Like many of the Imperium's great hive cities, Desoleum Primus is formed into a mountain of plasteel resembling a termite mound of impossible proportions. The highest point, known as the Apex, is host to the seat of power of the hive's, and indeed the world's, ruler, Lady Aud Killian, the hereditary Lady Desoleum. Most of the actual ruling is conducted through the Consortium, a body concerned with profits and the continuation of business concerns that have stood for countless generations. Though there is much infighting between factions within the Consortium, there is relatively little actual war between the members; most factions instead use proxy forces such as gangs or bribed Sanctionaries when actual violence is required.

The uppermost point of the Apex penetrates the edge of the atmosphere itself, with a spike of indestructible metal called the Spine reaching several kilometres into the void. The Spine descends through the middle of the hive into the depths underground, penetrating below even the Underhive and the Dark with no termination that any have found. Many theorise that it is vital to supporting the hive beyond mere structural support; legend even has it that the Spine always existed, and it is the hive that grew around it. The Apex houses the cream of the hive's nobility along with powerful Imperial representatives, and an exquisite Ministorum Shrine that serves them as well as sufficiently faithful offworld dignitaries. There are several small shuttle pads along the outer skin for the elite, so they do not have to pass down through the squalor and dangers when travelling away from the hive.

Beneath the Apex is the Upper Hive, sometimes called the Pinions, where the great houses of the Consortium operate and the majority of the hive gentry live. The worker-serfs living further down-hive can only dream of the luxury even the lower tiers here exist in, the most privileged enjoying actual sunlight filtered through windows affording them grand vistas of the expansive cloudscapes below.

Despite the unimaginable luxury of these areas, they are atrophied and declining. The ancient, little-understood archaeotech systems that sustain them are slowly falling to disrepair. Growing areas of the upper reaches are now sealed off from habitation, though some still find use for secretive meetings or illicit activities. Like their environs, the oath-cogs of those within the Upper Hive are incredibly ornate as befits their high station, but many are becoming tarnished and even inoperable.

The great bulk of Desoleum Primus is the Main Hive, often referred to as Desoleum City, an area that accounts for the large majority of its population and industry. Businesses operated by the houses of the Consortium dominate this region, and these oversee almost all facets of life in the hive. Those areas not set aside for hab housing contain enormous factories producing the hive's main exports. Massive refrigeration systems cool the upper levels of this area, for the factory heat is intense. Many metres of greenish frost often accumulate along the ceilings, making for a thick barrier between the upper and main hive. Huge icicles of frozen, polluted water also form here along the hive's outer edges. These often break off after forming into chunks hundreds of metres long, creating terrible scars in the hive's outer skin as they rip down its length with screaming sounds audible even in the hive interior.



This area is host to all classes, and is the highest level that Consortium-affiliated gangs can expect to travel unchallenged, so long as they are about the business of their masters and not intent on overt violence. The line between the Main Hive and the endless reaches below is indistinct and in places highly variable.

The lower one goes, the more the air becomes more stale and humid, and the light more dim and unreliable. Rain comes from foetid waters dripping down through the levels, coating all with oily liquids. While there is no firm divisor, there are plenty of guards to prevent Underhive scum from roaming too far above their station; some areas even have huge barricades and fortresses to protect valued areas situated in the lower Main Hive. Along the rough border areas are thriving protection rackets that keep the scum away from the trading posts and habs. The border is defined more by the extent to which the Sanctionaries are willing and able to patrol, the area beyond becoming the domains of gangs, outcasts, and worse. Their main concern is that the scum does not drift up to invade the Main Hive and they have no concerns about who passes downhive or why.

The true depths begin at roughly ground level, where a few ill-maintained roads and passages exist leading to the surrounding wastes. The Underhive is home to those who have abandoned their oaths as well as those who know nothing of such things. The gangs here are the worst to be found in the entire hive; names such as the Oath-Breakers and the Hive Worms are used to scare up-hive children to bed and Main Hive merchants to pay up. Most hivers will never hear of such hells as the Cold Reaches or the Red Drippings, let alone visit such vile places, but many have heard of the Cascades or the infamous Gorges, where the inhabitants are said to be ravenous for anything or anyone they can capture.

Below the Underhive is an area that makes that region appear organised and law abiding in comparison. This is the Dark, extending so far into the planet's crust it is impossible to chart, though the Spine is always present no matter how far down one ventures. Huge lakes, created from aeons of effluent draining down from uphive, form in many regions the farther down one descends. Monstrous creatures dwell in these seemingly endless depths, hidden in the black waters until revealed by the ghostly lights flickering on their massive hides when they rise to feed.

Hive Communication

Long-distance communication within Hive Desoleum can be a complex affair. The thick walls of plasteel, rockrete, and iron that form the bulk of the hive can cause significant interference to vox broadcasts. To ease this, vox-amplification towers are situated around the city, particularly in the higher levels of the Main Hive and in the Upper Hive. Various groups own and maintain these towers, including Consortium members, noble houses, and the hive government. The secondary purpose of these towers is to allow for monitoring of the vox transmissions routed through them. Hard-wired data-cables run the length of some areas of the hive, allowing for transmittal of data, vox, and sometimes vid between different points. It is rare for a connection to bridge more than a few kilometres, however.

Data-cable and vox-net technology is generally only available to the powerful and influential. Many are ill-maintained and unreliable, particularly outside of the Apex and Pinion. There is no single coherent data network, and most cables connect only a small number of terminals, or even merely two points. For those without access to vox-casters or data-cables, or requiring a greater degree of privacy, courier services are available. Rival services offer different advantages over the competition, such as the swift servo-skulls House Auspion uses, or the messenger-warriors of the Valospex Guild, oath-sworn to give their lives if necessary to deliver a missive.

Hivequakes periodically strike Desoleum as its massive bulk shifts and settles, making the Dark even more dangerous; caverns collapse as supports fail, but ancient areas are revealed anew, drawing many to seek out any treasures within. Legends say that wondrous archaeotech devices exist in the Dark, such as grav-repellers that can lift starships, inexhaustible power sources that draw from the very tension of reality, and nightmarish guardians that kill with whispers. To find so much as a shard of such wonders would elevate even a foul stumper to the highest echelons of the hive's society overnight. There are large settlements here, larger than any above would imagine, where mutants, heretical worshippers, and other terrors live and scheme and fight with each other. A few dare venture into the Dark in search of treasure, thrills, or the monsters that roam in the sputtering light and heavy air. Fewer still return.

The Iron Heart of Desoleum

The great spires of Hive Desoleum are ruled from the glittering heights, and slowly rotting from the Underhive up, but it is in the industrious Main Hive that the true purpose and life of the city resides. Countless, vast factories produce innumerable armaments and devices to feed the Imperium's war machine every day, staving off the dissolution of the Askellon Sector for just a little bit longer.

The bulk of Desoleum's midhive bustles with innumerable labourers maintaining and working in massive manufactorum plants day in and day out. These dutiful workers abide carefully by the guidance of their oath-cogs and serve their lords to the best of their ability. Over the many centuries of toil the midhive has seen, little has disrupted this multitude for long, from food riots to distant wars. However, even the sturdiest foundation may give way to rot. The seemingly respectable and dependable core of midhive life conceals a dangerous level of deviancy, crime, and unrest. Although the midhive does not approach the lawlessness of the lower levels outside of a riot or other disaster, it is still far from a safe place for those without influence or power.

Ignaius Arms

The mark of the Ignaius Arms plant on a lasgun is known as a stamp of quality throughout the Askellon Sector, for the focusing lenses produced there are without peer. This sterling reputation and much-desired product provide the spire nobles who own the plant an endless stream of income, much of which they have wisely invested into the careful maintenance of the manufactorum that is the source of their wealth. The workers at Ignaius Arms take rightful pride in the quality of their product, and willingly endure long shifts to ensure that the honour of their brand is not defiled by shoddy workmanship.

Just beyond the hearing of these proud workers, rumours fly back and forth as to just how Ignaius lenses are made. The precision of their manufacture is called into question by envious foremen of other plants, or even attributed to hidden machines of inhuman manufacture deep within the bowel of the plant. If there is any truth in these rumours, it is well-guarded, but eventually the proud workforce of Ignaius Arms (or the even prouder owners) shall hear of them, which could possibly end their satisfaction with the current state of affairs.

The Jade Foundry

Control and maintenance of manufactorum plants is typically the responsibility of sponsoring noble houses from the hive spires. However, some plants produce technology too rare, unique, or advanced to be left in the hands of technological laypersons, and are placed in the direct supervision of the Adeptus Mechanicus. The Jade Foundry (so-called for the vivid emerald hue of the display screens on the equipment produced there) is one such plant. Advanced auto-fabricators in the care of the senior Tech-Priests assemble capacious components into sensorium arrays for voidships. The auto-fabricators are a technological wonder beyond the capability of current Magi to reproduce, and can assemble a full sensorium array in a scant few months with sufficient materials—barely the blink of an eye compared to the normal pace of voidship construction.

Unfortunately, certain lower-ranking Tech-Priests in the tech-shrines of Desoleum have grown envious of overseers of the Jade Foundry, and crave stewardship over the revered auto-fabricator units. Reports are filtering up to the highest Magi in the Askellon Sector that the Jade Foundry has been poorly maintained and that its caretakers have neglected crucial maintenance rites. If an inquiry is launched, it could shut down production for decades.

The Grand Shrine of the Oath

Although humble compared to the gilded marble edifices patronised by the spire nobility, the Grand Shrine of the Oath is the oldest and most revered of cathedrals used to convey the Imperial Creed to workers on holy days and festivals. Its well-worn pews can seat tens of thousands at a time, but such is its prestige that many times that number seek admittance to its hallowed halls when the work-shifts wind down for religious observances. Even a festival that frees one man in a hundred from his labours sees a hundred thousand petitions to attend the services held in the central Oathroom.

Naturally, it is quite impossible for the shrine to admit so many, and most petitioners and pilgrims are sent away, redirected to a lesser house of worship. Most workers phlegmatically accept their dashed aspirations, but there are often those who resent being turned away. In the past, riots have sparked from the protests of high-producing shifts being turned away after a record year of production, or from unpopular and brutal foremen being let in ahead of workers seen as more deserving of the honour.

The Worker's House

The Worker's House is one of the few respectable places of leisure in the Main Hive. Its patrons are free to indulge in everything from hard liquors and hot meals to games of chance where they can wager their meagre salaries. The hostel maintains the privilege to offer frivolities by sending out a crop of indentured workers (usually those who indulged too freely and became indebted) to fill in for any hours of productivity lost as a result of these activities.

This rare source of respite has long been a release for countless hive workers. Even those who can't afford attendance console themselves with the promise of an evening at the House after the next shift, or the one after that. However, over its long history, the Worker's House has run up against the increasing pressures of ever-higher work quotas, and has had to become sterner with collecting debts in turn. The promise of indulgence is slowly turning sour as more and more workers are seen working a double shift after a single night at the House.

Sworn Collectors of the Tithe Immutable

Although crime and gang rule may be the way of life in the Underhive, a more respectable way of handling such matters exists in the levels above it. In the Main Hive, those with a talent and knack for small-minded violence and thuggery are employed by the spire nobles as Sanctionaries. Some work as foremen or shift heads in particularly gruelling conditions. Others join "work brotherhoods" such as the Sworn Collectors of the Tithe Immutable—a gang legitimatised by the sponsorship of higher authorities.

The Sworn Collectors are tasked with increasing the incomes of the nobles who sponsor them. In theory, this would be a futile effort, as the workers they shake down barely have enough to interest the near-criminals of a work brotherhood. The truth is more complicated, as nobles primarily use the Collectors to target those working in the plants of rival families. Efficiency at these plants often plummets as workers grow hungry, bruised, and agitated. As harming the efficiency of manufacturing is a serious crime, the Sanctionaries have forcibly disbanded the Sworn Collectors several times, only for it to be reconstituted with new members at the behest of their sponsors.

Minders of the Shift

All of Desoleum's "work brotherhoods" are essentially legalised gangs, but some put more emphasis on legitimacy than others. For many centuries, the Minders of the Shift have been a loyal if ruthless method of maintaining shift discipline. Their enforcers hunt down any labourer who misses a work-period and ensure he reports in properly, as well as ensuring any lost production is paid back. When quotas are high, the Minders hire out as additional foremen in order to put the fear of the God-Emperor into the production lines.

Unfortunately for this proud if somewhat distasteful tradition, recent leaders of the work brotherhood have been more concerned with the Minders' profits than their task. The focus of the Minders has been turned towards collecting the bounty on truant workers instead of towards deterring truancy. Some workers have been lured off shift by promises of bribes or outright deceit only to be turned in as evading work, while some Minders have even turned in random passerby for bounties, pitting their word against their captive in the hope of pay.

Ludmilla's Den

"The Den," as its patrons typically refer to it, is a typical example of the less-reputable type of leisure hall in the midhive. There are more like it seeded throughout every hab-block, subject to regular raids by both law enforcement and the more respectable work brotherhoods. However, Ludmilla's Den is especially problematic in its persistence. Raids have shut it down several times, only for the mysterious and rarely-glimpsed proprietor to reopen elsewhere. These events have given it a dubious allure that exceeds that of the competition, and unsavoury characters from many hab-blocks away come to find it when it sets up in a new location.



The Shattered Foundry

The manufactorum formally titled "Work Plant Zero-Zero-Alpha-Five" on the official documents of Desoleum has earned another name among those who walk by its towering walls—the Shattered Foundry. Its machinery and its halls are wholly intact and free of damage, but repeated incidents of malfunction and disaster have claimed many lives over recent years, building a superstitious dread for the place among the locals. The Adeptus Mechanicus closed the plant down nearly two decades ago, only adding to its dark reputation across many hive levels.

The Tech-Priests have found nothing to indicate the repeated accidents were anything but random chance, and are likely to pronounce it once again safe to operate. If they do, it is likely that whatever work crews are assigned there would riot rather than pass through its gates; the punishments of the courts pale compared to the grim legends that have built up around the Shattered Foundry.

Gangs of Desoleum

In the Underhive, where the Sanctionaries refrain from patrolling, there is no law other than the barrel of a gun. Here the gangs rule, countless bands of deadly fighters who have carved out a territory in the depths for their own. Through brute force, vicious cleverness, and a ruthless willingness to do whatever is needed to survive, they have become a powerful force in the hive, with dark legends that have spread even beyond the Desoleum system. They are generally skilled urban fighters, and Imperial Guard impressment sweeps often target them when "recruiting" for new Oathsmen Grenadier regiments. Should they ever truly unite behind a single goal or leader, the gangs could overrun the hive in a day, the planet in a week.

While they rule the lower reaches, those gangs seeking greater power seek the patronage of one of the great houses of the Consortium, and over the centuries a reciprocal arrangement has been forged between factions that would appear to have little reason to peaceably co-exist. Gang and House become linked, and turf or trade wars fought between gangs become proxy contests between the great houses; a defeated gang leader might never know, for example, that his skirmish's failure has cost his patron house such prestige that its fortunes might not recover for generations.

In the Consortium, the gangs find a source of funding and support they would otherwise have no means of accessing. Bonded gangers are occasionally allowed into the Main Hive, where they find still more resources as well as markets for stolen wares and archaeotech treasures from the Dark. In the gangs, the great houses of the Consortium find servants to perform private tasks that the house cannot publicly sanction, from assassinations to smuggling.

Not all gangs are sponsored by members of the Consortium in this way—some are simply bands gathered together for survival or common interest. Religious sects too troublesome for life above, necro-cultists, heretical worshippers, tech-gangs operating under the orders of insane and obsessed Tech-Priests, expelled Sanctionaries who know that anywhere else they would be killed outright, dissolute nobles and their retainers struggling to survive: all these and more fight for survival in the infernal depths of the Underhive.

Although subject to bewildering variety, many of the numerous hive gangs of Desoluem belong to one of several dominant affiliations. There is no formal structure binding these affiliations together, but they tend towards sharing various cultural idioms and attitudes. Within each affiliation there are numerous specific gangs, each with their own colourful title and peculiarity of dress. Some are too infamous or barbaric to ever be seen in the Main Hive, while most have at least a few splinter gangs able to restrain their violence long enough to deal with the rest of the hive. The most notorious affiliations are the Fleshcutters, Death-Masks, Cloudboys, Tech-Gangs, and Painted Throngs, but many more exist, ready to make their bloody mark upon the hive and any who would cross their territory.

Fleshcutters

Notable gangs: *The Bloodlines, Scalpel Kings, The Lacerationfex, Red Lions, Razor Angels*

As the name suggests, these gangers love knives and almost exclusively use only bladed weapons; knives, swords, or any other weapon with an edge is worthy. Refraining from guns, they delight in using throwing knives as their main ranged weapon. In combat Fleshcutters are aggressive and fast, their primary weapons agility and speed. They are silent stalkers, preferring to sneak up on or ambush their foes; once battle commences, though, they are loud and wild, screaming with each cut they make. Fleshcutters place great value on personal combat, but prefer inflicting severe wounds to killing, for it ensures their enemies always carry the memory of who bested them in combat. Many of their blades are heavily serrated with thick, triangular points for maximum maiming; some coat their blades with pain-inducing toxins or nerve-acids to ensure the cuts are especially memorable.

Many Fleshcutters indulge in ritual scarring to mark initiations, memorable fights, significant events, and the like. Battle wounds, if received in personal combat, are often treated with dyes to produce highly visible scars that the gangers elaborate with additional cuts, to better show how they came to be. As in all of Hive Desoleum's numerous gang factions, new recruits here must undergo a gruelling initiation, in this case one of blade and blood. A long, slow, painful cut is made along one arm, which must at least run from wrist to elbow. Blood and bone dust from dead members is forced into the cut, to make for an impressive scar. Initiation scars that are long and unwavering indicate the recruit bore the ritual without tremor, a high mark of gang respect.

Gang myth holds that the Fleshcutters were founded by members of a group of offworld warriors who had come to the planet to quell a hive uprising. In the stories passed down from Blademaster to Blademaster, this unit was accused of looting, and was to be executed but instead escaped into the depths of Desoleum. Their skill with their much-beloved blades made them a powerful force in the lower reaches, and many other gangs took to copying their style.

At some point soon after its creation, the group split as a still more violent faction, calling itself Fleshmaulers, took to using more extreme chain weapons. These gangers are even more violent and bloodthirsty than their progenitors, and use as standard such weapons as chainswords and chainaxes, many modified with barbs and hooks to produce even more horrific lacerations. They also use smaller chainblades and huge chain-glaives, the more maniacal even wearing chain-knucklers.

Fleshcutter gangs are hyper-violent and often gather new recruits ejected from other gangs for being too vicious, eager to fight and in the grip of a constant and unreasoning battle-lust. Some gangs, without even knowing or realising it, slowly fall to Chaos as their lust for blood and pain grows too overpowering. Their scars subtly alter to resemble marks of Khorne or Slaanesh as their practices draw the blessings of these Ruinous Powers.

Death Masks

Notable gangs: *False Faces, Skinners, Bonelovers, Deathskins*

The Death Masks are necro-cultists who worship death in all its many and varied forms. Each ganger crafts and wears a mask made from the skinned face of his first victim, though some replace this with a new mask to mark an especially memorable death. Well-made masks with few marks or stitches needed are signs of high status, especially if the skin's original owner is recognisable. The rest of a Death Mask's grotesque clothing consists mostly of thick leather straps studded with bone and metal, as well as loincloths of shaved skin. They wear totems of carved bone, jaws, and appealing titbits such as fingers and ears. Skulls from cherished deaths or beloved relations are worn on belts or chains. Unlike most gangs, they do not venture into the Main Hive of Desoleum; many there believe them only as dark fables designed to frighten workers from abandoning their oaths.

Most Death Masks are meaty and large; unlike most other Underhivers, they invariably eat well, as plenty of flesh remains after the skinning is done. They slather fat and drippings across their bodies, making their skin rancid-smelling and foul. There are no female Death Masks, for their codes forbid anything that can produce life in the ranks. In combat, Death Mask gangers prefer to use oversized hammers and clubs, the better to bludgeon their foes to death. When they do use ranged weapons, these tend towards simple, brutal weapons such as autoguns or heavy stubbers. Whatever his armament, no Death Mask would ever be without a flensing blade or similar short, sharp knife at the ready.

One peculiar trait that has been noted of the Death Masks is their habit of witnessing the exact moment of their foes' deaths. Having mortally wounded an enemy, they become bewitched as they watch the dying foe, staring intently into the fading eyes and ignoring all else. Outside of combat, they conduct elaborate rituals to celebrate when one of their own dies. Some claim these death-rituals grant them increased power over the living, a disputed but worrisome matter given their already impressive deadliness.

Cloudboys

Notable gangs: *Dandy Longlegs, Babyfaces, Style Killers*

Amongst the vicious gangs of Desoleum, the Cloudboys stand out not only for their deadliness but also for their cruelty. Their members are exclusively from the upper reaches; most are young toughs from noble families, those not in the line of ascension and constantly causing embarrassment to their houses. Some are banished to the lower levels; others leave on their own, eager to get away. Unlike almost everyone else in the hive, they have actually seen not only the sky, but looked down on the noxious clouds below them, just as they view almost everyone else in the hive.

Ex-nobles from the upper reaches who were disgraced, ejected, or exiled lead several of these gangs, some escaping before execution or impressment into the Desoleum Oathsmen Grenadiers. Their rough yet stylish demeanours easily attract those new to the lower hive areas, offering protection and the camaraderie of others from their social ranks. Others simply bring their retinues of followers along when they are forced to the lower Underhive regions, but once ensconced, these new gangs quickly carve out territory and control using the powerful weapons they brought with them.

Cloudboy gangs are known for their extremes of style and depraved ferocity. Their hair is worn in elaborate wedges and wild forms fashioned using masses of static-gel and glitterfoam. Some gangs sport elaborate masks, while others wear obsidian shades that sheen with fluid patterns of changing colours, all to preserve their identity during their time below, or simply as an affectation. Their clothing is also colourful but lethal, such as padded quilted vests laced with carapace scales, silken capes of monofibre flakweave, and ornate gloves covering metal plating. Many sport elaborate coats, sharpened boots, patterned leggings, and ornate hats, all made of materials unheard of in these lower reaches. Debates over which fashions are indeed the most cutting edge often result in actual cutting, with all colours quickly turning red.

Cloudboys delight in always using overly genteel manners as they taunt their foes, relishing in their advanced vocabulary to belittle the scum around them before launching bloodthirsty assaults. It may seem these gangers treat their actions as a lark, but most are quite insane and view everyone else as lower beasts that exist only for their own amusement. Though their behaviour may appear courtly, Cloudboys are sadistic psychopaths amongst the most dangerous denizens even in the Underhive's deadly environs.

Tech-Gangs

Notable gangs: *Ironmongers, Brassmen, Gearlovers, Cogworks*

Entranced with technology, these gangs worship the machine, with many having strong links to agencies of the Cult Mechanicus in the higher hive levels. Most members have poorly-made and poorly-installed bionics and other mechanical augmentations; not waiting for actual injury to require the artificial replacements, they perform surgery once their hive-made devices are deemed fit for implantation. Their bionics are crude but powerful, and to wear tech a ganger has himself constructed is a sign of honour. Those gangs with an exiled Tech-Priest or heretek leading it can feature truly imaginative bionics, items that would shock Mechanicum followers higher in the hive.

These gangers worship guns (often literally), especially energy weapons of any kind; rivals have gone to war just to capture a single plasma pistol. In combat, Tech-Gangs often have greater firepower but often not enough skill to use it properly. Many do better for themselves repairing vehicles and other machines across the Underhive expanses, becoming valuable enough to protect against enemy actions. Some gangs include actual servitors, mostly captured in upper-hive raids. A few create their own from lobotomised members with implanted and experimental augmentations. These rarely live long.

Their garb is heavy and industrial, but always cut away clothing to reveal their proud mechanical augmentations. Many sport bald heads and paint their skin with metallic paints or even brush on molten metal, the better to bond with the machine. While few have working oath-cogs anymore, they try to create their own inferior versions, more to mimic the mechanical style than to indicate actual oath-data. Many Tech-Gangs have extensive networks amongst the tech-prospectors that trawl the sump-lakes for archaeotech relics and xenostech, and if new discoveries happen, these gangs are often the first to know.

Painted Throngs

Notable gangs: *Needle Boys, Painted Angels, Blood of Inks, Prettyskins*

A recent offshoot from the Fleshcutters, the Painted Throngs grew to love flesh decoration above mere sliced scars. Colourful inks were mixed into the cut flesh, evolving into elaborate tattoos that finally lead to one gang, the Painted Angels, to break their ceremonial longknife and leave their primogenitors. Several other gangs followed suit, and new gangs sprang up until the Painted Throngs became a force in their own right.

The Throngs view themselves as artists and skin as their palate. Insanely defensive over their inkwork, they would eagerly call someone out for simply bumping into them as it might damage newly-finished skinart. Many tattoos are done with luminen inks that glow in the dark, or metallic inks that reflect light in glorious patterns, the better for all to admire. For these gangers, tattoos are more than decoration though: they are the history, a way to memorialise important events and personages so they are never forgotten. The Throngs use tribal tattoos to mark special occasions, impressive feats and kills, loved ones who have died, and other personal events. Some of the older members literally are a walking history, showing hive-quakes, major fights, and other events the gang will always remember.



Induction involves an elaborate painting, usually across the chest or back, glorifying the gang's symbol in a unique way. This is done with heavy, thick needles to ensure the result is especially memorable and lasting. Disgraced members have their tattoos peeled away (along with the skin) before being ejected into the Dark, falling down the endless pitfalls until their screams fade into the irregular thrum of the hive's support machinery.

These gangers delight in using explosive shells and frag grenades in combat, viewing mangled flesh as the worst insult possible; many of these gangs brew their own acid-grenades from distilled sumplake waters. They rarely wear armour, as the Throngs value the displayed skin over its protection, but become frenzied should an enemy dare harm their skinart. Their inkwork is their main calling card; when they send a message to rivals, it is usually done with a captured enemy who is marked with their glyphic message, then sending him back (or sending him back in parts, should the message require a lengthy correspondence). Some enemies are simply used as practice canvasses, and especially good results are skinned off and mounted on intricate frames for all of a Throng to admire.

These gangs usually dress plainly, for their real clothing is their decorated skin. As their inkwork grows, they wear less and less, enduring any discomfort in order to better show off their art. Some sport feathers or other objects pierced through their skin as ornamentation, or as ways to counterpoint their needlework. Throng gang leaders often display sophisticated electoos that shift in design and pattern, xenos blood tattoos that slowly writhe over time, esoteric flesh-inks that react uniquely with each different genetic coding, marks that incorporate embedded gems and precious metals, and other extraordinarily rare artistic efforts. Some have become so renowned that nobles have hired bounty hunters to bring their skins back for display at the next Apex carousal; such is their skinart pride that some Throng leaders have gone willingly to such a fate.

Enkidu

Population: *Unknown (approx. several million)*
Tithe Grade: *None*
Geography: *Planet-wide forests, cold/frozen swamps at poles*
Government Type: *Remote Protectorate*
Planetary Governor: *Admiral Yukon Dzann (rtd)*
Adept Presence: *None on surface, Adeptus Terra and Adeptus Mechanicus presence in orbit.*
Military: *Interdiction fleet stationed in orbit*
Trade: *None*

Enkidu is a world of impossibly dense, dark forests and endless swamps. An incredible array of fearsome beasts, most of them defying all categorisation and no two ever seeming to conform to even the broadest genus, roam its surface. So mindlessly hostile are the things of tooth, claw, and tentacle that dominate the benighted lands that the feral human populace must live high in the enormous, twisting, and distorted trees. Warriors daubed in bright paints defend villages made of wood and the metal debris from earlier efforts to subdue the world. Huts of crudely joined armour plating cling precariously to the sides of over-sized trees, linked together with rope bridges upon which warrior-sentinels maintain ceaseless vigil against the ravening abominations below.

The humans of Enkidu are hardy, for only the strongest survive in such an environment. Yet, despite the danger posed by the beast-things of the forest, these are not the primary cause of death. Rather, their own violent nature ensures that most deaths come from their fellow men in the ceaseless wars within the treetops, the fallen dead feeding the wild things of the forest and perhaps dissuading them from venturing upwards. No village, many thousands of which are scattered across the surface, is untouched by war, though it is rare for the winner to have time to enjoy the spoils of victory. Instead of taking control of the territory of the defeated, the victors take their choice of the vanquished themselves, who are dragged away into slavery. Thus, each of the tribes is divided into two, ever-shifting classes: the tribal rulers who are free and who have taken a prisoner, and those who are not free, having been enslaved. This rank as free or slave can change with the rising and setting of the sun, for while they fight vigorously to defend their villages and avoid enslavement, if defeated and captured they accept their new status with unusual quiescence, given their fierce essence. As part of the tribe, even slaves fight in the next battle; should they themselves take a prisoner they are elevated in the tribe as free. To flee or avoid battle is literally unthinkable; no Enkiduan can even put such concepts into words.

Enkidu has been part of the sector's recorded history for as far back as such things exist, and its key location should have made it one of the great powers of Askellon. Yet, travel to the surface of Enkidu is forbidden, a decree from millennia ago still enforced by a sizeable military presence stationed in orbit. Few know even of the myths surrounding the rationale, only that the order has never been rescinded and thus it must be obeyed, with new ships replenishing the blockading fleet each generation. Below the warships, the world and its natives continue their endless wars, yet it is its peace that gained Imperial notice.

Eye of the Storm

There are no known surviving records of Enkidu's discovery; it primarily exists as little more than scattered footnotes to more important historical events such as the Fall of Karsis or the shattering of the Libris system. It garnered little space in the system's many data-vaults, with only two instances of note over the millennia.

A minor Administratum adept on Juno began correlating travel across the Thule sub-sector, and noted an abyssal series of data concerning the Enkidu system. There were many records of missionaries venturing to the planet, but no mention of any returning. He found forty-seven instances of impressment landings



from Rogue Trader ships or in support of regimental musterings, but nothing to indicate any men left the world. Further research indicated even the visitation to install a planetary governor disappeared without a trace. This was duly noted, filed for review, but given the mountains of data his sect generated each day there was no notice of it for years.

The second came about as part of Arch-Magos Kapellax's revelations concerning the Pandaemonium. Almost lost within his multi-layered flux charts showing the Infernal Storm's rage was one area of calm. So small was this area that it went unnoticed for many more generations, until one of the later factions devoted to worshipfully studying his grand work made the discovery. It seemed as if each time the raw Warp-stuff of the storm has crept and coiled along the space lanes of the sector, in every single instance it has recoiled as if in terror from the Enkidu system. The group struggled to arrive at formulae to explain the phenomenon, and kept their finding hidden lest others learn of it and possibly use it to degrade the memory of the great Magos.

Enkidu later became a pawn in a sector-wide conflict between rival Imperial branches. It was in the aftermath of the Nova Terra Interregnum that the sector was gripped by a period of bitter recrimination, as the Ecclesiarchy attempted to gain ascendancy over the Adeptus Terra. As part of the so-called Cataclysm of Souls late in the 36th Millennia, coinciding with a powerful surge of the Pandaemonium, the Ecclesiarchy of Askellon sought to use the sector's current woes as palpable evidence that the Emperor had found the people wanting and refused to aid them. In so doing, they unleashed a wave of zealous redemption. Wars of Faith raged everywhere, as fanatical militias purged the unrighteous system by system. Seeking to further its power, the Ecclesiarchy laid claim to many worlds, justifying many through ancient records showing of missionarius landings.

Enkidu was one such world. A minor force swept across the planet, but its fate was never noticed amidst the roiling storms of war. In the aftermath of the Cataclysm, the Ecclesiarchy sought to consolidate their newfound holdings, and, on discovering their loss in this system, was determined to take it. Their zeal was multiplied when the Kapellaxian Secrets were woven into a routine Astropathic transmission to the Basilica on Juno. There was no authorship for the data, but then Arch-Cardinal, Vasil Bordo, seized on it as a sign from the Emperor of the world's holy nature.

He convened a mighty gathering of Ecclesiarchy leaders across the sector in the Convocation of Arakadi. For many days the matter was debated, as sermons were preached and arguments were presented. At length, the Arch-Cardinal prevailed and his arguments swayed the majority of the leaders present to his cause. A new, final War of Faith was declared, its intent to conquer Enkidu and make it a stronghold of the faithful where they might find sanctuary from the taint of the ever-seething Warp. Secretly, his trusted prelates knew his actual goal was to subvert the entrenched Askellon nobility under the pretence of a religious war, and establish himself as ruler of a new, impregnable sector capital.

The War of Suppression

The Enkidu Suppression, as this new War of Faith became known, was launched almost before the echoes of Arch-Cardinal Bordo's frothing sermon had faded away. The Ecclesiarchy mobilised the faithful of numerous worlds, herding many thousands of armed civilians onto bulk cargo vessels on each for delivery to the Enkidu system. All too soon, the skies over Enkidu were aflame with the bright contrails of descending vessels of every size and class. Across entire continents, hordes of zealous holy warriors spilled into the forests, desperate to take what many believed would prove their promised land. Bordo himself lead the first landing, ceremonial flame-pike held high as his chem-altered warriors assaulted the enemies they knew must be hiding in the verdant darkness. In his final words, he decreed that no other feet should trod upon the world until he emerged victorious, blessed to lead the sector in the Emperor's Name.

The cardinals in the Basilica eagerly awaited word of the righteous crusade, but only found silence for many weeks. The astropathic choir there finally could pluck a single, fragmented message from the turbulent Immaterium, curdled with such emotional layering so powerful that half the choir fell to gibbering insanity. Only two words could be discerned: "It knows."

The Enkidu Interdiction

With Bordo's death, efforts to invade the feral world ended. The remnants of the Suppression evaporated without his fierce will binding them together, and with them much of the Ecclesiarchy's power in the Askellon Sector. It would take many centuries for the Ecclesiarchy to regain its strength.

In the aftermath of this defeat there followed a period of intense debate and recrimination as the Arch-Cardinal's successors sought desperately to cling to power. Conspirators amongst the Ecclesiarchy's ranks manoeuvred themselves into new positions. A quiet but deadly war broke out amongst the highest echelons, assassins and infiltrators slaying dozens of senior prelates.

The Ecclesiarchy retains control over the world, and due to Bordo's final decree it remains forcibly isolated. None dared gainsay his word, fearing his return one day. The Ecclesiarchy drew upon ancient debts with the Imperial Navy fleets of Askellon to quarantine the planet. Such is Bordo's power—even in absence—and the intransigent nature of the Ecclesiarchial bureaucracy, that it still holds after so many years. Despite the blockade, however, there are tales of expeditions that claimed to have set foot and returned.

Surreptitious landings have made vid-captures of the fearsome creatures on the ground, and the warring natives in the trees. Often their recordings are all that remain, showing eldritch arcs of energy before dissolving into static. Taproom tales in Port Aquila say the planet is littered with crashed ships and ruins from primordial colonies, but the dense forests hide details even from orbital auspex scans. One tall story even has huge, silvered hulls half-buried in the lush earth. Some claim that the population of Enkidu is descended from the same stock as the nobility of the Askellon Sector, marking them as descendants of the original colony fleet. Others insist that one of the lost founding vessels, carrying Enkidu's ancestors, was carrying a fully functional Standard Template Construct system. More still are certain that at some point during the population's development, a sub-population of psykers emerged, able to repel the attentions of the denizens of the Warp. There are always rumours of Rogue Trader or Mechanicum expeditions attempting to circumvent the quarantine, with no reported success. The only certitude, it appears, is that the world still resists the Pandaemonium's rage, and possibly might be the only one left sacrosanct should the storm finally devour Askellon.

The Tributary Worlds

"These so-called Lords condemn in others sins they themselves flaunt shamelessly. They burn entire worlds over the slightest divergence. They shall not do so here, even should we all be drowned in the Sea of Souls."

–Intercepted vox transmission,
used to implicate Lord Dyrulli in the Vaxi Atrocity

Other worlds beyond those linked through the Grand Processional wield great power in Askellon's fate. Systems such as these can have unparalleled influence across the sector, and some even outside of it. Some of these planets claim to date back to Askellon's founding, others are only several millennia in age, but all are puissant and between them control most of the commerce, industry, and manpower of Askellon.

Aventine

The world of Aventine is said to have been colonised soon after humans arrived at Askellon, and certainly its history is a long one indeed. While it has never been counted amongst the great powers, Aventine has always been prosperous, yet never as influential as it would wish. This friction had led to many rivalries with nearby worlds in the Thule sub-sector.

The surface of Aventine is dominated by countless thousands of high-sided, flat-topped island-mesas, between which flows a shallow sea teeming with oceanic life. Atop the island-mesas are numerous settlements, each connected to the next via gracefully arching bridges decorated with statues depicting numerous saints and other worthies. Most of the islands are somewhat self-sufficient and able to feed themselves from the bountiful surrounding sea. The largest island is host to the palace of Lord Sarawak, Aventine's governor, as well as the barracks and parade ground of the Aventine Yeomanry, his personal household guard.

The Sarawak line stretches back into Askellon's dim and distant history, but his ancestors were ever denied the status they thought rightfully theirs. They fought alongside armies, led assaults, and prosecuted sieges. Yet always, Aventine's leaders needed more, and always bemoaned their lesser power compared to Desoleum or Cerix Magnus. Lord Sarawak is a man of great ability and a ruler much beloved by his people. He takes as sacred the oath he swore when he ascended to the throne of Aventine and regards himself as a true and loyal servant of the Emperor. What he does not regard himself as, however, is a loyal servant of Praefectrix Anastasia XX. Having perceived the sector's decay, and lack of proper responses to threats such as the rising Pandaemonium, he has come to believe that she, and the sector's rulers on far Juno, are no longer able to properly govern and protect Askellon.

Having withdrawn much of his regular contact with Juno, Sarawak has effectively withdrawn his world from the Imperium. He has not formally seceded, for he knows that to do so would be an enormous gamble. Instead, Sarawak has determined that his world is to face whatever may come about alone, maintaining his own personal honour above all else. As far as the people of Aventine are concerned, their master's virtual secession has gone largely unnoticed. Of late, he has been refocusing their devotion more to him, strengthening his hold on the world. As he readies his world for independence, he has abandoned many of his normal Imperial duties. One such area is that of the psyker cull.

On Aventine, an entire island-mesa is set aside for any suspected psykers, its high cliffs topped by a bleak prison feared across the entire world. Of late, the Black Ships have been less regular in arriving at Aventine, and Sarawak has essentially ignored the area. The prison has been left all but unattended. None can say what horrors fester within the storm-wracked walls, for almost subconsciously the populace has moved as far away from it as possible, creating a huge zone empty of natural life. Across the planet, the cull is ignored, a matter that his people hail and has increased their lord's stance. While few dare report it, though, there are growing instances of seemingly trivial, but unexplained phenomena, from unexpected hoarfrost to bloody clawmarks across walls.

All the while, Lord Sarawak broods in his palace surrounded by his loyal counsellors and bodyguards. He has yet to realise that his pride and determination to avert the doom of the entire sector is in fact serving to hasten his own world's death. How soon Aventine might have before the breaches burst open and the unstoppable tide of the Warp vomits forth remains to be seen, but it cannot be overlong.

Cel

Cel is one of the many agri-worlds that feed Askellon, but it is one of the most renowned for the succulent meat it provides to the wealthy across the sector. Over long millennia, a pyramidal system has come into being that provides much, though not all, of the sector's needs, with different tiers of agri-worlds in an interstellar food chain and Cel at the top.

At the lowest tier of the sector's agri-worlds are over two dozen planets set aside for the production of crude plankton-like life. Artificial seas of slime cover the surfaces of each world. When the bloom reaches the height of its life cycle, it is siphoned off into huge fermentation tanks of unimaginable size. Crane-like structures rearing dozens of kilometres into the upper atmosphere pump the processed contents of these vats to waiting tanker vessels, before the contents are shipped to the second tier of agri-worlds.

The second tier consists of planets given over to the production of a variety of primitive flora. The material shipped in from the first tier agri-worlds is sprayed across continent-wide fields, where it serves as feed to fuel the growth of these crops. Many of these agri-worlds are populated by Ratlings, a diminutive class of abhuman known for their skilful fieldcraft as well as their bucolic indolence. When harvested, the second tier crops are shipped out to feed the third tier, half a dozen planets on which millions-strong herds of grazer beasts are raised for the sole purpose of providing food for the planet at the apex of the pyramid, Cel itself.

The surface of Cel is one endless, bone-strewn plain across which wander beasts the size of Warlord Titans known as Mhoxen. These creatures are believed to have been created by Askellon's founders using technologies long lost to Mankind, and they represent the most bountiful source of protein in the entire sector. Mountains of blubber with enormous, teeth-ringed mouths, Mhoxen are fed on entire herds of the transported grazer beasts. When they achieve their full size, roughly two thousand tonnes, the Mhoxen are herded for slaughter. Squadrons of armoured walkers armed with electro-prod lances drive the gigantic beasts towards the grinder-gates of the yawning meat processing plants situated across the world's surface. Their meat is rendered into a wide variety of forms, then shipped off to all corners of the sector.

Mhoxen flesh is highly prized for its supremely delectable flavour, a taste so exquisite it borders on addictive. It is said that wars have been fought at the rumour of a shortage, but fortunately such a situation has never befallen the sector. It would take the disruption of several entire planets to interfere with the process significantly. Should that happen, however, the entire pyramid could crumple, and billions of souls would starve or be reduced to cannibalism simply to survive.

Cerix Magnus

Askellon is host to many forge worlds of the Adeptus Mechanicus, the greatest of which is Cerix Magnus. It exists in the Mechanicum's own empire that coexists within the sector. Despite this, Cerix, and to a lesser extent its sister forge worlds Selvanus Binary and Core Theta, are as reliant on the sector as it is on them, for without raw materials from elsewhere, the forges would sputter and grow cold.

Cerix Magnus must have been settled soon after Askellon's founding, for it has been populated by the servants of the Machine God or their predecessors for as long as any record states. The world's ancient history is largely unknown outside of its own data-repositories, and the masters of Cerix Magnus refuse outsiders access to their archives. It is assumed that the world was host to some engineer caste even before the scions of Mars rose as a power during the earliest days of the Imperium. With the arrival of the Imperial Expeditionary Fleets and the Mechanicum, though, it and its sister worlds were readily transformed to the control of the Machine Cult. Fragmentary records hint at an unnamed treachery during this period, but areas of the three forge worlds' archives have been deliberately sealed or even destroyed, and the truth may never be known. Echoes of this terrible occurrence, whispered as the Brass Scouring, still ring across the millennia, however.



Throughout the Age of Imperium, Cerix Magnus has led the forge worlds of Askellon, entering into a number of reciprocal arrangements with other factions including several nearby Knight worlds. In return for the supply of weapons and other advanced materiel they manufacture, the numerous other worlds serve what needs it cannot meet itself. These range from raw natural resources vital to manufacturing, to Knights and other forces in times of armed conflict, to a supply of sinners to be converted into the many servitors each forge relies upon for its many tasks.

Outsiders are not welcome upon Cerix Magnus, nor indeed any Adeptus Mechanicus holding in the sector, but those who do have cause to visit the world report that it is hostile to most forms of non-augmented life. The atmosphere is thin, providing scant protection from the baleful radiation cast upon it by the system's bloated star, Cerix Tyrannus. So massive and bright is this star that Cerix Magnus is thought to have had its orbit altered at some point in the distant past in order to survive the periodic storms emanating from its photosphere. The planet's surface is cast in ghostly blue light by its star, which despite its great distance looms threateningly in the polluted sky. No oceans exist, and the world's mountain ranges have long since been hollowed out to form the core of its factory-hives. The highest point on the surface is Assembly Zero-One-Zero, a mountain hive rearing almost twenty kilometres into the atmosphere, its interior plunging so deep into the crust it is thought to penetrate the mantle below. Assembly Zero-One-Zero is the seat of the ruling council of Cerix Magnus —the Quorum Primus—a body that has absolute power over every servant of the Omnissiah on the planet, and that has nominal command over Selvanus Binary, Core Theta, and the many lesser forge worlds across the sector.

Cerix Magnus produces a massive range of weapons and other advanced materiel, but over the millennia has established itself in a number of specialised areas. It is perhaps best known for superior technologies that rely on exotic field effects. These range from plasma containment systems to personal field projectors, but at the more rarefied extremes include teleportation devices and Gellar Field systems based on venerated, ancient templates.

In addition to its primary function as a centre of advanced manufacturing, Cerix Magnus sometimes serves as a layover point for Adeptus Mechanicus Explorator Fleets that roam the sector and beyond in search of archaeotech and other treasures. Recent centuries have seen such stopovers grow ever more perilous as the Pandaemonium becomes steadily more severe. Several binaric legends on Cerix Magnus cant that during the mythical Scouring, an entire forge world vanished from record, along with a blessed Adeptus Titanicus force. Many Tech-Priest Questors are certain that somewhere, buried in the devastated wastes of a lost world, lies an entire legion of the most formidable war machines ever to walk the battlefields of Mankind's wars. Should these Titans be discovered, the sector would surely tremble beneath their metallic feet.

Laran 9k

The Laran system is vital to the defence of the entire Askellon Sector, for it serves as mustering ground, depot, and bulwark for the sector's many ground based defence forces. When Imperial Guard regiments are raised in the sector, they invariably gather at Laran 9k, where they are provided with any equipment and supplies their own world was unable to furnish. The continent-spanning grounds of Laran 9k have seen use countless times over the millennia as regiments have gathered there from across the sector, entire army groups parading before the most highly ranked of marshals. A triumphal arch, tall enough to accommodate an Imperator Titan striding beneath it, stands in the centre of a sprawling city of barracks, stores, and bunkers. It is traditional for newly-raised regiments to pass beneath the triumphal arch before boarding the troop ships beyond, the name of each regiment etched into the stone that it might be remembered for all time.

Laran 9k is not ruled by an Planetary Governor, but by a Lord Lieutenant of the Departmento Munitorum. This was for many generations a position of great honour, often conferred on a respected war leader past his prime but still of value. The last incumbent, Lord Lieutenant General Vazkho, has been declared too old and infirm to fulfil his duties and his nominated successor, General Ryken Dow III, is believed to have been lost in transit. Without a duly appointed commander, the planet's authorities have appointed a council to rule in his stead until such time as segmentum high command sees fit to dispatch another replacement. This Council of Proxy has become mired in internecine squabbles and bureaucratic rivalry, and the world's defences have fallen into a state of desperate unpreparedness. The hundreds of thousands of staff officers and menials that maintain the stores and training grounds now spend their time maintaining their own personal fiefdoms, all traces of cooperation slowly ebbing away.

Those areas of the surface not host to the sprawling mustering facilities are set aside for weapons training of every possible variation. An entire continent is dedicated to armoured manoeuvres, and it is not just the tank commanders who are able to train there using live ammunition. Army groups consisting of dozens of armoured regiments with aerial support have taken part in exercises of unimaginable scale. Thousands of vehicles have swept across the blasted, crater-strewn landscape, the skies black with the smoke of their engines. The last of these exercises, carried out two decades ago, escalated to an actual war as rival generals vied for supremacy. The resulting battle raged for three months before a Munitorum delegation could broker a cessation, though by that point very little of either army remained. Both generals would have normally been executed for such gross misconduct, but both had powerful allies reaching back to Terra itself. They were instead each granted a Warrant of Trade, so that they could continue their personal vendetta elsewhere.

Laran 9k is one of Askellon's strategically vital systems as the central coordination point for most of its military forces. What none on the planet realise is that deep beneath its surface is a strategic command bunker, constructed millennia ago at the order of segmentum high command. Knowledge of this reserve asset is limited to the planet's Lord Lieutenant, and with this individual struck down by infirmity, its existence is now a lost secret. The Council members snipe and plot against each other, setting off flares of combat, unaware that stocks of cyclonic munitions are stored in a cavernous chamber scant kilometres beneath the northern pole. The power source maintaining that chamber's stasis field is slowly failing, and when it does, the mad scramble for control over the bunker could tear the planet apart.

Port Aquila

Port Aquila is not a single world, but a belt of asteroids orbiting the star Diomedea Stella. The largest of the rocks are almost planets in their own right, and many host a wide range of shipyards, docks, and storage facilities. Many smaller asteroids are also inhabited, forming the private fiefdoms of numerous trading concerns, Chartist Captains, shipwrights, and others. While many of these groups compete against one another, they are surprisingly adept at cooperating for the mutual benefit of all. It is common for the different bodies to ally with one another in the defence of Port Aquila, but their cooperation goes much further than self-preservation. When acting in concert, this Greater Askellon Trade Combine has interests in markets across the length and breadth of the sector, and has of late cast its acquisitive eyes still farther afield.

While Port Aquila has existed for many centuries, it has not always been the centre of commerce it is today. In earlier times, when grand Terminus ruled commerce across Askellon, the system served as a den of pirates, slavers, and renegades. Some claim that the stain of recidivism still lurks, and that any who settle there soon succumb to sin and damnation. Certainly, even the many outwardly respectable trade concerns that have sprung up in recent decades are especially brutal in their dealings with those outside of the Combine, employing mercenaries and assassins at whim. Newly-minted merchant princelings along the belt adorn their strongholds with crude grandeur in an effort to emulate how they imagine the palaces of the great houses of Terminus might have appeared in ages past. They amass signifiers of their imagined status, quaff rare amasec vintages, and hunt xenos species to extinction, all to prove their newfound pedigree.

Many of Askellon's noble houses, especially those claiming descent from the original settlers, regard the commerce-lords of Port Aquila with undisguised disgust. They refuse to deal with them openly, though with the decline of the great houses of Terminus, they increasingly have little choice but to do so. It is now said that the majority of vessels plying the trade routes within the sector do so under the flag of the Combine, the power of Port Aquila insinuating itself into ever more markets.

Other factions, including the House of Roth, have insinuated themselves into the Combine, joining the numerous princelings who have enjoyed a meteoric rise to wealth and power thanks to membership. Amongst these are several secret pleasure sects and xenos-worshipping cults, as well as a great many individuals willing to use such groups to grow unfathomably wealthy. The latter use their new connections to gain access to the Faceless Trade in smuggled alien artefacts, selling on what they can to those members of the nobility with illicit and unconventional tastes.

Port Lokhart

The Imperial Navy maintains several facilities in the sector, collectively referred to as the Askellon Station Command. The most important of these is Port Lokhart, strategically located to provide its vessels with ready access to a number of Warp routes leading towards the nearby Scarus Sector, as well as away into the unknown reaches beyond the sector's trailing borders. It is unusual in that it occupies a far older orbital structure discovered long ago in the sector's distant past. The port takes the form of an artificial ring, apparently wrought from some unknown material by the hands of unidentified, but undoubtedly alien, masons. The ring encircles a small, jewel-like planetoid in the Pallisada system, itself the source of much debate amongst the Adeptus Mechanicus.

Port Lokhart was established at some point during the first millennia of the Age of Imperium. The archives relating to this period are incomplete at best, but they appear to suggest that the Imperial Navy wrested the system from the control of local forces who opposed segmentum high command establishing a presence in the Askellon Sector. Whatever the truth, the Navy has occupied the alien construct for almost nine thousand years, the structure now studded with countless thousands of weapons turrets, docking arms, observation blisters, and similar, man-made components. The interior of the enormous ring is divided into a honeycomb-like structure, an internal arrangement that has been altered, expanded, and rebuilt over the ages by the capital shipwrights of the Adeptus Mechanicus. Despite millennia of occupation, the Navy has only ever imposed its presence on a fraction of the interior, leaving countless thousands of chambers unexplored.

Though an impressive facility, Port Lokhart is well past its prime. At its height, it functioned as the base of operations for a formidable number of vessels, from squadrons of destroyers to mighty battleships. Over the last few centuries, it has decayed as naval forces have been diverted to more pressing wars in the Segmentum Obscurus. Only a number of second line and reserve vessels remain, leaving the protection of an entire sector and surroundings to a woefully understrength force. As pirates and foul xenos raiders have grown even bolder, Port Lockhart has become pressed to counter these threats with the limited resources available.

The personnel stationed there are aware of their status. Many of its officers come from other sectors, often as punishment. Invariably, they have sufficient family connections to avoid more severe, perhaps even lethal censure, but have committed some sin so dire that some form of punishment nonetheless had to be imposed. These range from strutting martinets to borderline madmen. Some insist on exercising the full range of command responsibility, while others are only concerned that the mess room silverware is kept polished to an impossibly high standard. Their crews know only that they face ever more pressing dangers, both from the Pandaemonium and enemy vessels, and hope to make it back to the port after each deployment.

The Surena Rogue Trader Dynasty has been known to work alongside the forces of Port Lokhart, both offering assistance to its beleaguered fleets with its own powerful voidships and, from time to time, calling for aid in driving off xenos raiders, pirates, and other Rogue Traders that threaten its nearby interests. Though this alliance is at times tenuous, Port Lokhart's increasing reliance upon the Surena Dynasty means that many of its officers cannot refuse the house's calls to war.

The Xenos Threat

Orks are a ubiquitous threat to the domains of the Emperor, as the barbarous greenskins are encountered everywhere Mankind has voyaged. The Askellon Sector is far from immune to their predations, and has been assailed by their periodic invasions countless times in its history. In each case, the Imperium has reacted by raising additional regiments to confront the threat and, while countless millions have martyred themselves in the process, each invasion has eventually been halted. Nonetheless, once Orks have set foot upon the surface of a world, they are all but impossible to repulse entirely, even when they appear to have been wiped out. Intermittent Ork infestations plague several of Askellon's frontier systems, the bestial aliens appearing as if from nowhere to lay waste to Mankind's holdings. To date, these infestations have been kept largely in check by the increasingly ragged forces of Port Lokhart and, in recent years, the Surena Dynasty's daring but costly interventions. It remains to be seen how the sector's forces might react to a renewed period of full scale invasion, beleaguered as they are by so many other pressures.

The Eldar represent a less obvious danger. This ancient race cares little for humanity, a species it considers barely sentient at best. Some say the galaxy bent to the Eldar's whims before Mankind even descended from the trees of ancient Terra, and that systems lived and died at their command. The Eldar of the 41st Millennium, however, are a doomed race, reduced to a relative handful scattered thinly across the stars. Their piratical raiders harass and pillage across the sector, and no vessel seems safe from their attentions. There does not seem to be any rationale for their attacks, as a small freighter might be destroyed while a promethium-laden bulk hauler is ignored. This unpredictability adds to the fear their corsairs wield throughout Askellian space. There are rumours that the Eldar have also conducted slave raids and planetary attacks, but no clear evidence has been recovered from the devastated remains found on many remote planets. Worse yet are rumours these inscrutable xenos are also conducting targeted assassinations and thefts, and that any who unknowingly have gained their notice are doomed.

The remains of other races litter the sector like scorched bones on a battlefield. Some were thought destroyed during the early days of Askellon's founding, but many appear to have ended long before Mankind left Terra. Each of these dead races is unique, as near as the Tech-Priests of the Xenos Biologis can determine, common only in their silence. They are long dead, forgotten, and, thankfully for Askellon's future, could never return.

Terminus Prime

Terminus is often the first developed system a vessel travelling to Askellon encounters, and is a prosperous centre of trade. The system is host to half a dozen settled worlds, ranging from Terminus Prime, a densely-settled planet home to numerous mercantile concerns, to Terminus Exo, a paradisiacal world given over to the leisure of the most privileged scions of those same trading houses. These worlds are protected by a sizeable system defence fleet, as well as superbly trained and equipped planetary armies, all paid for by the combined profits of the great houses.

The numerous factions of Terminus, from Rogue Trader dynasties to Navigator Clans, have all gained their staggering wealth by investing in a range of trade and exploitation endeavours, both within the sector and without. For countless centuries they have dominated the internal markets, in particular those relating to the supply of produce from the sector's agri-worlds to its hive worlds. When Warp conditions have allowed it, these great houses have invested heavily in trans-sector shipping, holding significant interests in many Chartist Captains' fleets plying these lonely routes. At other times, the great houses have backed Rogue Traders seeking to penetrate the largely uncharted voids beyond the sector's trailing borders, though these endeavours have become increasingly risky in recent decades.

Terminus Prime is a world of gleaming oceans and low, rolling grasslands, many of the latter turned over to the production of an amasec varietal popular amongst the sector's aristocracy. Its population is spread out between several hundred cities and countless smaller settlements, each the exclusive preserve of one of the great houses. In times long past, it is said that the cities made war upon one another, but did so in a highly ritualised manner according to a massive canon of law. In recent centuries, however, the cities' rulers fight according to no law but their own, for the golden age of prosperity is long gone, never to return. While outwardly all is well, behind the faded curtains is hidden treachery.

Millennia of riches has led to stagnation, and where in the past Terminus daringly backed many ventures of high risk, which often resulted in higher rewards, it now refrains from any but assured prospects. Meanwhile, the aggressive Greater Askellon Trade Combine of Port Aquila has become more powerful and dominates many trade routes and markets. Many Terminus trading houses are now empty shells, their treasure chambers draining away in foppish pursuits.

With so much of the planet's wealth seeped away, a great many of its cities have slid into stately dilapidation. Delicate bridges have collapsed into once pristine canals, and the copper domes of the great palaces are now tarnished and weathered. The houses have begun turning on each other, none risking outright war but eagerly sponsoring poisonings, assassinations, and other less violent means to control what little they can. Many of the gilded cities are ruled over not by the head of a great house, but by whatever lesser relation is left alive after the latest attack.

Despite the decline of the great houses, the Ursa Navigator Clan maintains a significant presence, as do several Rogue Traders, including the ancient Anzaforr Dynasty. However, the ebbing of the power of the mercantile interests has allowed others—including the Surena Dynasty, the hated enemies of Anzaforr—the opportunity to prosper. In the wake of their last, devastating war that wracked the sector many years ago, both dynasties have entered a truce of penance, as each repays Juno for its sins. Still, the peace is uneasy, and their balance of power shifts daily as Aristide Anzaforr garners favour with the Ecclesiarchy and Banu Surena's daring exploits strengthen her ties with Port Lokhart. From the sidelines, the Ursa Clan watches carefully, exploiting the opportunities that both dynasties create while skirting open hostility with either.

Thaur

Thaur is a planetary mausoleum, a shrine world dedicated not only to the veneration of the living Emperor of Man, but of the countless nobility and saints who have passed away over the long millennia. Much of the world's surface is dominated by endless leagues of low, rolling hills swathed in dense woodlands. It is within the dark shadows beneath the endless canopy that the elite of the aristocracy of Askellon rests its dead. Only the very wealthiest are buried here in the conventional sense, the bones of the less highly ranked used to adorn or even comprise the opulent tombs of their betters—the fate to which many pilgrims aspire. The shrouded forest floor is in effect one single necropolis formed by many millions of crypts, graves, and shrines, all connected via kilometres of wide walkways filled with shuffling pilgrims. Some edifices are so old that the writing carved into the stone is unreadable, the faces of the mourning statues blank and expressionless following centuries of weathering. Many structures are cracked open or sinking into the ground and covered by a dense layer of moss and ivy. The tombs vary in size from individual grave stones to enormous, cathedral-like structures that burst upwards through the canopy to tower above the forests. Entire avenues are formed by kilometre after kilometre of tall statues depicting weeping saints and angelic guardians, some so new the marble gleams in the sunlight filtered down through the trees, others missing limbs or having merged with the trunks of trees.

The dead are not the only occupants of Thaur, for the graves, tombs, and shrines must be tended lest they waste away entirely, and new ones must be constructed to accommodate the endless supply of remains. These and similar tasks are carried out by a population known as the Eulogus Askelline, an entire society living in the midst of the dead and entirely devoted to their care. The Eulogus is divided into a bewildering array of classes—at the very bottom are those tasked with scouring the moss and ivy from the oldest of graves, while at the very top are the Vestals, who maintain vigil over the tombs of the senior dead, weeping constantly in quiet devotion as they spend their entire lives in this sacred task.

There are also shrine-masons who construct everything from the smallest grave marker to the tallest bell tower, adorning their works with the bones of those not entitled to a full burial. Others tend to the countless eternal flames mounted upon many of the tombs, while more still are responsible for controlling the hordes of vermin inevitably attracted by the presence of so many preserved human bodies. Servitors, however, are not used on Thaur to care for the dead or their remains, even for the most mundane tasks, for such creatures are entirely unable to shed tears.

The most senior member of the Eulogus is the impossibly ancient Lord of the Wake, Jeronius Pyre. As Lord of the Wake, Pyre is also the Imperial Commander of Thaur, though he cares little for this role and leaves most of the associated tasks to his numerous underlings. His main duties revolve around the performance of the most important services of remembrance, whether for newly-interred nobles or for those who died many centuries ago. Each day sees Lord Pyre performing a service, some attended by crowds of mourning offworlders, others by no more than a cluster of weeping Vestals. The Lord of the Wake does not discriminate between the age of the deceased, investing a eulogy to a general dead for five thousand years with the same weight and dignity as a merchant prince only just placed in the ground.

While on the surface, the population of Thaur might appear to rank amongst the most dedicated adherents of the Imperial Creed, this is far from the truth. The Eulogus Askelline is riven by factionalism, and the Lord of the Wake only attains his position by adding numerous rivals to the graves they formerly attended. These groups also maintain competing beliefs. Some hold that when a senior member of the nobility dies, selected members of his family and household should be put to death as well in order to attend him at the side of the Emperor. Others hold that life is fleeting and largely meaningless, encouraging entire bloodlines to march into the crypts and sacrifice themselves in the hope of a better afterlife. A small number seek to delve further into the soil than human graves descend, led by tall, cloaked figures and seeking out older things said to slumber deep in the clammy soil. It is said they sometimes recover some dread, nameless relic of the things long dead, which they venerate as if it were the holiest of icons in stark disregard for the Imperial Creed.

Equally chilling are shadowed cults that have desecrated the graves in worship of decay and the Ruinous Power that embodies it. How long these cults have been operating amongst the Eulogus is unknown, as is the true extent of their influence. Whatever the truth, it seems likely that the forces stirring them on are growing stronger as the Pandaemonium rises across the sector.



Vanth

On the death world of Vanth, the primary danger comes from the plant life that makes up its trackless jungles and swamps. Almost the entire surface is one enormous, foetid mire from which rise the roots of mangrove-like trees several hundred metres tall. So ancient are the pilings of these trees that they have become interwoven over the millennia, growing together to form a web of bridges across which many arboreal creatures travel over the swamp below.

While the enormous trees of Vanth are host to a bewildering array of animal life, the true threat to exploration resides in the viscous swamps. The dark waters are host to some manner of creature or creatures preying upon anything passing over the root bridges, striking up out of the water with one or more coiling, tentacle-like vines. Having ensnared its prey, the organism drags it down into the swamp. Some xenos savants have suggested that the swamps are themselves a single planet-sized digestion system, a theory that is regarded with derision and horror in equal measure.

Ordinarily, there would be little reason to travel to Vanth. However, it was discovered several centuries ago that its swamps produce several rare and highly unusual gasses known to have utility in a number of very valuable medical procedures. Most of these relate to juvenat procedures, used by those with sufficient wealth or power to reverse the effects of ageing and greatly extend the span of their years. When Vanth's priceless natural resource was discovered, the eyes of some of the most highly placed interests in the sector and far beyond it were turned upon the world.

The operation to extract the juvenat gasses has always been plagued by misfortune, for there is no way of doing so without drawing the attentions of the threats that lurk beneath the swamps. Countless different methods have been attempted, and while most have met with a measure of success, none have done so without a hefty bill. At present, the most successful operation belongs to a shadowy cartel made up of several noble houses. It pays a huge stipend to the House of Roth, the Rogue Trader dynasty that first discovered the presence of the gas, though not the world itself.

The cartel has found considerable success in mining the gasses using a large processing platform held aloft above the swamps. Anti-grav generators procured for the purpose, at staggering expense, support the huge machinery, the trees themselves too fragile to support such weight. A siphon is piloted into position by a crew stationed inside an armoured capsule, and when a pocket of gas is located, as much is pumped off as possible before the swamp's tentacles can mass sufficiently to tear the whole apparatus apart. Even this most successful of methods has cost the lives of many hundreds, however, for should the siphon remain on station for too long, the swamp tentacles mass with such effect that the rig itself is threatened with being pulled from the sky and dragged into the swamp. It takes scores of heavily armed mercenaries to keep the tentacles at bay long enough for the siphon crew to mine enough gas to make the attempt successful, but casualties of over two-thirds are common. So far, the effort has been profitable, to the backers at least.

The Low Worlds

"Rebels rise up and the segmentum lords blame our sinfulness, never their own incompetence. The Warp surges forth and the cardinals preach that the evil in our hearts has aggrieved the Emperor. Xenos fiends enslave our sons and daughters and the High Lords say that we are to blame, never that the Imperial Navy has been lax in the prosecution of its duties. Little wonder that the very stars abhor the rule of Terra, for what choice of path have we, the true sons of Askellon, ever been offered?"

–Unnamed author, *The Decline and Fall of the Askellon Sector*

Beyond the Grand Worlds and the Tributaries are those planets categorised as the Low Worlds, those with only fragmented or hazardous Warp routes connecting them to other systems. Many are industrious contributors to the sector, lacking only better routes to allow them to become Tributary Worlds. Some are frontier worlds whose populations have never heard of the Imperium, or planets that have never known the tread of human feet. They are all nonetheless claimed by the rulers of Askellon, even if they exist as little more than an entry on a faded star chart.

Angel KZ-8

Very little is known of the Angel KZ-8 system. The only solid descriptions are those logged by the Auriga Navigator Clan, which fled the Askellon Sector five centuries ago, and though scouts from the Surena Dynasty briefly examined this system for exploitation, the notes were sparse and interspersed with madness. Most hold the existing information to be unreliable at best, and the product of broken minds and shattered ambitions at worst. What reports appear to agree on is that somewhere about the system's star there circles a black armoured fortress bristling with weaponry, its cliff-like slabs encrusted with statues, surmounted by ebon gargoyles and etched with kilometre after kilometre of spidery text. The fortress appears studded with augur pylons covered with sensors and probes, all trained intently upon the seemingly empty voids trailing the sector. What those silent sentinels might be keeping watch for remains a mystery, as do the identity of the fortresses' builders and what might trigger their eventual return. Accounts claim that the fortress is empty, though the machine spirits guiding its countless weapons turrets remain vigilant. Silent vacuum gates await the arrival, or perhaps return, of its masters.

Far Draconis

Far Draconis is a world that exists at the very edge of the sector, and one occupying a precarious Warp route. It is an ocean world orbited by a satellite so dense that it inflicts an incredible tidal effect upon the seas below. As the satellite passes through the sky, the highly toxic seas are drawn towards it. As the acidic waters rise hundreds of metres, so the seabed on the other side of the world is exposed, a process that takes around forty standard hours.

What continues to draw curious individuals to Far Draconis is the fact that, when exposed by its satellite's tidal pull, the ocean floor is revealed to host many kilometres of sunken ruins. None can tell if they are of human or xenos origin, but the ruins are certainly ancient. All are of a uniform white marble, covered in tonnes of seaweed and barnacle-like life. Amongst the massive structures can be found oddly shaped metallic objects known to command high prices amongst those aristocrats with a taste for the forbidden. The true function of these small artefacts is unknown, but many become the basis for fine jewellery or unusual sculptures. Recovering them is a dangerous task, even once a dry area is found. Lurking predators, evolved to the tidal shifts, emerge to attack without warning. Salvagers must fight them off and locate treasures quickly, for the highly toxic seas soon return—and there is no way of halting the lethal waters.

Gamma Euclid 13

The Euclid 13 system exists at the extent of the Askellon's trailing border. The system is rarely accessible, having been cut off by the Pandaemonium many times in history. All of the eight worlds in the system appear to be clones of one another, exhibiting nigh identical mass, dimensions and other gross characteristics. The only variation to be found is in the surface conditions, but most Mechanicum researchers believe these merely a reflection of each planet's vicinity to the central star.

So far as the archives relate, only a single world in the Euclid 13 system has been visited. The third planet out from its star, Gamma Euclid 13 is reportedly a world dominated by distorted terrain formations that appear twisted out of shape as if by the whim of some mad god. Enormous spirals, arches, and limbs of rock tower far into the sky, seemingly unaffected by all normal laws of nature. It is not these strange formations that have earned the world a dire reputation, but that every expedition has fallen victim to some manner of guardian, only a handful of survivors returning to relate their terrible warnings of terrors emerging from the dark.

Kul

The world of Kul lies beyond Port Aquila and is counted amongst those worlds having fallen afoul to heresy and madness brought on by the proximity of the Pandaemonium. For much of its history, Kul was a frontier world, undeveloped and of little interest to the great houses of Askellon. Its people were regarded as tainted and regressed, and few outsiders had any reason to visit the world. When Kul was engulfed by the Warp in the mid-38th Millennium, most thought it lost for all time, and none shed a tear for its populace. A century later, however, the Warp apparently spat the system out once more, and an Imperial Navy squadron was dispatched from Port Lokhart to ascertain what, if anything, remained of its people.

What the mission discovered was a cause for concern amongst savants of the Pandaemonium. The surface of the world was blasted beyond all recognition and its settlements reduced to ruins. Blanched bones littered the land, but were not of the natives—they were from an Imperial Guard regiment thought lost in transit centuries ago, judging from their tattered uniforms. Their vehicles also dotted the now-hellish rock. Subsequent investigations failed to turn up any clues as to the population's fate, but most did meet with unexpected calamity and disaster. Currently the world is under quarantine, though this has not stopped agents of the Faceless Trade from plucking especially interesting items from its surface to sell across the sector.



Nurn Delta

A world on the rimward edge of the Stygies sub-sector and far from any useful routes, Nurn Delta has never truly been counted amongst its worlds. So far as the houses of Askellon are concerned, it is a world of wind-blasted plains populated by savages, barely able to speak and concerned only with braining one another with large rocks. This combination of isolation, apparent lack of natural resources, and the utterly regressed state of the native human population means that few Askellian ships ever visit it. Vessels from elsewhere entirely visit it, however, drawn there for unique reasons of their own.

Once per generation, a warship bearing livery of brightest sky and purest cloud arrives by way of Warp routes not known to any of Askellon's Navigator Clans. Small parties of huge warriors suddenly appear on the surface at a time and place foretold at the height of the previous visitation.

Their arrival heralds a period of trials, wherein the chosen sons of the numerous tribes set aside their rivalries and compete against one another for the favour of the sky warriors. These contests are waged until only one warrior from each tribe remains. From these, the visitors select those they judge worthy to begin the process of training and transformation that will, in a small fraction of instances, lead to the initiation of a new brother in their ranks.

It is a matter of great anticipation amongst the tribes when the foretold time is almost upon them. Many hold that the wait is itself a test of faith, and the tribes must prove themselves worthy by engaging one another in renewed hostilities. As the time of trials approaches, the tension nears a fever pitch that will only be relieved when at last the sky warriors return to Nurn Delta.

The Rosenkreuz Cluster

Along the coreward borders of the Askellon Sector is a string of systems, the stars of which are orbited by numerous barren worlds that are host to what is supposed to be a long-extinct civilisation. These worlds are known for the enormous, black stone dolmens raised by unknown builders at some point in the region's pre-history. No hint of the identity of the builders remains, but that is not to say they have left nothing behind.

These dead worlds are steeped in some form of psychic field, an effect described by those psykers able to bear it as a stain or some manner of underlying resonance. This effect can even be felt by those without any psychic ability, in whom it often manifests as an itching of the skin and trouble focusing the eyes. At times the effect is so pronounced it causes memory lapse or bouts of psychosis, and the effect is still more pronounced in psykers. When caught in these periods of intense mental feedback, psykers have been known to lose their sanity entirely, unleashing their powers on all nearby, whether friend or foe.

As a result of this effect, all prudent Navigators and ship's masters shun the Cluster. Each of its systems is seeded with interdiction buoys that transmit a continuous warning against travelling into the inner systems, although in truth there are scant legitimate reasons for any registered vessel to be passing through the area. There are plenty of illegitimate reasons for doing so, however, making the cluster a natural home to outcasts, pirates, and heretics. Those that reside in the region for too long become permanently altered, their sanity compromised and their souls forfeit to some unnamed power.



Tuchulcha

The Tuchulcha system has not featured on sanctified star charts for many centuries. The world was at one time marked for colonisation by a joint venture of allied Rogue Traders, who intended it to become a gateway into the unexplored and unexploited spaces trailing the sector. The House of Roth eagerly lead the way, with several other powerful clans (such as the Anzaforr and Reil Dynasties) backing this ambitious project in the hopes that it would pay even greater returns. They were convinced this region was home to countless treasures just waiting to be plundered, and made substantial investments in the endeavour. An entire exploration fleet was assembled, along with the additional infrastructure needed to take advantage once the region was secured. A massive orbital port was constructed, and talks were entered into to draw the most highly placed dynasties in the entire Imperium into the grand scheme. In a single night, their plans collapsed.

The Pandaemonium, earlier considered too distant to interfere with the endeavour, raged out of all proportion. The storm wracked the Warp routes serving Tuchulcha, cutting it off from surrounding space entirely. The last vessel out was a fast frigate of the House of Roth, but what the crew saw as the Warp closed in behind them was never recorded. It is said the ship's master and his officers walked into an open voidlock soon after, their sanity blasted and their souls withered. In the wake of this disaster, the near-ruined Reil Dynasty left the sector, cursing the House of Roth's reckless avarice, and departed for uncharted regions far from this horrid cataclysm.

Tuchulcha remains Warp-locked to this day, a world seemingly trapped in amber to any aether-scryers mad enough to turn their gaze towards it. Some say the orbital facilities still hang above the world, their storage chambers groaning with the treasures shipped back from the unknown reaches, as a temptation to any who would dare return.

This would be the worst of errors, for Tuchulcha is now a Daemon world, a planet wholly immersed in the Warp. Infernal legions stalk the twisted landscapes, battling one another according to the whims of the Ruinous Powers. These creatures grow in power and march forth periodically, bursting through the tortured veil of reality and dragging unfortunate souls back to their realm. These unfortunates reside still on the surface of Tuchulcha, ever fleeing from the attentions of cackling Daemons.

Beyond Tuchulcha is now said to lie a legendary and impossible domain of star systems, a region larger than most sectors contained within a volume of space no greater than a minor sub-sector. What lurks within this realm remains unknown except to madmen and the most damned of Warp-seers, but must surely be revealed when at last the Pandaemonium overwhelms Askellon.



Chapter XI: The Game Master

STOP!

The remainder of this rulebook is for the Game Master's eyes only.

Acolytes should wisely refrain from reading further, lest they learn secrets they should not know.

In every game of Dark Heresy, one of the players must take on the responsibility of being the Game Master, or GM. It is his role to bring the *Warhammer 40,000* setting to life with additional characters and new events. In this chapter, players can find a detailed explanation of what it means to be a GM, as well as advice and an assortment of tools to assist in taking on that role.

How to be a GM

"We are all but a weapon in the right hand of the Emperor."

–Anon

The GM's job is one part narrator, one part referee, and one part cast member. It is his responsibility to create and maintain the living world of the game. He must establish and portray all the various NPCs that populate this world, and work with the players to set the events of a game's narrative in motion. This involves both preparing such material before the game and working within a given session to adapt and develop it, and responding to any changes the players' decisions might cause.

The GM has a great amount of creative control and leeway in this task, but roleplaying games are ultimately a collaborative effort. While the GM may create characters as an author does or set scenes in the manner of a film director, he must also work with his players to create an experience that is enjoyable to the whole group. In this way, the GM can also participate as a mediator of sorts, working to ensure that everyone receives a chance to participate and have fun, while arbitrating any conflicts over interpretations of the rules. A good GM makes sure that his game runs smoothly, and that all the players are engaged with the events of the game and having fun.

The Group

Any game of Dark Heresy is shaped by its participants. Both the GM and players inevitably place a unique stamp on the events. In order to make sure the result is as much fun as possible for all involved, it is best to put some thought into the group's dynamic and how best to accommodate the interests of all participants.

Choosing the Game Master

The first thing a group needs to do when organising a game of Dark Heresy is to select a GM to run it. This is an important responsibility, and can be no small amount of work, but it can also be very rewarding. Obviously, the GM's position is best handed to someone who is interested in taking it on, but it is also important to select a GM with a solid knowledge of the rules and a good grasp of the *Warhammer 40,000* setting. If the group is sharing a copy of the Dark Heresy Core Rulebook, it might also be advisable to make sure the GM is also the one who holds onto it, so that he can consult it when preparing material between sessions.

Player Styles

In addition to selecting the GM, it can be useful to discuss what each of the players is interested in seeing out of the game before it begins. There is a wide range of possible themes or events that can be covered in the course of a Dark Heresy game, and it is unlikely that a group has time to cover all of them. Some players might prefer a focus on social intrigue in the Imperium's highest courts, while another might want to face down hive scum, guns blazing. Some details on a few of the more common approaches to games can be found below.

Character-Focused Games

Many players want to see their characters as the focus of the game. They might come up with ideas for NPCs their character knows, or obligations and grudges their character holds unresolved. The GM can tie these ideas into their plot to make things more exciting. Perhaps an Acolyte in debt to a Faceless Trader must smuggle illicit relics, or arrange an accident for the Trader's rival. Such personal touches can go a long way towards getting a player invested in the game, but the GM must be careful not to place too much attention on any one character over the others.

Some GMs find it best to alternate focus, giving each player a turn in the spotlight, while others find ways to tie multiple such elements together. A GM who knows his players and their PCs well can work with a player to introduce new elements; these can add a personal stake to the story, such as strangers claiming to be long-lost family or a dark secret from a close associate's past.

Combat-Focused Games

Some players find a thrill in taking on tough enemies in mortal combat, and defeating their character's opposition in the most visceral way possible. GMs looking to accommodate this desire should make sure to include such foes in their plans, and to develop new tactical challenges in combats. An Acolyte who has mastered close combat can be challenged by elusive and mobile enemies, while a master marksman might be interested by foes who make good use of defensible positions in cover. If this type of challenge does not appeal to the entire group, the GM must both be sure that the tougher enemies do not simply destroy less-specialised PCs on the way to the best fighter, as well as balance the session between combat and narrative encounters.

Investigation-Focused Games

Some players enjoy the thrill of discovery and ferreting out secrets to solve a mystery. Fortunately, this is a style to which Dark Heresy lends itself extremely well. Many of the enemies that Acolytes encounter as servants of the Inquisition prefer to shroud themselves and their machinations in secrecy, and so it can be easy to develop a cunning adversary or devious plot from the existing threats. The GM must take extra care to engage mystery-loving players who are familiar with the *Warhammer 40,000* setting, so as not to make things too obvious. On the other hand, not everyone enjoys guesswork or investigation, so the GM needs to ensure there are always a few clear leads to keep other players from getting frustrated, and to move the plot along if they are passing over subtler clues.

Intrigue-Focused Games

It is not always necessary to present players with an obvious threat in the form of slavering beasts or shrouded cultists. Sometimes the best challenge is one that cannot be met head on, so that the players can match wits with their adversary in a subtler arena. Within the tenuous balance of Imperial politics, even close allies must sometimes be carefully enticed to help. Some players thrive on this sort of challenge, preferring to talk their way out of—or into—trouble. Their foe of choice might be the obstructive bureaucrat, the pompous noble, or the brazen demagogue, as enemies who must be defeated with sharp thinking or persuasive rhetoric. Powerful figures such as planetary governors can also make good social challenges, as their influence is extensive enough to make direct opposition difficult. However, it is important to make sure that such challenges do not simply engage the most talkative player and leave the others bored.

The Role of the GM

The primary function of the GM's job is to create a story (more commonly referred to as an adventure or narrative), in which the players participate. Everything within the story that is not the PCs is under the control of the GM. He needs to provide information about locations and characters, set scenes for the PCs' actions, and drive the plot forward with new occurrences and conflicts. When the PCs encounter other characters, the GM takes on their roles.

Over the course of a Dark Heresy game, the GM should try to link past and future scenarios together to create a sense of continuity and verisimilitude. This kind of extended narrative, commonly called a campaign, can allow the players to feel they are participating in a living world that responds to their actions and influence, and can make for games of greater durations.

The Basics

Given the importance of the GM's role, it is vital that he prepare for the game accordingly. Before accepting the role, as well as prior to each session, the GM should make sure he is comfortable with these important elements of the job.

Know the Rules

The GM should try to familiarise himself as much as possible with all the rules for the situations that might come up in play. Ideally, he should know the rules as well as or better than any of the players. If conflicts arise during play as to the interpretation of a rule, the GM should always be ready to make an informed ruling that gets the game back on track. Some GMs might rely on a knowledgeable player to assist him with this task, but this can sometimes cause concerns about bias in their decisions.

Know the Plot

In Dark Heresy, the Acolytes are the agents in the service of an Inquisitor who must defend the Imperium against hidden threats. However, it can be difficult to do this without any such plots or foes. It is up to the Game Master to provide these items to drive the plot of the game. He must develop broad settings and specific locales, characters to be antagonists, allies, and bystanders, and heretical schemes for the Acolytes to investigate and stop. These are the tools with which he portrays the events of the narrative.

Because the narrative of a roleplaying game is a group effort, the GM should always leave room for the PCs to influence the development of the plot. This means that putting too much detail into some parts of the preparation or relying too heavily on a specific element can cause problems if the PCs never encounter it. The GM must do his preparation as a broad overview of events, and make sure any specific details such as clues or NPCs can be used flexibly, as the game demands.

Be Prepared

In many groups, the GM is the one who must make sure the game runs smoothly in other respects, providing scratch paper, pencils, dice, or any other useful gaming aids. Some GMs might also prefer to hold on to any materials such as characters sheets between game sessions. Keeping track of little details such as these helps free attention for the important task of progressing the game. A list of basic roleplaying supplies can be found on page 13.

Game Master Tasks

"The Emperor is our Father and our Guardian, but we must also guard the Emperor."

–Sebastian Thor

In addition to having a general understanding of a Game Master's duties, the GM should go over specific situations and systems within the rules to make sure he has a thorough understanding of how to run a game. The GM must be prepared for everything from assisting in character generation to a warband's transition from a secretive investigation in its final confrontation.

Preparing to Play

Much of the GM's work is done outside of actual game sessions. While it is often possible for an experienced GM to improvise a scenario from start to finish, most GMs prefer to have at least some material prepared ahead of time. This makes it easier to focus on the matters at hand during a session, instead of dividing attention between the current events and what needs to happen next. This is especially true at the start of the campaign, before the players have a chance to develop their own momentum in driving events.

Helping with Character Creation

The creation of the PCs is first and foremost for the job of the players who use them. Some players might even take offence at a GM "meddling" on the wrong side of the table. However, this does not mean that the GM cannot, or even should not, offer help where it is needed in this process. The GM can assist players in a number of ways without compromising their control over the character creation process.

One of the simplest ways to do so is to guide the players through the rules. For a group playing Dark Heresy for the first time, this can be especially important, as the players might not have had a chance to go over the rules at all. Similarly, if the GM is more knowledgeable about the *Warhammer 40,000* setting than his players, he can help in explaining the details of the galaxy the PCs inhabit. The GM can also work to tie the PCs together as a more cohesive group, by initiating discussions over possible pre-existing ties between characters or noting possible adventure seeds in the decisions during character creation.

Pre-Session Preparations

Preparation does not stop once the campaign has started. It is useful to take time before every new session to review past events, go over plans, and come up with new ideas. There is no definitive guideline on how much time to spend on this kind of work, so it is best to start with the basics of preparation and expand outwards as long as this remains interesting and useful.

Players often venture into areas the GM had not anticipated, or take an investigation in unexpected directions, so some preparation to cover these instances is essential. The GM should have some new NPCs and locations at the ready, so he can use them to flesh out these situations. Often simply having a list of names for these can aid the GM in populating environments as the Acolytes move into them. Along with these, some pre-made clues and leads are useful to also make unexpected travels rewarding

for the players. The GM should be flexible on such unplanned diversions; some can be kept isolated from the main plot he has in mind, or they could offer extra layers to an existing conspiracy. Some side encounters could even become the launch of entire new adventures, should the players find them interesting enough. The GM needs to always keep track of what each NPC knows of the many dark secrets in the adventure, especially in these cases with unplanned NPCs.

Running the Game

As with any narrative work, the tone of a Dark Heresy game is heavily influenced by its structure and pacing. To assist in setting the flow of events, the rules include two different ways of tracking time and actions. Mastering the use of these different modes can keep player interest piqued, and prevent scenes from going by too quickly or from dragging on.

Game Modes

The events of the game can be portrayed in either structured time or narrative time, as detailed in **Chapter VII: Combat** and **Chapter VIII: Narrative Tools**. Details on when to use each mode and when to change between them are discussed below.

Narrative Time

All situations outside of structured time occur in narrative time, the default game mode. Narrative time does not place special obligations on the GM or PCs to have actions occur in any specific order or proportion. It is possible for a limited number of the players or NPCs to take a more prominent role in a given encounter or scene in narrative time, or for players to take actions as often or infrequently as they wish to (within reason). The GM must be careful that all players remain engaged with the events even in narrative time, and avoid a fraction of the group receiving an unfair amount of attention. The advantage of narrative time is its fluidity, which allows the GM to respond to the players more naturally. However, it can be difficult to handle some types of events in narrative time precisely because of this loose format.

Structured Time

Structured time occurs in regular increments of rounds, or approximately five seconds of in-game time. During each round, every PC and relevant NPC receives a chance to take actions. Although the primary use of structured time is to handle combat encounters, it can be used for other purposes where events require careful tracking of time passed, a regular cycle of actions from all involved characters, repeated occurrences of an environmental effect, or some combination of the above. Examples of scenes that might use structured time include an aerial chase through the spires of a hive city, the appeasement of the machine-spirit in a timed explosive, or an escape from a burning building. Structured time allows the GM to control the inherent chaos of dangerous scenes while maintaining tension through the limited economy of actions.



Pacing

Successful pacing of a game session requires the GM to understand how to use both structured time and narrative time. Since most events occur in narrative time, he must know how to keep events moving forward without enforcing a definitive clock. He must also be able to keep the attention of every player, and prevent the scene from focusing too heavily on any one part of the group. He also needs to maintain dramatic tension, allowing it rise and fall during the game as part of the overall narrative. Finally, he must know when it is appropriate to shift into or out of structured time, and to handle these transitions without disrupting gameplay.

Using Tests

Most actions during a session are resolved through tests of characteristics or skills. However, not every action needs to be rolled to determine its outcome. In some cases, using a test makes the game less interesting, or allows a chance of failure at a task that should obviously succeed. Game Masters should only call for a test when the results should be interesting regardless of success or failure, and never for routine tasks performed without pressure. There would be no point to calling for a player to perform an Athletics test for his character to walk down a long hallway, but a test might be appropriate if the Acolyte is running away from pursuing enemies. Tests are often appropriate when under pressure from an outside circumstance, such as trying to quickly decipher a data-grimoire before enemies can breach its storage vault.

Some tasks are simple, such as performing basic maintenance rituals on a sturdy vehicle like a Rhino APC. Others require the utmost skill to attempt, such as climbing the outer walls of a high hive spire. In general, a task that is performed in the absence of some external pressure should rarely be more difficult than Challenging (+0), and should more often be Ordinary (+10) or easier. Very difficult tasks or particularly trying circumstances might call for the GM to make tests more arduous.

The results of a test are simple to determine in some cases, but there is often room for additional nuance based on degrees of success or failure. Some tests have obvious possibilities for how an overwhelmingly positive or negative result might play out—for example, failing the repairs on a volatile plasma reactor could cause a dangerous energy build-up and subsequent explosion. In other cases, such results might be more subtle—a door being forced open might be burst from its frame, or some additional details might be recalled about an important topic that would otherwise have been left unknown. If the test's results are easily quantifiable, such as the speed at which a room is searched, consider scaling the results with the degrees of success or failure. If they are not, the Game Master should consider adding more detail to the results of tests that succeed or fail by at least three degrees. Using degrees of success and failure in this way can greatly add to the narrative for the adventure, and even project the collaborative story the players are creating into new directions.

Skill Tests

Although tests can be made with either a raw characteristic or a skill, most tests in Dark Heresy use the latter. Characteristics represent a characters basic potential for a task, but in most cases, the actions a character undertakes are dependent on learned specialisation as much as natural aptitude. The GM should only use characteristic tests when it would be impossible to apply training from a skill. An example of such a case might be surviving a dose of poison—the natural Toughness of a character might save him, but there is little his training can do once the poison is already in his system.

Each skill comes with certain recommended characteristics that it can use for most tests. Typically, it is advisable to use one of these characteristics for tests with that skill, and a single characteristic may stand out as the obvious choice in some situations. However, some unusual circumstances or ideas might allow for, or even require, the use of a different characteristic. A case could be made that a Deceive test to pass oneself off as an Apex noble could be made using Willpower to represent an unchallengeable air of arrogance that deters close inspection, or using Agility to imitate a specific individual's body language and gait. Although this kind of clever thinking can make the game more interesting, the GM should never allow a character to simply use his best characteristic for everything. After all, there is no way a suave character could talk a heavy boulder out of his path.

Most tests should allow for the use of one or two possible characteristics. The GM should choose at least one of these as a default option, as it would be very unfair to create a test for the PCs to which the GM lacks a solution. If the test requires a specific action to be undertaken, it can be appropriate to limit it to a single characteristic. Tests with more open possibilities might have more options, with some leeway on the GM's part towards suggestions for additional choices.

Troubleshooting

It can sometimes occur that, despite the best efforts and plans of the GM, a game runs into issues that impede or halt a session or entire campaign. Sometimes the PCs' actions take the game down a road the GM did not anticipate, which can cause the plot to stall. At other times, the group dynamic can be soured over conflicts in-game. These issues are not cause to give up on the game, as most problems within a group can be worked out as long as people are willing to communicate.

Improvising

While the GM should do his best to plan variations and contingencies, there is no way that he can be ready for every eventuality. Sometimes unlikely dice rolls or unexpected actions by the PCs bring about results the GM had not imagined. It is often possible to salvage these situations with some quick thinking, but sometimes the Game Master finds himself at loose ends after these surprise upsets.

There are several simple ways to handle this sort of problem. One of the easiest is simply for the Game Master to tell the players that he needs some time to adjust things, and call a break while he works out a new plan. Depending on how much time is needed, this might mean anything from sending the players out to grab snacks, to ending the session early. Obviously, this is not ideal, especially in the latter case, but most players find that keeping the ongoing game running smoothly is well worth the delay.

Alternatively, it is possible to buy time for planning without stopping the session through redirecting the progress of the game. Cutting away to another aspect of the plot or a player not involved in the problem can help, as can throwing in a sudden ambush from the Acolytes' enemies. Many books and movies keep the plot moving with a sudden action scene or dramatic revelation, and it works just as well for roleplaying games.

Finally, the GM might delegate some of the creative work to the players. If the PCs' actions threw the scenario out of alignment, then it might be that they had specific expectations for what would happen next. Even if they did not, they might be able to provide some prompt or seed for an idea to keep things going. Even if their ideas do not mesh with what plans the GM has left, asking around the table is unlikely to cause harm, and can inspire new ways of looking at the situation.

Resolving Conflict

Although roleplaying games are intended as a fun activity and hobby, matters within a gaming group can sometimes become a little heated. Players might find disagreements over a course of action turning into arguments with a life of their own. An encounter that turns out to be more trying than expected can lead to frustration towards the GM. The important thing in these situations is to keep communicating clearly and calmly. If the conflict is minor, it might be best to put off dealing with it until the session is over, but never let such issues sit unresolved altogether.

The GM can serve as an impartial mediator in the case of disputes between players, or can open himself to comment and critique if the players have concerns about the direction of his plot. Airing out such problems is better than leaving them to sour the players' fun, and it is entirely possible that someone—GM or player—might be unaware of the problems another perceives him to have caused. Both the players and the GM should strive to take responsibility and to avoid laying blame, as it is easier to reach an effective compromise when no one feels as though he is being ostracised or held at sole fault for a problem.

Sometimes fixing an issue might be purely external to the events in game, but at other times, it can mean changes to the GM's plans, or even past events. The GM should not hesitate to make alterations if they are important to keeping the game fun for all involved, although the players should not take the GM's work for granted, either. Understanding where everyone is coming from is key to keeping a group friendly and the game fun.

Crafting an Inquisitor

"Arise, for the Emperor has work for you..."

–From the Calling of Inquisitor Zarath

For groups without a Player Character in the role of Inquisitor, the responsibility of portraying this central character falls to the GM. The role's narrative weight means that the Inquisitor is likely to be the single most important NPC within the campaign, and should be created with an appropriate level of care and attention to detail. Some important questions to ask about the Inquisitor are listed below, as well as some ideas on how to answer each one.

Although Inquisitors sever all ties with their past life upon taking up their duties, no man can fully escape the mark of his origins. Inquisitors rarely dwell on the past, but they are always marked by it. For the GM, this means that it can be important to consider the person the Inquisitor was before his current station. Knowing this can help inform how the Inquisitor is portrayed, and add significant colour and depth to his interactions with the Acolytes. Given that the rigours of Inquisitorial work can shape a man as deeply as the world of his birth, such touches should be relatively subtle, and perhaps filtered by other elements of his character. Care should be taken to make sure the Inquisitor's past does not become too much of a focus, however—it is the Acolytes and their present deeds that are the focus of the game.

Where did the Inquisitor come from?

In theory, the office of Inquisitor is open to anyone in the Imperium, from the lowliest factory worker to the wealthiest noble. However, the drive and will to rise to such a position is rare in the extreme, and it is unlikely that one amongst all the population of a teeming hive world would possess it, much less find an opportunity to express it. As such, the Game Master should not feel restricted by the life the Inquisitor led before his current duties. If a particular option seems unlikely, the GM should remember that simply being an Inquisitor at all is unusual enough to eclipse such circumstances.

Once the GM has narrowed down the options and determined the background for the Inquisitor, he should consider how this upbringing might influence his current outlook. An Inquisitor is unlikely to have been a typical example of his past office, so the answer might come about from any manner of reasoning. A former Navy officer might pay special attention to the threats lurking in the void, or he might instead focus on corruption among the nobility whose worlds he once protected. Similarly, an erstwhile noble is just as likely to be a deadly swordsman with no patience for double-talk as he is to be a schemer moving unnoticed amongst the Imperium's elite.

Some possible origins for an Inquisitor follow, although these are by no means representative of the full spectrum of options:



- The Inquisitor was an Administratum clerk before encountering a conspiracy to hide forbidden lore within the hallowed data-stacks and archives surrounding him. His past experiences lead him to thoroughly examine even the most minute details for signs of hidden heresy. Despite his meticulous care, he does not hesitate to shake up the established order of the Imperium to purge unworthy elements.
- The Inquisitor was formerly a sergeant in the Imperial Guard, and survived alone against sanity-blasting horrors on an alien battlefield. His desperate struggle for survival left him in need of cybernetic replacements for several limbs and organs, and marked him with an unrelenting hatred of alien life.
- Once a preacher of the Ecclesiarchy, the Inquisitor found himself suffering a crisis of faith after a rogue psyker overpowered him in front of his own congregation. His blessed rites and catechisms failing to protect him, he became determined to do battle with the powers of the Warp and now studies the Ruinous Powers to defeat them with their own weapons.

What drives the Inquisitor?

Although the will to act in the face of danger is common among all Inquisitors, this unifying feature takes many forms. For some, the drive is deeply personal, stemming from a terrible loss or fear of their past. For others, it is a result of their devout upbringing, tempered by ruthless experience. Not a few Inquisitors act out of pragmatism rather than any sense of responsibility, recognising work that must be done for Mankind to survive that no others are sufficient or competent to undertake.

The Inquisitor's driving motive should strongly colour all his dealings. This is the core of his being, the wellspring of his strength. The GM should take care to ensure that the Inquisitor's motivation is not easily shaken. If the Inquisitor is motivated by the need to right some past wrong, this should be a matter of his perception rather than a concrete goal. He might be willing to do deeds a thousand times more terrible than what he suffered in pursuit of his ultimate rebalancing of the scales. Such a motivation should also be something that the Acolytes are willing to accommodate, so some discussion with the players could prove necessary.

Some possible drives for an Inquisitor are listed below, although these are but a sample of the full spectrum of options:

- The Inquisitor's early life was steeped in the Imperial Creed, and the horrors he has since combatted have only cemented his conviction in Mankind's unique right to the galaxy. He does battle with the alien, the mutant, and the Daemon, knowing that with each such foe slain or banished, he is cleansing the path to ascension for the Emperor's flock.
- Long ago his home world nearly fell to a xenos invasion, but the true culprits of the deaths of millions were the incompetent and unprepared leaders of the local troops and defences. After seeing the price of failure firsthand, and realising the rarity of those capable of success, the future Inquisitor swore never to stand idle where he could avert catastrophe.
- The Inquisitor was once a very different man, an Acolyte in the service of another Inquisitor. However, he discovered his master was consorting with fell powers to achieve his goals, and was forced to confront and slay the man who had raised him up to become an Inquisitor. Now, he seeks to undo everything wrought by the man who betrayed his trust.

What would he sacrifice to accomplish his goals?

It is a common assumption that there is nothing that an Inquisitor allows to bar his path, and this is more or less true. Once an Inquisitor sets out on his course, there is very little that can impede him. However, even the most ruthless Inquisitor holds to a few principles to guide himself along the twisted maze he must walk. Any individual sufficiently paranoid to survive as an Inquisitor knows to plan for when his needs and his principles conflict, and to be ready to judge each for its value.

More commonly, an Inquisitor struggles with less abstract sacrifices. He should be prepared to sacrifice his own assets, or even his Acolytes, to achieve a goal, even knowing that losing them hinders future operations. Similarly, he must calculate the value of any spent Imperial lives, weapons, and even worlds against those he stands to save by his actions. Some Inquisitors balk at giving up these resources for a single victory, and prefer to preserve their strength for a longer campaign against darkness, while others might gladly condemn a million Imperial citizens to death so that a billion more might live.

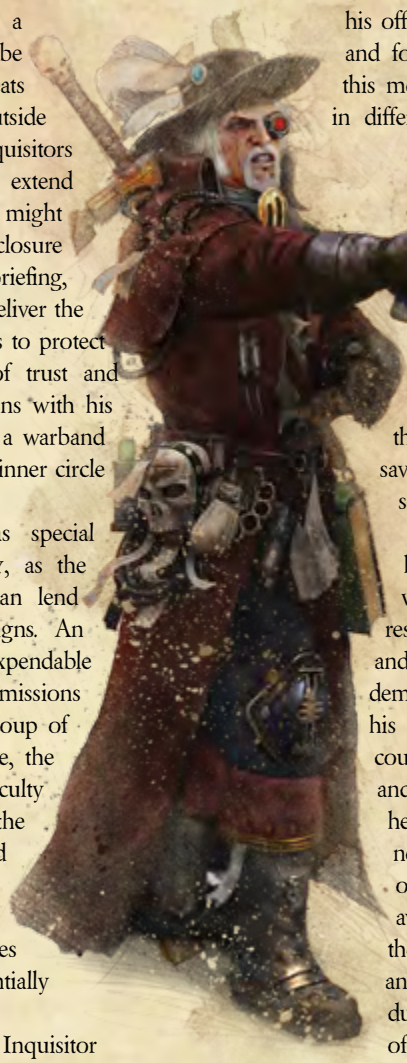
The GM should also consider whether the Inquisitor is willing to tarnish himself in flesh, honour, or spirit to gain the power he needs to succeed. For some Inquisitors, the price paid for forbidden technology or sorcerous might is too great to ever use such tools, while others freely add any weapon to their arsenal if it leads to the defeat of Mankind's foes. In its most extreme form, the question becomes that of how greatly the Inquisitor values his own soul, and whether he is willing to deal with foul xenos or twisted Daemons in order to thwart others of their kind.

The restraints and consequent liberties an Inquisitor might express in his design are many. Below are some possible boundaries an Inquisitor might set for himself, although these are by no means representative of the full spectrum of options:

- The Inquisitor is well-aware of the rarity of planets worth inhabiting, and refuses to sanction any action that would ruin a world. However, he might be willing to sacrifice the world's population if it could later be re-colonised.
- Jealously protective of his personal powerbase, the Inquisitor is loath to spend his own resources when he can exact the cost from somewhere else. He might be inclined to redirect Imperial resources from any other cause, no matter its importance, to make sure his own missions succeed.
- The Inquisitor is willing to pay terrible prices for victory, and has already done so with his creation of a bound Daemonhost he uses as his terrible, most secret weapon. There is no boundary he would not breach with sufficient motivation.

How does the Inquisitor use the Acolytes?

The relationship between an Inquisitor and the Acolytes serving him is often a complicated one. An Inquisitor can only be in one place at a time, and dealing with threats beyond his immediate reach requires outside help. However, the degree to which Inquisitors trust and value the Acolytes they use to extend their reach varies tremendously. Some might prefer that their Acolytes be given full disclosure on their assignments through a personal briefing, the better to deal with the threat. Others deliver the barest of details through coded dead-drops to protect themselves from betrayal. The degree of trust and closeness of contact an Inquisitor maintains with his Acolytes might even vary over time, with a warband being slowly brought into the Inquisitor's inner circle of confidants as they prove their worth.



This aspect of the Inquisitor has special significance for a GM of Dark Heresy, as the Inquisitor's inclinations in this regard can lend themselves to different styles of campaigns. An Inquisitor who views his Acolytes as expendable cannon fodder sends them on different missions than one who views his warband as a group of students and potential successors. Likewise, the Acolytes can find their jobs vary in difficulty tremendously depending on whether the Inquisitor trusts them with his secrets and resources. If the Inquisitor is adversarial to the Acolytes, the GM might want to consider allowing them to build up resources independent of their master and potentially succeed him, whether he wishes or no.

Some possible methods by which an Inquisitor might deal with his Acolytes are listed below, although these are by no means representative of the full spectrum of options:

- The Acolytes never meet with their Inquisitor directly, who instead entrusts a particular contact to deliver his directives. The contact might even be a former Acolyte; no longer capable of active duty, in his new role, he is to be obeyed as if he was the Inquisitor himself.
- The Inquisitor maintains an extensive network of contacts and servants on the worlds where he operates, and grants the Acolytes the privilege of accessing it to assist in investigations. He expects them to act upon any significant intelligence gathered by a local network.
- The Inquisitor works closely with the Acolytes, travelling with them to whatever secure holding he possesses nearest their sphere of operations and assisting them in planning sessions, though he does not take to the field lightly.

How did he become an Inquisitor?

The moment when an Inquisitor fully adopts the mantle of his office is a crucible that scours away much of his past and forges him into a new being. For each Inquisitor, this moment is unique, and it has shaped each of them in different ways. Some were invested with honour by their master after a long apprenticeship, while others pried a sacred badge from their master's still fingers in order to carry on the fight that he could not. The position perhaps was claimed by force after confronting his predecessor for some perfidious treachery to the Imperium. There might even be those who have no claim to the power of Inquisitor, save that all who oppose their ascension have been scourged of such foolish thoughts.

The nature of the Inquisitor's investiture can have an impact on how he treats the Acolytes. One who served a past master loyally might be inclined to respect his Acolytes, but could also hold them to harsh and unflinching standards based on his own master's demands. If the relationship between the Inquisitor and his former master was antagonistic or mistrustful, he could be watchful for betrayal from his own Acolytes, and even punish them for taking initiative beyond what he deems safe (although the GM should be careful not to discourage the players from taking such charge of their situation). These are but a few of the possible avenues to this ultimate power and responsibility, for the road to becoming an Inquisitor is nearly as twisted and arduous as the one walked after taking up the duties of the Inquisition. Other potential investitures of Inquisitorial office are listed below:

- Serving as an Acolyte for many years, the Inquisitor had no ambitions to succeed his master. When his elderly Inquisitor became victim of foul play, though, he was forced to claim his mentor's authority in search of justice for a great man.
- The Inquisitor bears an ancient seal of authority passed down among a succession of Inquisitors beyond counting—or so he claims. The seal is in actuality a masterful forgery he created when he claimed office, and swore to allow no opposition to his crusade to protect the Imperium against itself.
- The Inquisitor bears a rosette carved of pure Terran granite, kept in a stasis box, which marks the bearer as a representative of the Emperor's will. He slew his master and seized the rosette, after discovering that the man he once trusted planned to defile it as part of a ritual to harness the powers of Chaos.

Combat Encounters

"Peace? There cannot be peace in these times."

– Lord Commander Solar Macharius

It is a regrettable truth of the 41st Millennium that Mankind is beset by foes on all sides. Part of the GM's job is to bring these threats into the game and manage the desperate confrontations against them. The primary rules for handling such battles are found in **Chapter VII: Combat**, but some additional guidelines specific to the GM's role can be found below.

Start of the Encounter

Since all combat encounters occur in structured time, the GM must resolve any hanging narrative actions for the Acolytes before the beginning of combat. Drawing a clear dividing line between combat and non-combat actions is important, as some players might take this opportunity as an invitation to ready or even fire weapons outside combat. This is better handled as an attempt to surprise the opponent, and should be avoided. In most cases, any action that was not declared before the outbreak of combat (and some longer actions that were declared) is superseded by the imminent violence.

Setting the Scene

In addition to narrating the essential details of the scene, such as the number and type of enemies, or their relative positions, the GM should take some time to note any unusual or important aspects of the local scenery. Pointing out objects that could be used for improvised cover or weaponry can make a combat encounter much more interesting, as can potential hazards such as ledges or live wires. If such features can be spotted on the battlefield, the GM should ensure the players are properly aware of them. Some things of this sort are best left for the players to puzzle out, but they should never be left entirely ignorant of their surroundings.

Although it is best for the GM to be clear and informative, a little bit of mystery can go a long way in setting the tone for the encounter. A purely factual and rules-based description of foes or battlefield features can make them seem bland and unintimidating. Emphasise the descriptive details as much as the mechanical ones—point out the chainsword of the lead cultist by the grinding roar of its blood-caked teeth, or emphasise the blistering heat coming off the molten metal of the factory, rather than detailing the exact damage total for touching it.

Readiness and Surprise

Combats in Dark Heresy rarely involve cut-and-dried engagements like the front lines of a war. Direct confrontation can involve as much skulduggery and lurking as any other nefarious deed from the enemies of the Imperium, and the Game Master should feel free to reflect that by using enemies who plan ambushes or otherwise attempt to catch the Acolytes off guard. However, this can quickly become unfair for the players if some thought is not put into the enemy's tactics.

For adversaries to have a reasonable chance of ambushing the Acolytes, they must have certain advantages. They must be aware of the warband's presence or travelling route, and also some means of concealment, whether through dense local terrain, sorcerous occlusion, or advanced technology. If the GM has the Acolytes ambushed in an open field in which the enemy could not have hidden, the game can quickly devolve into feeling forced and unreasonable. For the same reason, ambushes should not be foolproof; Acolytes should always be given a chance to detect or react to hidden enemies. Allowing the Acolytes to make Awareness tests before an ambush is typical, although enemies using more esoteric means might be opposed in other ways—perhaps the Psyniscience skill could warn of an impending teleportation.

The GM should also remember that the Acolytes can make use of surprise as well. Just as their foes must seem to do, they must plan appropriately in order to succeed. The GM should not make such planning unduly difficult, however. The GM might be aware of the Acolytes' plans, but that is no reason for the NPCs he controls to have unreasonable foreknowledge. NPCs should have access to the same means of detecting an ambush as the Acolytes, but not more than that.



Initiative

Keeping track of the Initiative order is key to making sure a combat encounter runs smoothly. Fortunately, the mechanics for Initiative are simple in most respects. Things can get a little more complicated in larger combats, when there are a wider number of participants to track. If any of the GM-controlled participants in the combat (whether friend or enemy) are similar to other such NPCs, it can be a good idea to track these groups with a single Initiative roll. Therefore, there might be one roll for a group of allied Adeptus Arbites, one roll for a group of underhive gangers, and one roll for the gang leader driving the enemies onwards, in addition to each of the Acolytes. The GM can generally rely on players to help track Initiative for their own PCs once a few combat rounds have gone by. At this point, they should be familiar with the combatants acting before and after them, and should be able to help keep things in order.

Running Encounters

Planning and running a combat encounter can be a difficult experience, but it is also a rewarding one. Combat in Dark Heresy should be exciting, so it is important for the Game Master to handle it well. It is not only necessary for the GM to track details such as the Initiative order, the health of NPC combatants, and any ongoing status effects, but also to drive the opposition so as to present a tactical challenge without leaving the PCs with no chance of victory. The GM must be able to strike a balance between a fight that is challenging enough to be interesting and one that is too challenging to overcome. This does not mean he should avoid crafting battles where the PCs easily defeat their foes or are faced with overwhelming force, for either can help establish a stronger component to the overall adventure. The motley thugs who were decimated in a single volley of autogun fire might have been an expendable ruse to lure the warband into an ambush. A hail of fire from hidden Eldar Rangers could force the Acolytes to withdraw from their planned frontal attack. This might allow them to discover hidden weapon caches or Faceless Trade operatives lurking nearby.

Managing Adversaries

Tracking the status of each combatant generally requires some scratch paper, index cards, or other means of taking notes, as there can be many details that need updating over the course of the encounter. Essential details to note include the Fatigue and damage each combatant suffers, as well any status effects (such as Blood Loss) and changes in their equipment (such as an overheating weapon). It can be helpful to include the Initiative order among these notes as well.

It is crucial to organise any notes being kept during the combat, in order to avoid confusion. Players often find it extremely frustrating when their attack meant to finish off an injured foe turns out to land on a healthy one due to the GM's confusion. Making a table or chart before a combat can help keep details in the right place, and the GM should take care to cross off or otherwise denote when a status effect (or enemy) expires.

Tracking Conditions and Damage

In addition to noting and tracking the general status of combatants, the GM must make sure to apply the results of any ongoing conditions or Wounds that have been suffered. Some conditions (such as Blood Loss) require regular attention. Others can have an impact on how new effects are applied. The GM should check for any effects that need to be updated at each Initiative step, as well as whenever a new result is applied. PC conditions and wounds are a special case. The GM should make sure the players do not forget them, and that they keep him updated on any important status changes, but should generally rely on them to track these details. This may vary in groups where the players are less comfortable with the rules (or prone to forgetting such details), in which case the GM might wish to take more active notes on the subject.

Tactics and Strategy

Effective use of tactics (or the lack thereof) can serve two positive roles for a GM. First, by playing enemies as especially cunning or foolish, he can adjust the difficulty of an encounter if it plays out differently than anticipated. If the PCs are easily routing an important enemy, the GM should consider whether he is ignoring opportunities that could make the fight more dramatic. Similarly, if weak foes are making mincemeat of the PCs, he might have these enemies overextend themselves by splitting up into more vulnerable groupings after being made overconfident.

The relative tactical prowess of an enemy can also serve as a sort of narrative device in itself. Apparently brutish thugs making clever use of ambushes and covering fire may be more than they seem. Some tactics might even be inherent traits of a particular type of enemy. Bestial foes tend to flee after receiving any significant wounds, and particularly zealous ones keep fighting no matter how desperate the circumstance. Of course, this does not mean that characterful tactics of this sort and flexible options as described above are mutually exclusive. The GM can turn seeming incongruities into hooks for the players to become even more engaged, if the portrayal is convincing. By establishing that most beasts typically flee a losing fight, the one alpha predator that does not takes on a particularly fearsome aspect, and is likely to be remembered by the players long after it is defeated.

Using Combat Circumstances

There are a number of variations in combat that can change how a battle plays out. Fights in zero gravity, complete darkness, or obscuring fog can present an intriguing and dramatic scene. The local terrain might offer advantages to those who can seize the high ground or push their foes off of it, or it might slow the pace of any who try to close over the rough ground. Collectively, these features are called combat circumstances, as described on page 229; the GM should familiarise himself with these, but also be ready to introduce new ones as desired for his combat tempo and narrative plans.



Some combat circumstances are common variations on a fight that can occur frequently throughout a session, such as when a foe or PC is outnumbered in melee, or a combatant with a ranged weapon wishes to fire on a target engaged with one of his allies. Being familiar with these rules helps the GM develop more effective tactics for NPCs. Other combat circumstances relate to special battlefield conditions, such as variations on the local gravity, lighting, or terrain. The GM can select one or more of these combat circumstances to play a role in an encounter when setting the scene. Used well, they can add a whole new level of depth to combat encounters. Adding heavy cover throughout a battlefield can serve to emphasise melee combat or simply make a fire-fight less lethal, while a perilous chasm might caution PCs and NPCs alike about approaching a certain area. If the players seem to be losing interest with combat encounters, it can be worth making them more complex in this way. Similarly, climactic confrontations deserve some extra consideration in their layout.

Finishing Encounters

At some point, it becomes necessary to move on from the confines of a combat encounter and continue the session in another way. Often, this is when all the combatants on one side have been defeated or driven off. The GM must then take a hand in wrapping things up so that the game can continue. This can include speeding the foregone conclusion of a now one-sided struggle, or narrating the aftermath of the combat once it has concluded.

When Is an Encounter Over?

Although some groups might prefer to roll out every combat until the last foe has been slain, it can often be more expedient to recognise when a conflict has progressed into a clean-up action, and move on from there. If the PCs are soundly defeating their enemies without taking serious consequences in return, and all serious threats have been quashed, it can often be more satisfying to narrate their triumph than to let the warband slug it out with their foundering competition.

It is also generally a poor idea to wrap things up in this manner so that events favour the NPCs. Even if the battle is clearly slanted in the favour of their foes, the players are most likely to be upset at being denied a chance to turn the tides. If the GM is concerned that a stubborn stand against the NPC combatants might turn into a last stand and end the game, he can suggest to the players that a narrated surrender or capture might be preferable to this, but should never force the issue.

Encounter Consequences

In addition to the obvious results of any wounds, fatigue, or deaths among those who fought in a combat, the GM should take note of any other results from the conflict. Some of these might be appropriate to note to the players, such as the arrival of local law enforcement or a torch-wielding mob. Others might be less obvious, such as the hidden mastermind behind the enemies learning of his opposition, or a nearby target being alerted from the noise of the fight; **Table 5–5: Weapon Volume** (on page 148) can be especially useful for the latter. If the fight was especially noticeable, it might be appropriate to reduce the warband's Subtlety.

Not all the results of a combat encounter should be negative. If any enemies were left alive, the Acolytes might now have useful sources of information or even bargaining chips. Foes with powerful weaponry who are defeated may serve to expand the Acolytes' own armoury (a factor that should always be considered when planning encounters), and any other opponents alerted by the combat might be intimidated as much or more as they are informed, possibly granting bonuses to appropriate tests made against them. Defeating enemies that natives particularly hate could grant increased Influence for the Acolytes in that locale.

The GM should also consider that a battle fought with no survivors or notice given can have consequences as well, if the foes ought to have reported in or been found, but were not able to do so due to their deaths. Whether this works out for or against the Acolytes can vary greatly depending on circumstances, but it might serve to raise the Acolytes' Subtlety just as an overt encounter reduces it. After all, there are no longer living witnesses to their presence, and other enemies might spend resources chasing down phantom leads or lay low in fear of an unknown slayer.



Narrative Encounters

"Contact with alien races always renews one's faith in humanity. It is my belief that foreign travel narrows the mind wonderfully."

– Helem Boesch

The majority of encounters in a typical Dark Heresy game are handled in narrative time. It serves as the standard method for running most types of encounters, from negotiation to research to travel. A number of resources for use in managing such encounters can be found in **Chapter VIII: Narrative Tools**. Additional guidelines for applying these methods from the GM's perspective can be found below.

Narrative Resources

The paired resources of Influence and Subtlety available to Acolytes are excellent tools for setting up scenarios. In addition to their individual utility, they can serve as a guide for the overall tone of an investigation or other task. Groups operating with low Influence and low Subtlety could be in over their heads, or serving as expendable cat's-paws to disguise a less obvious purpose. Those with both high Influence and high Subtlety are likely playing deadly games of hunter and hunted by pulling strings across the sector. Low Influence and high Subtlety might indicate rising stars wise enough to play it safe, or a group of desperate survivors. High Influence and low Subtlety can represent especially righteous and powerful warbands—there is little more fearsome in the Imperium than the terrible wrath of an indignant Inquisitor whose great Influence is unchecked by the need to keep a low profile. All these possibilities and more can be used to draw inspiration for a campaign's ongoing narrative, especially as events cause changes in the group's methods and resources, transforming one style into another perhaps not envisioned when the campaign began.

Influence

A character's Influence score is more than just a resource to be used in accomplishing a goal. It represents his standing in Imperial society at large, and his pull within major organisations and power blocs throughout Askellon (or potentially, even beyond). A character with a high Influence score is a major mover and shaker that the informed, the cautious, and the powerful recognise whenever he does not take steps to conceal his presence. Conversely, those who see themselves as operating on a higher level might dismiss those with low Influence scores as insignificant pawns.

This can colour the reaction an Acolyte receives from NPCs, possibly influencing their initial dispositions, or even making the NPCs more or less likely to interact with them in the first place. The naturally sycophantic may gravitate towards high-Influence characters, just as the independently-minded avoid them as they jealously guard the little freedom they are allowed. Similarly, low-Influence characters might find the rich and powerful have shut many doors to them, or haughty nobles and elite marshals might not take them seriously.

The GM can represent this phenomenon either actively or reactively, by having NPCs recognise and respond to the Acolyte's Influence, or by allowing the players to dictate when they draw on their reputation to awe and impress. In most cases, it is best to use a combination of these methods. The GM should allow the Acolytes to use their Influence as a tool, usually by employing it for tests in social or investigative encounters to influence others, but should also play it up as a factor when not in direct use. The Acolytes do not stop being important figures, though, simply because it would not be convenient at a given moment, perhaps disrupting their planned efforts. Power-hungry nobles, for example, might eagerly seek them out to increase their own local authority and upset undercover operations, or a Faceless Trade operative might decide to make a name for himself through arranging the deaths of well-feared Acolytes.

Subtlety

The level of Subtlety at which a group operates should have a strong influence on the GM's presentation of the scenario. Players concerned with keeping their characters hidden from their enemies respond very differently to encounters than those with a more brazen and straightforward approach. As such, the GM could find that certain leads might not be followed by a group concerned with exposure, but might be pounced upon by another that operates loudly. Other scenario aspects can also draw differing levels of player interest based on how their characters conduct themselves. The GM can control this to a degree by choosing to apply modifiers to the group's Subtlety score with more or less frequency. In allowing more leeway with what qualifies as an overt action, the GM can encourage the players to step forward and face threats directly—or he can caution them about a course of action's advisability by warning it could impact the warband's Subtlety.

By default, the GM should use Subtlety as a prominent—but not dominant—element. Major actions taken to raise or lower the group's profile should affect their Subtlety score, but changing it too often might prove confusing or difficult to keep straight. Barring extreme changes in the Acolytes' fortune or methodology, it might be best to limit changes in Subtlety to no more than three or so shifts per session, or no more than 10 points from the score at the session's start. Minor changes could result from openly brandishing exotic weaponry, wearing rare armour designs, and other loud displays (especially in more quiet settings such as underworld dens or illicit trading stalls). These changes could be for the good (impressing a crime lord, perhaps), or for ill (frightening away a contact before a meeting). They also do not have to happen immediately; it might take some time for news of a fire-fight to percolate throughout a hive, for example.

The results of Subtlety can also be more widespread than the bonuses to subtle or overt actions described on page 271. The GM should feel free to alter the Disposition of NPCs who respond especially poorly or well to the skulduggery or audacity with which a given group operates. Subtlety can even be linked to Influence. High Subtlety can aid in Influence tests for tasks such as acquiring black market goods or forbidden grimoires, while low Subtlety could make it easier to brandish the authority of the Inquisition to rile up a mob.

The Inquisitor's Influence

As the players create their characters, the GM should create the warband's Inquisitor if one of the PCs is not serving in that role. While this NPC might only appear in person rarely, if at all, the Acolytes can call on his Influence in the course of their investigations. The Inquisitor might be feared across the sector, or only known to the few he trusts, but his Influence should always be a high value representing the power of his office. As a rule of thumb, a value roughly twice that of the Acolytes' average Influence is a good starting point for a campaign, but the GM should feel free to modify this as fits his particular campaign styles and goals.

When an Acolyte calls on his Inquisitor's Influence, using the rules on page 270, the GM should provide this to the character. The GM does not have to provide the full value however; the Inquisitor might withhold part of his sway in a location to prevent his enemies from discovering his interest, for example. As per those rules, this reduces the warband's Subtlety by 2; the GM should also feel free to add other consequences should it have been done for what the Inquisitor could view as frivolous or unneeded reasons. An Acolyte calling upon this too often could find himself cut off, disowned, or worse. An Inquisitor who values covert manners might be especially upset in these situations, and deny his warband any aid for a duration as penance. The GM should never let the Acolytes feel they can always call on the Inquisitor in this manner as a crutch.

The Inquisitor's Influence can and should change during a campaign. It should evolve based on the Acolytes' activities, rising and falling based on their successes and failures. The warband's level of Subtlety can also impact this, with low levels generally making the changes more dramatic while high Subtlety muting them. Such changes can be determined when the GM assigns any other rewards or penalties to the Acolytes, and noted for future reference to further develop the Inquisitor's history. In general, it should be proportional to changes any Influence changes the Acolytes receive, but the GM should use all of the events of an adventure to make this secretive determination. Did the Acolytes impress or insult any powerful personages? Did they act with the best intentions of Mankind, or in a selfish or cowardly manner? Did they work to further their own resources, or continually call upon others for help? All these and more should be fuel for Influence changes both for Acolytes and thus their Inquisitor.

The GM can also alter this value based on other narrative events that perhaps the Acolytes only hear in passing; these could relate other matters occurring in the sector their Inquisitor (and possibly his other Acolytes) are pursuing. Their Inquisitor might be severely injured, betrayed, or imprisoned elsewhere, and thus his Influence for the warband's use could become limited. These can also make for excellent launching points for adventures or even new campaigns.

If the GM desires, the Inquisitor can also establish credit on worlds his Acolytes are assigned to investigate, possibly mentioned to them in their mission directives. This could translate into bonuses for Requisition tests for items he feels the Acolytes should need, a temporary Influence increase they can use while on that location, or even granting them basic equipment necessary for survival. A mission to Juno's grand courts, for example, might see him setting the Acolytes up in fine garments, stylish accommodations, and a wide credit line to back up their cover story. Alternatively, if it matches the style of character envisioned for the Inquisitor, he might do nothing for his Acolytes and insist they must rely on their own resources. This is perfectly fine as well; the essential point is that all players know in advance the Inquisitor's views in such matters (so much as the Acolytes can ever know the mind of their Inquisitor), so there is no confusion when PCs seek monetary or other support when there is none to be had.

Social Encounters

Any scene in which the primary focus is on interaction between the PCs and one or more NPCs can be termed a social encounter. These encounters can range widely in tone and style, from the interrogation of a captured heretic to subtle political games at a ball hosted by Imperial nobles. They are generally simpler mechanically than combat encounters or other overtly hazardous situations, but the need to maintain an interesting and consistent portrayal of the NPCs involved makes the GM's careful attention just as crucial.

The Role of Social Encounters in the Narrative

As with any kind of scene in the game, the plot of a social encounter should hinge on someone wanting something. However, while it can be quite obvious what the opposition wants in a combat encounter (usually the Acolytes' heads on a platter), social encounters are not always as direct. The more important and lengthy the Game Master wants a social encounter to be, the more he should control such information and its delivery.

For an encounter of little narrative significance, the Game Master should be fine keeping things simple. Buying a lasgun rarely involves complex negotiations or ulterior motives. However, the central conflict of a social encounter can often involve a degree of manipulation or deception if some of the parties involved have opposing desires. If the goals of the Player Characters are in accord with the NPCs with whom they interact, the scene can instead serve to further their solidarity and mutual trust, or to set-up a different conflict down the road. However, it is generally not worth giving a great amount of time or attention to a scene where everyone involved spends all their time agreeing on a course of action when they could be pursuing it actively.

Playing NPCs

A given social encounter is usually only as interesting as the characters involved in it. While the Player Characters can and should hold up some of this load, the Game Master must be able to keep each encounter fresh and engaging with his portrayal of new or recurring characters. Those NPCs with temporary or minor roles can usually be portrayed with only a bit of additional colour or detail to distinguish them, such as an unusual mannerism or distinctive appearance. For such characters, something as minor as a memorable catchphrase or article of clothing can serve to make them unique enough to serve their purpose. However, NPCs who are intended for extended or repeated interaction with the Acolytes deserve more consideration in their design.

One of the most important things to consider when designing a major NPC is his goal, both in general and with regards to the Acolytes. Knowing an NPC's agenda in a given encounter makes a convincing and realistic portrayal considerably easier, and can lend itself to defining other details. Knowing the goals and values of an NPC can be an excellent leaping-off point for developing more obvious and colourful details. A devout follower of the Emperor might invoke the names of saints at every opportunity or bear a holy relic for luck and protection, while a greedy merchant-prince is likely to dress in opulent fabrics and care little for anything that does not ensure a profit. Keeping these details consistent with each other makes an NPC feel alive and real, just as a carefully-used out of place element can be a useful clue to perceptive players about a hidden agenda.



Using Personality

The personality rules on page 277 can serve several different functions, depending on the NPC in question and the inclinations of the GM. Perhaps the simplest use can be to take the example personalities to flesh out interactions with minor NPCs. This can serve as a variation on the purely narrative details used to differentiate such characters, or it can be used as an additional level of nuance in depicting them. If the GM makes a habit of doing this, he may find it useful to create additional personality profiles to cover more archetypes or situations. For example, switching up some of the modifiers in the Submissive personality could create a Nervous profile for fearful witnesses or cowardly captives. Alternately, the GM could simply apply the Submissive profile and some judicious situational modifiers for such an NPC.

Personalities can also serve to add mechanical depth to a more detailed NPC. After spending extensive time preparing a major figure, the last thing the GM wants is to stumble over the presentation of the NPC during the session. Some NPCs might be natural fits for the existing personalities, while more unusual characters, such as aliens or maddened cultists, might merit building new ones from the ground up. Most major NPCs fall somewhere in between, using an existing set of modifiers alongside additional custom tools to represent their particular predilections. Possibilities for further details include modifiers for the social standing of the speaker or even a tie-in to Subtlety with different responses to subtle or overt approaches.

The GM should always strive to keep the mechanical results from an NPC's personality aligned with their narrative portrayal. If the GM has previously established that an Aggressive NPC is susceptible to flattery, he should not apply penalties to Charm tests made for that purpose simply because of the guidelines in that profile. Developing custom personalities or modifier sets can help with this, but the foremost thing that should be remembered is that the personalities are a tool used to assist in an NPC's portrayal, rather than ironclad laws governing their reactions. They work best when the mechanics are woven in with the narrative. When an Acolyte successfully interrogates a Clever NPC, the GM can represent the bonus gained through having the NPC's response coloured with a fascination with his own genius, or present it as an outright monologue of admission to the obvious simpletons who dare to question such wisdom. Simply applying modifiers without accounting for them in the narrative can lead to players feeling as though their actions are irrelevant or even nonsensical, and can severely diminish their engagement with the game.

Using Disposition

An NPC's disposition allows the GM to measure the degree to which an NPC might be favourably or unfavourably disposed towards the Acolytes. In this respect, the initial Disposition of the NPC can set the opening tone of any social interaction, and any changes in Disposition caused by the use of social skills by the

Acolytes can help the GM determine the degree to which their arguments are having an effect. If the GM has set the NPC's initial disposition at an indifferent 50, then raising it to 75 over the course of a scene is very clearly a significant change in the NPC's judgement of the Acolytes, while lowering it to 40 could represent setting a minor but noticeably poor impression. As with Personalities, these reactions should be integrated into the narrative of the social encounter, so that a particularly successful test might mean something was said that struck a chord with the NPC, while a disastrous failure should have a good explanation for his suddenly fouled mood.

Disposition can be tested like any other characteristic in order to determine an NPC's reaction to a particular suggestion, request, or other prompt. Using it in this way can give value to the Acolytes' use of social skills, as they ply the NPC's favour until their chances are better. However, sometimes a direct approach to the decision can be more appropriate. Asking an NPC to do something absurd or dangerous at no benefit to him should usually be rejected out of hand, regardless of his Disposition (and could even merit lowering it), while suggesting that the NPC do something he is already inclined to do is unlikely to fail. In such situations, the GM might find that using the NPC's judgement—his current Disposition—to deliver a definite "yes" or "no" response is more reasonable than rolling a Disposition test. Such a result could also be used as a reward for particularly clever arguments that have an effect not easily measurable with a simple change in Disposition. In less certain cases, a Disposition test can be used to finalise the results of the Acolytes' persuasive efforts.

Using Social Skills

While it is possible to carry out a social encounter without resorting to tests, it is usually useful to rely on certain skills to help direct the flow of the encounter. In particular, the Charm, Command, Deceive, Intimidate, and Scrutiny skills are useful interaction skills, as described on page 96. Testing these skills serves several purposes. First, it allows a player who is not inherently eloquent or persuasive to play a character who possesses those qualities, just as a small player can have a large PC, or a clever player can choose to play a foolish PC. Second, it can help ease the GM's burden of decision, if he is unsure of how to portray a particular NPC's reaction. And finally, the impartiality of the dice can make sure the players feel their arguments are being judged fairly, if there are concerns that the GM might be biased or unresponsive.

Although all of these factors make skill tests a useful part of the framework for social encounters, they should not be used as the sole method of resolution. It is not very engaging to simply roll dice and move on from an encounter without any narrative structure. Therefore, the GM should restrain from calling for tests of social skills, except where it changes an element of the conversation. If an Acolyte is simply trying to be friendly in a conversation, this does not require a Charm test, and can be represented by roleplaying the conversation normally. However, an Acolyte who is hoping that his charming manner distracts attention from a matter jeopardising negotiations might be called upon to make such a test. The difference is in both the goal and the potential results. In the first case, success is simple to assume and does not significantly impact the overall narrative. The second case is instead one where success or failure could lead to very different outcomes.

The GM should generally not allow the use of social skills to bypass an NPC's Disposition—modelling the charming distraction above with simply a Charm test without taking into account the NPC's current Disposition of 30, for example. It is usually more appropriate for a persuasive effort to be tested as an attempt to modify Disposition, followed by a Disposition test using the new score being the attempt to bring about the desired result. This allows decisions to be affected by an in-depth discussion or debate over multiple skill tests, and can give more of the Acolytes an opportunity to have an impact on the results. Simply cutting through to the final outcome can save time for minor issues, but decisive topics should be treated with the appropriate weight.

While social skills can be used to change certain elements of a conversation, there are certain things a given skill cannot do, or that cannot be achieved with persuasion alone. As a general rule, social skills cannot do anything an extremely perceptive and persuasive individual could not accomplish with the same methods in the real world. Some more detailed guidelines on what is and is not possible for each of the social skills can be found below.

Charm

Charm can make NPCs view a character more favourably, but it generally cannot influence an NPC without at least some foundation of regard to build upon. While it can defuse a hostile situation, it cannot typically change the minds of those already set on a character's destruction. Charm is of little to no use against a character's sworn enemies, the insane, or the inhuman. In such situations, Charm tests should be made at severe penalties, if they are possible at all.

Command

As a skill, Command can inspire or direct those with a cause to view the speaker's words as authoritative. This authority does not need to be formalised in an official chain of command, but it must be one that exists prior to the attempted use of this skill. Furthermore, its effective use requires that the NPCs being commanded consider the orders or speaker to be worth obeying. It is of little to no use when used on those with no respect, regard, or fear for the testing character, or when used on NPCs who lack a reason to consider him an authority. In such situations, Command tests should be made at severe penalties, if they are possible at all.

Deceive

Deceive can misdirect or confuse the attention or understanding of others. Deceive works best when the target lacks a means of challenging the misleading message. It is not typically possible to use this skill to make someone believe something while they are being presented with direct evidence to the contrary, or for the effects of a Deceive test to survive such a presentation after the fact. For this reason, it is extremely difficult to use Deceive to change someone's mind on topics with significant opposing evidence, or on which they have considerable experience. In such situations, Deceive tests should be made at severe penalties, if they are possible at all.

Intimidate

This skill serves to gain information from others through duress or threats (whereas Interrogation relies on psychology, specialised tools, serums, and other means). Using Intimidate is dependent on the target being vulnerable to coercion through fear or pain, and cannot function against those who disregard such concerns. It also should not be used when the testing character lacks the ability to cause such an effect, such as if they are in an obviously weaker position than the NPC whom they are attempting to alarm. In such situations, Intimidate tests should be made at severe penalties, if they are possible at all.

It should also be noted that Intimidate cannot provide information a target does not know, although it can yield false leads from someone without any better information to provide. In such cases, a successful Intimidate test simply frightens the individual into providing whatever information he believes might placate the testing character.

Scrutiny

Scrutiny allows a character to discern the subtleties of an exchange that are not directly spoken. It can note conspicuously avoided topics, unease, mistrust, fear, and similar cues. However, no Scrutiny test can determine what another character is thinking, only how they seem to think or feel based on available evidence. These tests cannot provide proof that someone is or is not lying, or definitively pin down the reason behind a given argument or behaviour. Such a test can only provide actual evidence for things than can be perceived with the senses, although the GM may offer conjecture as to possible causes at his discretion.

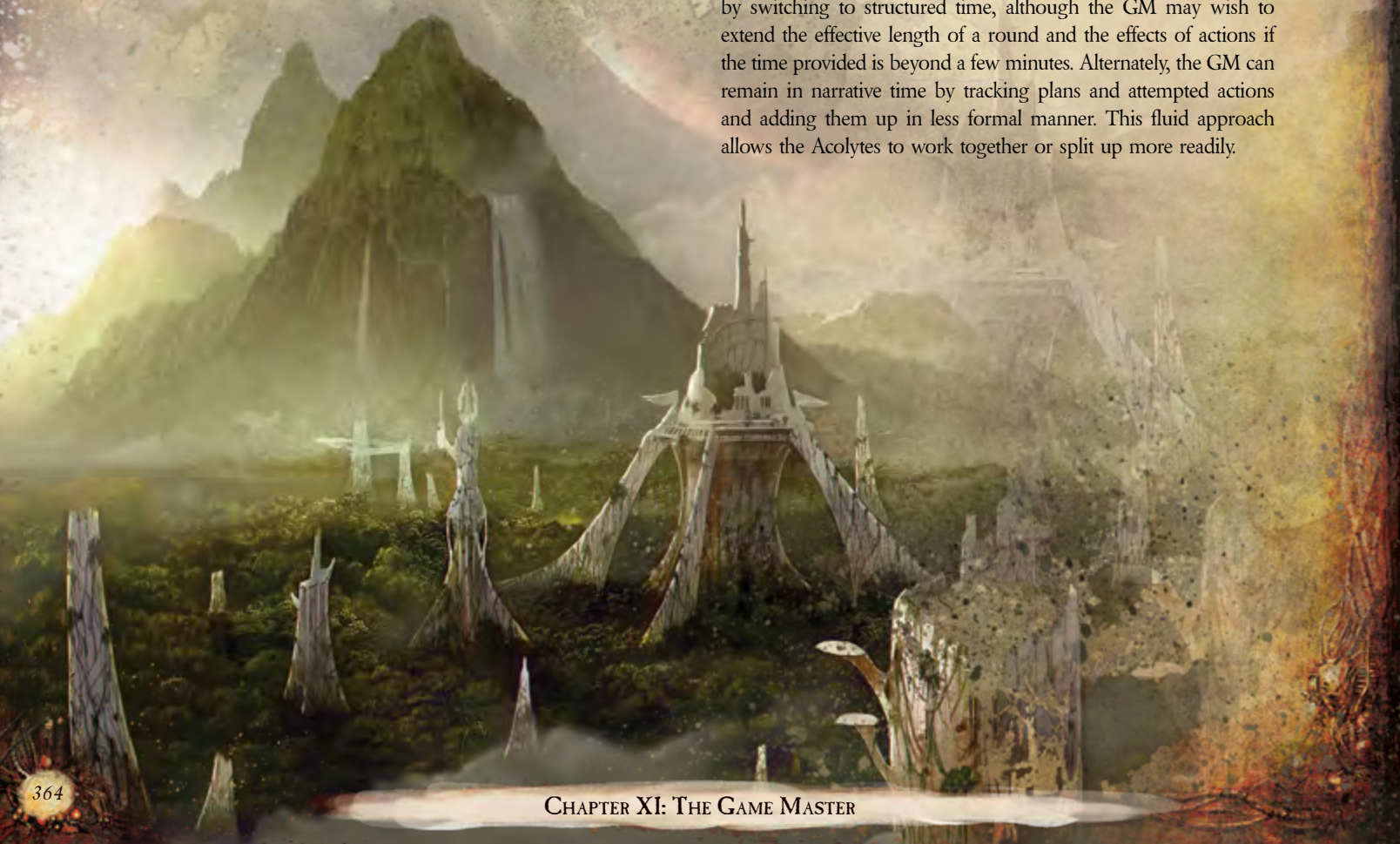
Exploration Encounters

Not all scenarios should involve the Acolytes facing off against NPC opposition. The GM can also make use of unknown and uncatalogued environments to challenge his group. Encounters involving plumbing ancient ruins, searching decaying underhive hovels, or even examining the scene of a foul ritual can serve to advance the plot and engage the players. Exploration encounters are not limited to areas of unmapped wilderness, but can be made out of any situation in which the environment or the unknown is the primary obstacle to the Acolytes.

Exploration

Running exploration encounters is very different from running social or combat encounters. The latter pit the warband against an NPC cast, who are able to take actions and respond to them, as directed by the GM. In an exploration encounter, the Acolytes must take the lead and direct the actions taken. The GM's role in an exploration encounter is largely one of response and reaction, as he evaluates plans, adjudicates test difficulties, and narrates the results of whatever is attempted.

In order for an exploration encounter to engage and challenge the players as much as tactical combat or delicate social intrigue, the GM must learn to use indirect tools such as environmental hazards or limited resources. One of the easiest resources to limit in an environmental encounter is time. The GM can provide a challenge that must be overcome in a certain amount of time in order to prevent a negative consequence. This can work as well for a search for evidence before a trial as it can for the need to escape an unstable ruin before it collapses on a valuable piece of archaeotech (or the Acolytes). This sort of limit can be enforced by switching to structured time, although the GM may wish to extend the effective length of a round and the effects of actions if the time provided is beyond a few minutes. Alternately, the GM can remain in narrative time by tracking plans and attempted actions and adding them up in less formal manner. This fluid approach allows the Acolytes to work together or split up more readily.



In addition to time, many other resources can be limited in an exploration encounter. The Acolytes might have to contend with the power supplies of tools, or gaining access to useful tools of any kind. Limits on breathable air and food mostly serve as a variation on a time limit, but could be used to encourage alternate solutions that extend the time granted (such as rigging an air filter or hunting any local fauna).

Environmental hazards are another useful tool in exploration encounters. These can be passive threats, like toxic gas in the local atmosphere, or active ones, such as a fire that must be put out or unstable footing to be noticed and avoided. Passive threats work well with time limits, and a gradually deadly threat can even be a reason for enforcing the limit. Other dangers can be consequences to failed tests or poorly planned courses of action. Dangerous power fields could inflict damage on those who fail a Security or Tech-Use test in a protected vault, as well as on those who simply attempt to enter without taking the proper precautions.

Although the primary focus of an exploration encounter is the Acolytes' struggle with their environment, this does not mean the GM cannot use NPCs at all. In fact, doing so can serve to keep things from getting monotonous if exploring a particularly vast area. Local guides or experts can provide the players with a sounding board for their ideas, or with additional information about their endeavours. At the GM's discretion, such advice and assistance could qualify for a bonus to any tests made. However, it is important that the GM not allow the encounter to be bypassed as the result of NPC aid. The Acolytes should have the burden of success on their shoulders, first and foremost. If there is an NPC whose aid could trivialise the whole endeavour, the GM might wish to substitute in a social encounter to enlist the NPC's help, but should not allow him to simply do the Acolytes' job.

Navigation

Since the foes of the Imperium rarely hide themselves within easy reach of its institutions, the GM might find it necessary to bring the Acolytes to untracked reaches of wilderness, or even planets lost to the Imperium in the pursuit of heresy. In such situations, exploration often becomes a crucial element of the story, not to achieve grand goals or unearth secrets, but simply for the Acolytes to survey the lay of the land. Seeking out the border of an open plain might not require any more attention from the GM than words to the effect of, "After days of travel, you find the plains coming to an end," but most areas more commonly merit tests from the Acolytes to find their way to any objectives they might have. The Navigate and Survival skills should be the mainstay in such situations, but the GM should allow the use of other skills where appropriate to allow each Acolyte to act on his strengths.

In addition to skill tests, the GM should also consider the rules for such extended travels. **Table 7–24: Narrative Time Movement** on page 245 can give a sense for how much ground it is possible to cover in a given amount of time. It is important the GM not forget to track any Fatigue suffered over the course of exploration, as this can influence any plans made, as well as any encounters at the eventual destination.

Travel

Sometimes, the Acolytes might traverse a huge or even hostile region without it being the focus of the narrative. Any journey aboard a voidship, especially one travelling through the Warp to another system, can be an example of this, as can more limited forms of travelling between important points. While such travel is fully capable of being made into separate adventures, it is more often used as a tool to advance other goals. Avoiding use of long-distance travel limits the scope and kind of stories that can be told, and giving it full attention whenever it is used can disrupt the flow of an ongoing plot or scenario.

The most common technique for resolving a trip of much distance, but little narrative significance, is to summarise it. The GM can detail the time and method used to travel, and perhaps through an anecdote from the trip to add colour, before moving on to the destination at which the Acolytes have now arrived. It is also possible for the GM to give the players a chance to detail what each of their characters did over the trip. This allows for a little extra roleplaying depth, and serves as an even better method for adding colour to the journey. Travel in Dark Heresy should rarely be trivialised, however; a journey across a hive world wasteland can easily become a major adventure, and even the least of Warp voyages can be a perilous event.

While travel times in the Warp are rarely possible to determine with precision, the GM should set durations between Askellon's Grand Worlds such as Juno or Desoleum as relatively rapid (a few weeks perhaps) due to the well-established Warp routes of the Processional that connect them. Passage to the Tributary Worlds and especially the Low Worlds should be much longer, where the Warp routes are erratic, poorly charted, and usually hazardous. Travel times of many months are not unusual here, and entire campaigns could occur en route.

Furthermore, some activities the players might wish to pursue are best done during periods of downtime, such as gathering rumours or acquiring goods. Most starships are large enough to pass for towns or cities, but even smaller transport options, such as ocean-going vessels, primitive caravans, or grav-rails may offer some kind of useful amenities. It is possible that such a trip can be focused entirely on this purpose. In such cases, travel serves as a useful lull in the action. The GM should give as much or as little time for such activities when travelling as he feels is appropriate to maintain the pacing of the campaign.

Adventures

"The Emperor will not judge you by your medals and diplomas, but by your scars."

–Anon

The GM has many tools at his disposal, as detailed earlier in this chapter and elsewhere throughout the book. However, the single most important tool the GM must possess and use is the ability to combine his understanding of characters, encounters, and other narrative tools into a complete adventure scenario in order to run an effective session of Dark Heresy. This skill is the backbone of the GM's role at the table, and finding or developing material for adventures is his most significant duty.

Types of Adventures

There are three primary sources for new adventures the GM can to use. The GM can acquire adventures produced by other GMs or find them in Dark Heresy products, develop new adventures from an existing seed or premise, or create a new and wholly bespoke scenario. Each offers unique benefits, and a long campaign may eventually see material drawn from all of the different sources.

Pre-made Adventures

If the GM is having difficulty developing his own adventures, whether due to a lack of time, warning, or inspiration, it is possible to find fully constructed examples to use instead. One such adventure is presented in **Chapter XIII: Dark Pursuits**, which is intended to serve as an introductory experience to Dark Heresy, and can serve to launch a new campaign. Pre-made adventures are also included in other Dark Heresy products, such as the Dark Heresy Game Master's Kit and on the Fantasy Flight Games website, including adventures designed for more experienced PCs. It is also possible to find fan-produced works on the Internet, up to and including full-fledged adventures.

The advantage of using these is that most, if not all, of the preparatory work has already been done. While some adventures might require the GM to adjust them for the specifics of his group, they inevitably possess a ready-made premise and structural elements. Once a pre-made adventure is complete, it is often easier to create a follow-up adventure to resolve any hanging threads or openings left from play than it is to develop a new adventure from whole cloth. Similarly, pre-made adventures can be useful even if the GM feels confident in his ability to create adventures of his own, as they can be the source of new ideas, locations, or NPCs to be placed within his own work.

Adventure Seeds and Modules

New adventures can also be built around a core of existing material from another source. Sometimes the presentation of a location or character hints at a potential plot in which it could be used. Pre-made adventures, such as the one included in this book, often contain seeds offering a brief premise taken from the possible results of the adventure, ideas that the GM can develop further into new storylines. These adventure seeds and modules provide an effective balance between creative freedom and external inspiration.

The purpose of adventure seeds is to provide a foundation from which a new adventure can grow. A given seed usually focuses on providing answers to the basic story-writing questions such as Who, What, Where, or How through the introduction of new or rumoured characters, locations, and events. Modules take these and flesh them out further, allowing them to be used as major branching points for the existing narrative. The GM still needs to do the bulk of the preparatory work when using these, but they can help to take the first step in the process by launching the initial storyline.

Homemade Adventures

Finally, the GM can create a new adventure from scratch using the advice in this chapter. Such an adventure might draw on locales from **Chapter X: The Askellon Sector**, and on characters from **Chapter XII: NPCs and Adversaries**, or the GM could create all the relevant materials from the ground up. Producing a homemade adventure can be a great deal of work, but it can also be an extremely rewarding experience.

Using homemade adventures provides two chief advantages. Firstly, the GM is not beholden to an outside source for his material. If the players want to do something outside the scope of published material, or to progress the shared narrative faster than the GM can find new adventures, he can turn to a homemade adventure to fill the gap. Secondly, the GM has complete creative freedom in handling the adventure. While this comes with increased responsibility and accountability, it allows for the GM to direct events to whatever end he and his players find most entertaining. If the GM wishes to explore a given facet of the *Warhammer 40,000* setting in great depth, introduce new characters and locations, develop his own sector, or push the boundaries of the expected and assumed within Dark Heresy, homemade adventures are his best tool.

Linking Encounters

Encounters are the building blocks of adventures, akin to scenes in a motion picture. This is as true for a GM running a pre-made adventure as it is for designing a new adventure. During the course of a game session, he needs to present all of an adventure's information, from its initial premise to the cast of relevant characters, using encounters as the medium of delivery. Some encounters can be short, consisting of a few words between a PC and an NPC, while others can be extended dramatic episodes that dominate a session. However, all encounters must be linked together in a narrative whole. Successfully linked encounters become more than the sum of their parts, while disjointed encounters end up weakening the impact of each individual element.

A good way to make sure everything fits together is to always think about two key concepts: framework and transitions. Thinking about an adventure's framework means taking a look at an adventure for its most essential elements, such as its beginning, all potential concluding points, and the most important people, places, and things. Identifying a unifying theme such as "the unknown," "isolation," or "knowing who to trust" also helps at this stage. Once the GM has identified an adventure's framework, he should try and make sure that all encounters serve some element of the framework, such as introducing an important character or providing information that leads towards a final showdown.



Spotting the elements of an adventure's framework also helps the GM remove or alter any encounters that would undermine its theme. If the adventure is one of survival horror, an encounter where the Acolytes meet up with a helpful and trusted ally might make it more difficult to express that theme.

While identifying the framework addresses the question of the adventure as a whole, understanding transitions helps the GM deal with individual encounters. A transition is the space between two encounters, and serves to explain the choice of the encounter to follow. If the GM cannot satisfactorily provide this reason, then the next encounter is rarely going to make much sense to the players. Furthermore, the GM cannot guarantee that the players are going to follow a given trail from beginning to end, the way that the author of a book would be able to do. To help with this, he should build encounters with elements at the beginning and the end suggesting how they might fit together with other events, like the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. Each encounter should be built with an eye towards why the Acolytes would find it desirable or necessary to participate, and should include one or more prompts or suggestions for future activities and investigations.

For example, an ambush provides an obvious motivation to fight (namely, survival), and suggests several future activities, such as fleeing what appears to be hostile territory or investigating the origin of the would-be killers involved in the attack. In this way, a combat encounter can lead to different exploration encounters (escaping the area or seeking signs of other hidden foes) or social encounters (interrogating prisoners or shaking down the locals for information). It could then lead back to combat when the secret backer of the ambush is found, or to a social encounter with the enemy in question, or with the Acolytes' own disappointed superiors. All of this naturally depends on the choices of the players, but the GM can direct these choices and their outcomes through effective transitions.

Encounter Ratios

An effective game alternates between all types of encounters. Focusing too much on any of the individual encounter types can become tiresome over time. However, a constant rotation causes a similar problem, creating either a predictable rotation of encounters or a chaotic, churning mess. While leaving one type of encounter out altogether denies the GM a valuable part of his toolkit, sparing use of an encounter type can allow it greater impact on the occasions when it is brought to bear. With all this in mind, the GM should seek to develop a sense for how often to use each of combat, social, and exploration encounters.

The Game Master might wish to choose one sort of encounter as the kind he plans to use most frequently or as a default. This choice can be made as a general one, based on his style and the preferences of his group, or it can be varied depending on the theme and focus of the current adventure. While doing this is not necessary, establishing this sort of baseline can help manage the expectations of the players and give the GM stable ground from which to work. Whether the GM establishes this choice in advance or leaves such matters to be determined in play, it is likely that a given session or adventure can develop some sort of focus in this respect, although not always to any great degree. Similarly, one type of encounter may end up being marginalised to an extent by the inclinations of the players or the specific nature of the current events in the game.

In order to keep things fresh and interesting, the GM should generally avoid a specific type of encounter repeating more than a few times in a row, and should try and fit in at least one of each type of encounter over any two sessions. Even a primarily social plotline like a grand ball for Imperial nobility can benefit from being shaken up with a duel of honour or chasing an audacious thief, just as a brutally combative warzone can include social interaction with allied forces or even the less bloodthirsty foes available. Sometimes it can be appropriate to focus primarily on one or two aspects of the game for a full session (such as the aforementioned ball with only a single duel, chase, or other action sequence), but leaving major game elements out of play for too long can lead to monotony. Keeping a good mix of encounter types not only keeps play exciting, but also keeps players from predicting (or worse, dreading) their next encounter.

Managing Investigations

A common occurrence in many adventures and plots within Dark Heresy is the investigation. In order to combat the shrouded foes and secret corruption that plagues the Imperium, Inquisitors and their Acolytes must first find the hiding places in which these dangers lurk. GMs who wish to make use of investigation as a theme or focus for their adventures should begin by examining the guidelines on page 284 of **Chapter VIII: Narrative Tools**.

Linking Clues and Leads

The core elements of any investigation in a Dark Heresy game are clues and leads. The GM generally provides clues, although he may require the Acolytes to engage in encounters or succeed in certain tests to discover them. Leads are drawn from work both the GM and the players perform. The GM can provide information about a clue that could qualify as a lead to follow, either as part of the clue's description or after successful tests to discern details. The players can also find leads by taking the initiative in drawing connections and correlations, or spotting details that stand out from the information as it is presented. A bloody knife can be a clue. If the knife was last seen in the possession of a certain NPC, that is a lead, and one that could be offered by the GM freely or after a successful Awareness test from one of the Acolytes. The Acolytes might be able to draw on their recollections of the NPC, such as his gambling habit, to surmise that the knife no longer belongs to him. This information could be an additional lead, thanks to their initiative. All of this information, or none of it, could be useful in tracking down the perpetrator of a murder during an adventure, depending on how the GM has set things up.

In Combat Encounters

The following represent clues and leads that the Acolytes can uncover in the midst of combat situations.

Clues

While it might seem that a deadly battle would be an inappropriate place to gather information, combat encounters can deliver just as much information as less lethal avenues of investigation. In fact, simply engaging in an unexpected combat encounter can be a clue that indicates the presence of an unknown enemy. The very foes involved in the encounter can also be a great source of clues. Common clues found in combat encounters include:

- The presence or absence of specific enemies (or allies) in the fighting, whether as individual NPCs or as groups. Such involvement can be an extremely direct clue in some cases, and should be used sparingly.
- Tokens of allegiance to a particular group, individual, or cause. Examples include badges or other insignias, as well as uniforms, tattoos, brands, or even specific battle cries.
- Unusual weaponry or armaments. This can include items beyond the normal means of the combatants due to the expense or rarity of the gear, forbidden armaments, or even specific pieces of gear with a known source or owner.
- Atypical tactics or coordination from foes known for a particular fighting style. Presentation of this sort of clue relies heavily on the GM's tactical knowledge, as detailed in the **Tactics and Strategy** section on page 358.

Leads

The most common lead that can be drawn from combat encounters is that of association. Some of the common clues even have associations inherently attached, such as an enemy uniform. For this reason, authentication becomes another important lead in following up on combat encounters, to ensure that the source of the association is genuine, and to avoid being deceived by a false insignia or similarly faked clue. Tactical clues can sometimes suggest the necessity of authentication, such as when a supposedly foolish foe displays a ruthless cunning he should not possess. Knowing or discovering the motivation behind an attack is also a crucial form of lead, not least because it can help guard against further attacks in the future. Every single combat encounter should be approachable from the avenue of understanding its motivation, as no one, from a soldier of the Imperial Guard to a xenos corsair, risks his life in combat without a reason (even if that reason seems incomprehensible to right-thinking servants of the Emperor). The last of the common leads from combat encounters is tracking, as the flight of surviving enemies or the path the enemy took into battle can sometimes indicate the foe's origin. Note that interrogations of captured foes can reveal many of these leads as well.

It is less common to direct the investigation of combat-related clues towards their history, but this can prove useful when directed at specific elements of the encounter. Further clues can sometimes be dredged from the past of a particular combatant, or the previous owners or uses of a given weapon. Finally, few of the clues from combat encounters lend themselves to a detailed examination of their method, as the preceding struggle usually provides any relevant information on that front.

In Social Encounters

The following relate examples of clues and leads that social encounters can provide for the warband.

Clues

The clues from social encounters are often subtle and easily missed. They are most commonly drawn from a conversation or message, which can often make them difficult to prove or track. However, it is also possible to draw more concrete clues from the locations and objects that are present in such an encounter. Common clues found in social encounters include:

- The conspicuous or frequent mention of a specific topic, or the avoidance on a topic that might be expected.
- The names of people or places mentioned in relation to an important topic, such as the associates of a victim or suspect, or anyone who might have had access to a known clue.
- The choice of venue for a meeting or other social encounter planned in advance. This is most likely a clue if the location is out of the ordinary, such as being closer or more distant to the NPC's usual haunts than might be expected, or if the venue is unusually public or private for the expected discussion.
- Any clothing or trappings worn or carried by an NPC that are odd or inappropriate for the situation at hand. This can include items that defy social convention (a lack of mourning garb after a death) or local conditions (odd garments that do not correspond to current weather or hive customs).
- The involvement of characters without a reason to be present. This can include associates of an expected NPC (such as a formidable bodyguard in a location known to be safe) or entirely unanticipated arrivals.

Leads

Social encounters are unique in that it is possible to immediately follow discovering a clue or developing a lead with further information when discussing matters with a knowledgeable NPC. It can be possible for a clever player willing to ask multiple direct questions to gain a disproportionate amount of information in this way. While this can be an effective tool at the latter end of an investigation to allow the pieces to fit into place, the GM should keep

such encounters from eliminating a need for the investigation in the first place. The GM should remember that if characters with the motivation to complete the investigation had the knowledge they needed to do so, it would have been finished before the Acolytes arrived. Therefore, knowledgeable NPCs should generally be disinclined to provide answers without something to gain, if they can be found at all. The GM can limit information to manageable levels by attaching a cost in favours or goods, by having an NPC refuse to address certain topics, or simply through letting the NPC lie about any incriminating or inconvenient matters.

Assuming that this hurdle can be overcome, the GM can use social encounters to present a number of different leads. Social encounters serve as perhaps the best way of discerning an individual's motivation, whether through conversing with the individual in question or with his associates. NPCs are also a useful source of information on details that are unlikely to be recorded outside living memory, such as matters of little-discussed history or associations that would be viewed as inconsequential outside of local gossip. Such discussions can also offer insight into the method of a crime or heresy if previous instances of the offence have been known.

The primary difficulty with clues from social encounters is the one of authentication. Often, using these clues relies on trusting the word of the NPC who provided them. Trust is a rare commodity in the Inquisition's work, where it can be found at all, which makes finding corroborating evidence for most such clues a necessity. Furthermore, it can be difficult to track down the source of information gained through word-of-mouth for this same reason. Rumour and gossip can be useful tools, but can take on a life of their own once they begin circulation. Finding the originator of a particular social clue might be necessary to clear up contradictions, and possibly establish motivations as well.

In Exploration Encounters

The following examples show clues and leads that the Acolytes can reveal and develop from exploration encounters.

Clues

Exploration encounters can be an excellent source of clues. After all, many classic investigative scenes, from the examination of a crime scene to tracking mysterious footprints through the wild, can be considered exploration encounters. The key to investigative success in an exploration encounter is often a matter of looking in the right place, so the Game Master might find these encounters most useful when following another encounter in which a lead was drawn from one or more clues. Exploration encounters can include a staggering variety of clues, but some of the most iconic examples include:

- Tracks, footprints, or other signs of recent activity, especially in isolated or rarely travelled areas.
- Items or objects with an origin clearly alien to the local environment, such as a manufactured tool in the jungle or a chip of marble far from any natural deposits of the stone.
- Discarded or hidden examples of clues from other types of encounters, left in out-of-the-way locations.

Leads

Tracking is the lead most commonly tied to exploration encounters. Entire exploration encounters can be formed from investigating a lead through tracking its origin or previous locations it has occupied. Furthermore, the question of tracking is intimately tied to specific locations, which can involve challenges of exploration both tied to the investigation and arising from local conditions. Exploration encounters focused on searching an area are also frequently done to investigate associations and to authenticate other information. Searches can often turn up clues that were lost or hidden by an NPC, including evidence that could contradict false testimony or tie an individual to an offence under investigation. In some cases, this hidden evidence can also provide insight into the methods involved in the crime or heresy being pursued.

It is considerably less common to find the history of a clue through an exploration encounter. Clues found by exploring the environment are often out of the appropriate place to discover such information, if they were not deliberately removed from it.

However, this very reason means that an exploration encounter to a specific location can sometimes lead to information on the history of a clue discovered elsewhere. And given that exploration encounters are primarily defined by limited contact with other characters, it is exceedingly rare that they can assist in discovering leads on a motive. It is possible that the discovery of a hidden clue can shed light on this sort of lead, but even this is rarely enough to suffice without further corroboration.

Guiding the Players

A good investigation relies on carefully-provided information. The GM must provide enough detail to pique the interest of the players, while leaving out any hidden information upon which the story hinges. When introducing a particular encounter or clue, descriptions that imply or suggest further features rather than revealing them outright work particularly well for this, especially if the insinuated details are open to interpretation. If the GM has specific avenues along which he intends for the Acolytes to conduct their investigation, this can be the point at which he introduces these paths to the players.

However, investigation-focused adventures do not function well without player input. In order to truly evoke the feeling of exploration, the Acolytes should be able to blaze their own paths to at least some extent. The GM should focus his attention on the end goal and clues or encounters, but leave the means of reaching the goal and traversing the encounters largely in the hands of the Acolytes. If the players find coming up with ideas difficult, the GM can allow them to discover prompts for potential courses of actions, although he should avoid forcing the issue. If the Acolytes are puzzled about where to begin searching for the dealer for a proscribed text, they could find a note in the margins, or scrawled on paper in the next room. Such a note should not proclaim the dealer's name and address, but could hint at a meeting place or common associate who might know more.

If the players are particularly proactive, the GM could do the opposite and allow their theories to inform the results of the investigation. This technique should be used carefully, as the players might not like the idea that there was not an answer to begin with. However, sometimes an idea passed around among the Acolytes is simply too good to leave unused, and the GM might find it better to improvise a way to include it.

Dealing with Snags

Sometimes investigation-focused adventures run into problems that hold matters up and prevent forward progress. Some of these can be avoided when planning the adventure. One such preventative measure to keep in mind is to avoid pinning the success of an investigation purely on the success of a test. Although clues and leads can be tied to the results of tests, the GM should make sure the players can receive any absolutely vital information without them, such as through an initial briefing. If the GM cannot find a way to provide such information, then the adventure should be restructured to avoid the possibility that the players become stuck due to poor luck with their dice.

At other times, the problem arises during the session. Sometimes the players repeatedly miss the information inherent in an important clue, regardless of any subtle prompting, or they become fixated on a theory of events completely different from what was intended. If more careful guidance does not get matters moving again, it can be necessary to include more drastic measures. For example, a time-honoured tradition in investigative fiction is to resolve any such slumps through a sudden attack or ambush, during which the attackers can give away crucial information. Using this method or some variation on it can usually start the investigation up again in the intended direction, or redirect attention from any falsely-drawn leads.

Alternatively, the GM can let the Acolytes act on incorrect assumptions until they realise their error, but this can lead to the wasting valuable time in a game session. It is possible to mitigate this by having the error lead to additional encounters of a different sort, where the path takes the warband into a beast's lair, or the victim's diary leads them to seek information from his close associates. This allows the players to feel vindicated and the GM to keep events consistent without compromising either goal.



Rewards

"There is no greater glory than a lifetime of dutiful service."

– Anon

Over the course of a Dark Heresy campaign, the Acolytes are called upon to accomplish great and terrible things in defence of the Imperium. The GM should see that they are appropriately rewarded for their efforts in the game, whether with knowledge, power, or resources. Such rewards serve to create a feeling of progress and mobility throughout the campaign, as well as to give the players a feeling of accomplishment for their characters' actions. These can all be adjusted based on the relative severity of the threats the Acolytes defeated, or other factor's at the Game Master's discretion.

Tangible Rewards

There are many types of rewards that can be measured or tracked concretely. These types of rewards can vary greatly, but are useful milestones of accomplishment thanks to their easily noticeable effects. Rewards of this type include increases to characteristics or other mechanical values of the character, or additional capabilities and resources.

Experience Points

The most common sort of reward the GM should grant is experience points (xp). Increases in xp represent a character learning from his encounters and growing stronger, as his mettle is tested and his resolve hardened while defending Mankind. A character with more xp is better able to acquire increased characteristics or skills and new talents than a character with less xp, leading to significantly increased personal power. Because xp ties directly into a character's capabilities in this way, the rate at which the GM grants it can impact the overall tone and pacing of the campaign. Granting xp at a greater rate leads to much more powerful characters and the need for significantly greater challenges, just as granting xp slowly or in small amounts leaves the PCs weaker and less capable of opposing mightier enemies.

There are two main ways for the GM to award xp to the Acolytes: the abstract method and the detailed method. These should be considered the default pace for a Dark Heresy campaign, but by varying the recommended amounts, the GM can alter the capabilities and potential of his group of PCs.

Abstract Method

This is the easiest method of awarding xp, and the one recommended for beginning GMs or if the GM prefers a more straightforward system. Under the abstract method, experience points are awarded for time spent gaming, ensuring a steady and even progression for all characters. For each game session composed of multiple encounters, every PC should receive 400 xp. This would allow them to purchase a minor increase in their capabilities approximately every session, or a more significant one every few sessions. This method assumes a game session lasts approximately four hours of active play time. For longer or shorter sessions, the GM can adjust the rewards accordingly.

Detailed Method

It is also possible to award xp in a more detailed manner, in which every reward is tied to a specific difficulty or challenge. This allows the GM to match the PCs' progression to the progression of events more closely, or to increase the players' sense of accomplishment. However, it requires that the GM be able to evaluate each encounter and challenge and assign an appropriate amount of xp. This can usually be done ahead of time, such as when planning the session and the encounters within it, which can save time and effort. Some GMs might prefer to hold off on determining the value of an encounter until it has played out, in order to make sure that their judgment of difficulty is accurate to the in-game events.

Table 11–1: Encounter Difficulty offers examples of xp values for encounters of varying difficulties. The difficulty can be judged based on the degree to which it taxes and challenges the PCs in resources, equipment, injury, or time. An easy encounter might be one that has little real threat to the PCs, but costs them time or resources, while a very hard encounter might have a serious chance of PCs dying or burning Fate threshold.

Table 11–1: Encounter Difficulty

Difficulty	XP Award per PC
Easy	50
Routine	70
Ordinary	100
Challenging	130
Difficult	170
Hard	200
Very Hard	250

GMs using the detailed method should be careful to only award xp for meaningful encounters that advance the plot or the goals of the PCs. Awarding xp simply for defeating enemies can incentivise behaviour that disrupts the game, such as unnecessary battles fought simply "for the experience." Similarly, more experienced and powerful characters might find certain obstacles and foes pose no appreciable threat, in which case they should not be awarded xp for defeating them.

Roleplaying Awards

The GM can also offer xp to players for demonstrating excellent roleplaying during a session. The amount of these awards is up to the GM's discretion, but should generally be between 100 and 500 xp, and should not exceed the amount earned over the course of the session where it occurred. The GM should be careful to only award these bonuses for particularly exceptional levels of performance, such as when a player risks his character's death because "it's what my character would do" or invents a distinctly evocative narrative for his character's behaviour. For the sake of fairness, judgement should be handled per player rather than over the whole group, so that players who typically do more in-depth roleplaying should be held to a higher standard than their less outgoing comrades. Similarly, roleplaying awards should never be granted to a player whose actions caused the session to be less fun for others, no matter how appropriate it was for their character.

Influence

While characters might gain in experience simply by the trials presented to them by their duties, an increase in Influence should generally correspond to a notable success. A character's Influence can be increased as a reward for a number of achievements, from drawing the attention of a powerful patron or ally, to claiming a particularly potent weapon or resource that can intimidate others into obedience. Most commonly, Influence is increased when a character assists in unravelling a sinister conspiracy, unmasking a hidden mastermind, or taking down a fearsome enemy of the Imperium—in other words, when the main objectives of adventures are successfully achieved. These increases represent the growing recognition of the character as a force to be reckoned with, as well as the assorted grateful allies and contacts who benefit from the Acolyte's deeds.

The GM should usually grant a modest increase in Influence to all characters who participate in completing an adventure. If the tasks involved were minor or had little impact on outside affairs, the increase might be as small a single point of Influence. For major accomplishments that shake the foundations of the sector or culminate from many previous threads coming together, an increase of as many as 10 points or more might be appropriate. In most cases, the reward should end up somewhere between these two extremes, with a typical adventure lasting several sessions granting 3 to 5 points of Influence to all participants. Characters with a particularly significant role in the adventure, or who went above and beyond the call of duty, might be awarded an additional few points, up to half again the regular reward. Rewards for a character's independent goals or actions should be about the same size as a reward for exceptional performance within an adventure.

Increased Fate Threshold

An increase in a character's Fate threshold is perhaps the most significant reward the GM can grant. Even possessing a Fate threshold sets a character apart from the majority of the teeming masses of humanity in the 41st Millennium. Increasing it represents a character's stepping into a greater destiny that could change the countless lives. In game terms, each increase in Fate threshold not only grants a character increased versatility and power through Fate points, but also effectively grants him an additional life, or at least a respite from death, through the possibility of burning the increased threshold as described on page 293.

Awarding Fate threshold should generally be reserved for the most momentous of deeds done in a campaign. It should never happen more than once every few adventures, and should generally acknowledge superlative achievements. Of course, if a GM is too reluctant to provide this sort of reward, it can cause the PCs to become much less effective, as well as more vulnerable to random death, as they burn away the points they have. It can be particularly appropriate to award Fate threshold to a character or to the PCs as a group if they took on a challenge knowing that it was likely to mortally challenge them (and therefore potentially required them to burn Fate threshold to survive).

Equipment and Resources

Some rewards can serve to increase a character's power indirectly. The Game Master can also grant the PCs access to or possession of new weapons, gear, or other material resources as a reward. Such rewards make the most sense when a character has impressed an NPC patron or ally with access to such resources, although seeking these rewards out can sometimes serve as an adventure in its own right.

Generally, resources provided as rewards should be different from those that the PCs can acquire using Influence. They could be rarer or of better make than the PCs could currently acquire, or possess histories and associations that make them status symbols. Items such as the sword wielded by a famous Lord Marshal of the Imperial Guard or a flamer blessed by an ancient Ecclesiarch makes the players care more about the reward than simply another blade or gun. The GM can take this opportunity to create unique pieces of equipment beyond those presented in **Chapter V: Armoury**, such as rare masterpieces, unusual patterns or marks of equipment, or even unheard of devices from the vaults of the Inquisition.

The Acolytes can also gain material items from the corpses of their defeated foes. GMs should take care to limit such looting though, and step in where necessary if the Acolytes perhaps take more time stripping bodies than pursuing investigations or crushing heresies. Armour might be destroyed, weapons damaged, and devices rendered useless if the GM feels their possession would hamper the campaign plans. Certain items such as xenos relics or Chaos weapons should impose other penalties to an eager Acolyte who claims one as well, which might become the basis for new adventures.

Of course, not all rewards of resources must take the form of gear. Servants or armsmen can be seconded to the PCs' command, or the Acolytes might find themselves in possession of a fortified base of operations on a given world. Having a cunningly-concealed hideout or palatial spire as a home base can provide options that no equipment can offer.

Narrative Rewards

Some rewards do not fit easily onto a character sheet. In addition to increased Characteristics or new gear, the GM can grant resources, powers, and privileges that exist in a purely narrative sense, but that are no less interesting or valuable than the other possibilities.

Information

Knowledge is power, and Inquisitors understand this better than almost anyone. Within the course of an adventure, the success or failure of the Acolytes might hinge upon their ability to acquire information. Some information they find has value for its ability to solve the problems at hand, such as the location of a suspect's hideout. Other information can provide a value entirely beyond such simple applications. The terrible secrets of powerful individuals, the True Names of Daemons, or secrets from the Dark Age of Technology can be more valuable than the entire estates of wealthy nobles. Allowing the PCs to track down or stumble across valuable secrets gives them access to a resource only limited by their ingenuity. A similar effect can be granted by providing them with access to the secret data-vaults and archives of prominent Inquisitors or powerful Imperial institutions.

Favour and Power

A PC's Influence is not simply a characteristic. It can be a powerful narrative resource, representing all manner of alliances, patronage, and favours owed. Representing a character's impact on the game can be done through the gratitude of NPCs as much as through the gifts they might give. When a hardened criminal trembles as a character announces their name, or a prominent noble grants him a title as an honorary member of his household, this can provide an effect more "real" than any measurable bonus.

To some extent, this sort of reward can simply be a change in the narrative to reflect the status of the PCs. Acknowledging their prowess and past accomplishments can provide a subtle form of reward that works as a backdrop to more overt gains. When the Game Master wants to make sure the players take notice, he can provide more specific, grand gestures. Honorary titles or medals for meritorious service or promises of future aid and repayment can work wonders after a job well done. A canny GM can draw on this to enrich future events, allowing Acolytes to untangle a sticky situation by calling in a debt or favour promised to them. This can be done via the Reinforcement system (see page 294). If the Acolytes suitably impressed an NPC, or he now owes them a large enough debt, that NPC could be transformed into a Reinforcement Character for future games. The GM can even award a Peer talent for the group involved for successful interactions with an organisation.

Consequences

In order for the game world to hold up to scrutiny, all actions must have appropriate consequences. Just as success should see the PCs granted further power and favour, failing to achieve their objectives or neglecting their duties can have dire effects. The GM should always apply punishments as consequences for their actions carefully, as the players might still be smarting from their failure or perceive the loss of what should have been rightfully theirs as a disproportionate sanction.

Removing Rewards

Sometimes, it can be appropriate to take away what was previously granted. Obviously such benefits as experience points or increases in Fate Threshold cannot be revoked in this way, but the possessions, favours, or titles granted to the PCs are often subject to the continued approval of the individual who granted them. A character who fails to live up his reputation may find that he is no longer welcome in the circles in which he formerly moved, or an angered associate might refuse to pay his debts to the PCs after a failure to honour their alliance. Equipment can sometimes be trickier to recall, as the PCs might be reluctant to let it leave their possession. However, holding on to the property of another without their consent could lead to a greater retribution than simply revoking favour.

Enemies

Just as success can draw the attention of allies and the patronage of the powerful or influential, it is possible for a dramatic failure to sour alliances or mark a character as an undesirable element. In its most mild form, this is essentially removing a previous reward, when an ally no longer trusts the PCs with whatever aid he previously provided. More extreme examples can see the PCs hunted by those they have failed, as they seek to exact restitution out of the offenders' flesh. The GM should be careful, though, about making powerful or vital authorities into enemies. If the PCs truly find themselves on the bad side of certain figures, evading the NPC's wrath might take more of the game's focus than executing their duties. In such cases, the GM should give the PCs an avenue with which to redeem themselves and restore their tarnished reputations; it is also rarely a bad idea to offer this opportunity to any NPC who has disappointed the Acolytes. Note that success can also create enemies as well, from jealous rivals to henchmen out for vengeance against those who killed their masters.

Themes and Campaigns

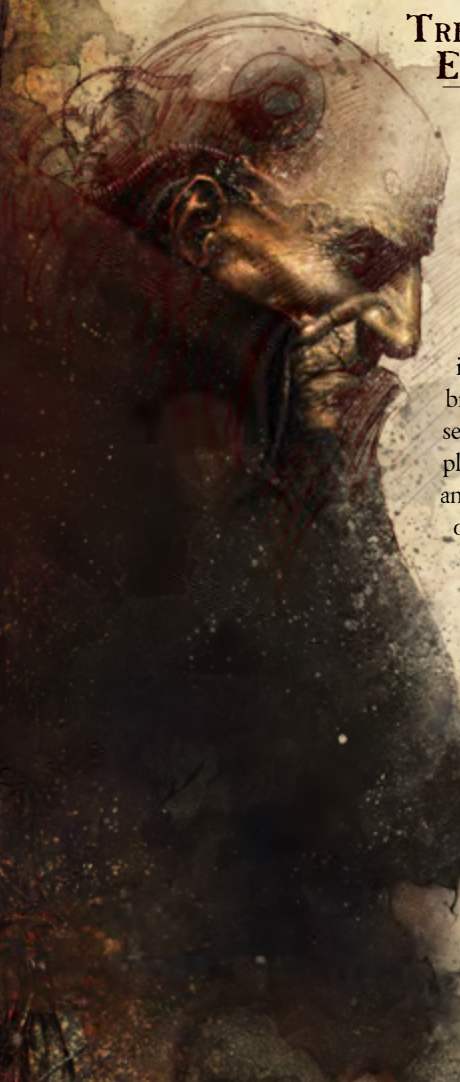
"Reason begets doubt; doubt begets heresy."

– Anon

Over the course of a warband's adventures, the Game Master should strive to keep a larger picture in mind. Dark Heresy becomes more rewarding for all players when its overarching themes are amply represented to best illustrate the *Warhammer 40,000* setting and the dreaded Inquisition in particular. Similarly, linking adventures into an ongoing campaign allows for even more depth and enjoyment for the group. A skilfully-run campaign can last for months or even years, and be fondly remembered long after its final conclusion.

Themes of Dark Heresy

When planning for a game of Dark Heresy, whether for a brief adventure or a lengthy campaign, the Game Master should keep in mind certain important themes. These concepts serve as guidelines for presenting the feeling of being present in the *Warhammer 40,000* setting in general, and the forsaken Askellon Sector in particular.



Treachery is Everywhere

A mythic betrayal marked the birth of the Imperium and laid low its architect, and countless more have followed over the millennia. Treacherous acts litter its history, be they from individuals sincerely believing they were acting in the best interests of humanity or those brutally acting only for their own selfish benefit. Factional strife plagues all levels of the Imperium and its many agencies, each certain of its correctness and holding others as suspect. Inquisitors, the final defenders of Mankind, trust no one—especially not each other.

Those GMs who wish to emphasise this theme can do so by playing up previous allegiances and also rivalries from the Acolytes' backgrounds. A fiery arch-deacon of the Ecclesiarchy and a venerated Adeptus Mechanicus Tech-Priest, as a frequently seen example, might constantly clash over religious matters with increasing tension whenever the warband deals with either organisation. NPCs might appeal to the Acolytes' loyalty to those from their earlier lives, or an Acolyte might seek to gain control over an NPC through displaying devotion to their shared service. All these and more can not only develop strife within the warband, but also open up areas for betrayal and treachery as the Acolytes delve deeper into Imperial factions. A character might find his respected ex-commander is hiding a cabal of xenos-worshippers, or that his birth world is now concealing psykers from the Black Ships. Other unrelated NPCs might profess to loyalty, but actually serve as alien thralls, profane cultists, or simply agents of their own ruthless ambitions. These NPCs should be difficult to spot, with their malice perhaps indistinguishable on the surface from the petty rivalry and obstruction the Acolytes find enclosing them on all sides.

By the same token, the Acolytes should be lucky enough to occasionally find an NPC who is worthy of their respect. Without other characters they can value, the Acolytes might find themselves questioning the worthiness of their task. Including characters of integrity amidst the sea of self-interest and treachery goes a long way to keeping the Acolytes on task, but the GM must take care not to undermine the more general themes of the campaign. After all, treachery is most reviled and devastating when it comes from an unexpected quarter.

This theme works in plots focused around the Enemy Within, where the opponent works inside the Imperium and undermines it using its own tools. Such plots do not even need to focus on outright treason, but can revolve around internal rivalry or obstruction grown to an unmanageable scale.

A Light Amidst Infinite Darkness

The Imperium is bloated edifice, stretching over countless stars and worlds across the galaxy. It is also the desperately besieged bastion of a near-doomed species, assaulted on all sides by every manner of enemy imaginable. Even the strongest Imperial holdings are surrounded by countless light-years of Wilderness Space containing an unknowable number of threats and perils, while at the same time being undermined from within by treachery, corruption, and the shirking of duty. It is this hostile, uncaring galaxy against which the PCs pit themselves. Every Acolyte is a candle lit against this tide of darkness, every Inquisitor a burning brand pushing back the endless shadows. The PCs are the Imperium's last, best line of defence against the final death of Mankind, but they can only do so much, and their fire can only burn for so long.

GMs who wish to emphasise this theme should remember that the Imperium is always in dire straits, and that what would be an apocalypse for a lesser civilisation is simply another day under the grinding gears of galactic survival. For every crisis the PCs seek out and thwart, the GM should make them aware of several others that were barely staved off or that breached the Imperium's crumbling defences. It is important to strike a balance between emphasising the desperate, doomed struggle of the Imperium's defenders, and making the actions of the PCs feel meaningful. Their efforts might buy the Mankind nothing more than a single day of respite, but the PCs should still feel like avoiding the monstrous alternative was something worth fighting for.

This theme works well with campaigns concerning the Enemy Without, such as infiltration or assault from xenos forces. Contrasting the Imperium with the inhuman prowess and hungers of its foes serves both to emphasise its desperate struggle and its value to Mankind's survival. Such threats are not only concerning physical conquest, for the xenos also taints souls and flesh. A man who begins to think as a xenos is no longer a man, and thus his soul is befouled and lost. Alien races can also taint human bodies into twisted mockeries, and contaminate entire populations without the need for overt battle.

Innocence Proves Nothing

The citizens of the Imperium are largely ignorant of anything that might resemble the truth of the galaxy. Their only instruction on such matters comes from their local preachers, shamans, and other leaders. If the general populace truly understood their precarious position in the galaxy, or the brutal necessities that are required to secure even that much for Mankind, the stability of the Imperium would collapse. However, this same ignorance that protects the Imperium makes it vulnerable. The safe falsehoods that comfort its citizens are easily supplanted with traitorous or heretical lies. Populations could be schooled that xenos are a mythical threat, leaving them ill-prepared for the reality of invasion. Such threats might draw the attention of Inquisitors, but once they are dealt with, the next foe becomes the civilians whose only crime was to bear witness to truths men are not ready to face. Death is a welcome comfort for many, their minds forever destroyed from the sight of a daemonic summoning, though an Inquisitor might obtain a new Acolyte from a soldier who managed to defeat such a foe.

GMs who wish to emphasise this theme should strive to include consequences for all the Acolytes' actions. This is not the same as punishing the Acolytes for making certain decisions, and it most definitely should not involve punishing the players for playing the game in a certain way. Instead, the GM should show that choices are not made in a vacuum. He should consider the alliances built and broken—and the methods used and avoided over the course of each adventure—and incorporate the effects of these choices into future sessions. The consequences the GM provides should follow logically from their causes and engage the players in the game, but they do not need to be the ones the Acolytes intended to bring about. Intentions do not defend the Imperium, for only resolve and action can win the day.

This theme matches plots focused around the Enemy Beyond, as Daemons and Warpcraft represent the ultimate in deception. With the power of the Warp, even the stable laws of reality can cease to be true, and perception cannot be trusted. Daemons also find it an easy matter to ensnare and bewitch the ignorant, building a profane and blasphemous cult out of the most innocuous components and unwitting accomplices. The Acolytes must oppose such efforts armed only with the truth and their own will, and hope that both can withstand the terrible and unrelenting power of Chaos.

The Inquisition

To be an Inquisitor is both a terrible burden and a mighty privilege. To those outside its shadowy ranks, from common labourers to the governors of whole systems, an Inquisitor's power is absolute and unquestionable. In theory, the mere presence of an Inquisitor or his chosen Acolytes commands immediate attention and obedience from all loyal citizens of the Imperium, and inspires terror and confusion amongst its foes. In practice, matters can be considerably more complicated.

First and foremost is the question of subtlety. For an Inquisitor or his Acolytes to claim the privileges of their station, they must announce their presence and status to those they wish to influence. Their investigations often require a lighter step than this sort of proclamation allows. Whatever could be gained through the obedience of the local authorities must be weighed against that which is lost by operating openly. For this reason, many Acolytes might find it advantageous not to reveal their presence or allegiance.

Even once an Inquisitor or Acolyte has revealed himself, the question of his relative power must be considered. Few arrive on a world with entire battlefleets and armies at their disposal, especially warbands of mere Acolytes. Acolytes must use the respect and authority of their Inquisitor, which has both less and more power than massive brute force. While Inquisitorial power is infinite and unquestionable, an Acolyte who acts irresponsibly or recklessly might find resources drying up and local authorities lacking in enthusiastic cooperation. He might also cause embarrassment to his Inquisitor, and find his own Influence lessened, as well as possible punishments from his master. While an Inquisitor has the power to burn a world, one who does this too often might find himself the target of other Inquisitors. Power is a tool, and those who use it improperly can find both themselves and it diminished, no matter their station.

However, an Inquisitor or Acolyte cunning enough to bring the power of his office to bear successfully can find no better tool in all the Imperium. Those he calls upon are driven by fear and awe in equal measure, and he finds no gate barred to him. This sort of authority can be a nightmare for the GM if he does not impose subtle limits on such power. For example, a GM must always take the possibility of the Acolytes dragooning up a planet's worth of aid into account when designing an adventure. Such approaches are rarely effective, except when facing equally blunt foes, and these cases are more suited to the Imperial Guard or Adeptus Astartes. Inquisitors and their Acolytes investigate and determine guilt; they might call on greater forces to defeat the foe unrevealed, but this is more the capstone to an adventure than the basis for one. Calling on such forces each time the Acolytes face a foe can result in desultory responses and lessened respect (and Influence). Matching enemies with appropriate force, or ideally using less force to cleverly defeat puissant enemies, is the mark of the truly powerful and a successful Inquisitorial warband.

Using Inquisitors

Chapter II: Character Creation reveals there is no "Inquisitor" character role. This is entirely intentional, as Inquisitors can come from any world, background, or profession without concern for any factor but their ruthless determination and indomitable will. In theory, any Player Character can become an Inquisitor. However, it is generally a good idea for the GM to talk this matter over with the players and determine which, if any, characters should operate in this capacity. Guidelines for handling the most common arrangements are detailed below.

No Players as Inquisitors

Sometimes, no players wish to take on the role of an Inquisitor, or they may not be able to agree as to who should serve in the role. A new GM might also be uncomfortable with placing such unchecked power in the hands of the players. In such circumstances, the players can all create Acolytes serving an NPC Inquisitor. This approach gives the GM more direct control over how adventures are chosen, as the Acolytes can be sent to investigate or engage threats at the will of their master.

Such warbands do not wield the same sort of power and authority as those that are led directly by an Inquisitor, and might not inspire the same fear and awe in NPCs. However, their limited authority should also allow them to keep a lower profile. Adventures for groups without an Inquisitor often focus on investigation or political manoeuvring, as they may lack the clout to go after their enemies directly.



One Player as Inquisitor

While it might seem natural for one player to take on the role of Inquisitor and the others to play the Acolytes of his warband, the GM should be careful about setting up a game of this style. This format can provide great narrative potential, but it can also be disruptive to the group if the Inquisitor's player receives too much attention or assumes his authority translates to dictatorial control over the other Acolytes. The GM should take care to give each player a chance to hold the spotlight, no matter his role in the game. It is also important for the GM to impress the importance of cooperation upon the player of the Inquisitor, so that his authority does not become an issue for others. It cannot be stated enough that Dark Heresy, for all the horror of its settings and insane nature, is a game where all the players are united to have an enjoyable time, and it is foremost on the GM to ensure this occurs.

If the GM can manage the group dynamic for this sort of game, though, he should be able to run almost any sort of adventure with ease. The lone Inquisitor and his loyal warband is a powerful icon of *Warhammer 40,000*, and can be brought into all manner of stories and scenarios.

Multiple Players as Inquisitors

An all-Inquisitor game is perhaps the most unusual way to run Dark Heresy, but it is far from unmanageable. The biggest concern for this sort of group dynamic is one of motivation. The GM must be able to provide reasons for so many normally solitary individuals to work together, and to remain together over time. This can also hold true for multiple Inquisitors in a warband, especially in which allegiances each Acolyte owes to which Inquisitor.

Typically, such groups are placed in direct, dire conflicts. One of the easiest ways to justify a large gathering of Inquisitors is to provide threats of such magnitude that they could not be otherwise opposed. A campaign for multiple Inquisitors is likely to end up shaking the foundations of the sector and beyond.

Alone Amongst the Stars

While the Inquisition is incredibly powerful, its reach is sorely limited by the availability of Inquisitors. Many threats to the Imperium rise up and devour worlds without ever being opposed, and many more are barely turned aside by the desperate actions of an outnumbered and outmatched warband of Acolytes. If there are even a handful of Inquisitors or Acolytes in a given sector, then it is well-protected indeed. That there could be enough Inquisitors in an area that they would unwittingly cross paths is highly unlikely.

What this means for the Game Master is that the PCs are almost always going to be the only available servants of the Inquisition involved in a given threat. It is fully possible that the Acolytes are not even aware of an Inquisitor outside their master, and they should certainly not be able to call freely on such individuals for backup. Entire campaigns can be completed without involving other Inquisitors, and if such encounters do occur, they should be rare and significant. Meetings between Inquisitors do not occur by luck or coincidence, but because some dire need has forced them to seek each other out, or because their different philosophies lead them into conflict. In most cases, those NPC Inquisitors would prefer to deal with such threats without sharing their authority, and might view Acolytes who need to call on their aid as unworthy of serving them.

Linking Adventures

Many different elements can be used to tie adventures together. Common links including recurring allies or enemies, or return visits to the sites of previous adventures. Effective use of such repeating elements relies on keeping them familiar, but also on having them change and grow in response to the Acolytes' actions and the events of the campaign. When the PCs return to the site where they confronted a terrible threat to a hive city, the GM could include a monument to their battle, if not to them personally. They might have new allies from the NPCs who fought with them as well. This sort of detail adds both verisimilitude and a personal stake, making them very valuable tools. After all, few things motivate player investment in a campaign as much as a threat to a favourite character or location, making these excellent catalysts for adventures. It also allows the GM to introduce new areas for the location, or deepen the details; even the least of hab blocks has enough detail for several encounters, and a hive city could easily sustain multiple campaigns with the billions of possible heretics, conspiracies, and dire threats that populate its endless levels.

It can also help to have less obvious links tie a campaign together. A single, shadowy menace can link the lesser villains of several adventures, such as a particular cult, a highly-placed traitor, or even a rival Inquisitor and his warband. A campaign could be devoted to unmasking a single such enemy, or protecting the Imperium from the fallout between two warring menaces. Shadowy figures need not always be enemies, either—a hidden patron can be an excellent source of adventures and information, even if never wholly trusted. Giving signs of a hidden link between adventures can be as subtle as a common architectural motif on the affected worlds, indicating a shared builder, or it can be somewhat plainer, such as similarly coded missives from an anonymous source.

Ending a Campaign

It can be tempting to continue a Dark Heresy campaign indefinitely. Such efforts are vulnerable, though, to slowly flagging interest or the demands of life outside the group. It is often better for the GM to plan an eventual ending point for a campaign, to tie things off and provide a feeling of closure. This ending can be planned from the start of the campaign and tied in with the events of the very first adventure, or it can arise from circumstances during later sessions. Even if the GM has no plans for an ending, he might wish to create some if it looks likely that the campaign might end for other reasons, such as a key player moving away.

Creating the ending is a chance to make something truly grand and memorable. The warband's final adventure should draw on their most important past missions and memories, and have them face consequences from their past actions. It should pit them against a past nemesis, or a new one created by a past failure. Acolytes are rarely granted a chance to retire, and so this ending can be a chance for a heroic death against unstoppable odds. It might climax with stunning victory, and the players all becoming Inquisitors themselves, certainly an epic ending and a perfect place for them to retire their existing characters and create new ones. Above all else, the ending of a campaign should be something the players are going to remember and relate in stories long after the campaign is done.

Example Game Master Sheet

The **Game Master Sheet** (see page 446) is a useful aid for GMs during game play and also between sessions. It contains information on the warband's Inquisitor, which the GM can use when the Acolytes interact with their master. The sheet also includes data on the Acolytes themselves, useful for when the GM needs to make secret tests for the Player Characters.

He can also use this to track the warband's Subtlety, and it has space for notes on upcoming encounters, the warband's current physical and metal status, and other useful information.

The Fantasy Flight Games website (fantasyflightgames.com) has downloadable PDF versions which can be digitally edited, as well along with other game aids.

Information about the warband's Inquisitor here, to help the GM when the Inquisitor interacts with the Acolytes and directs the warband.

Here the GM can record basic data for each member of the warband.

The warband's Subtlety is tracked along this bar for visual reference.



Inquisitor Name: Evangelyne Karlzan

Home World: Shrine World
Background: Adeptus Ministorum
Role: Sage

Influence: 83
Ordo: Malleus

Origin: Native of Ossuar
Rogue Psyker; Escaped Black Ships
Highly Devout but Radical, Xanthite

Player name: Anna
Character name: Sophronia
Home World: Hive World
Background: Adeptus Administratum
Role: Mystic
Elite Advances: Psyker
Notes: Rogue Psyker. Warband Leader
(Per) 28 (WP) 47 (Ifl) 38

Player name: Kate
Character name: Jannasi ("Nasi")
Home World: Highborn
Background: Outcast
Role: Desperado
Elite Advances:
Notes: Desoleum native
(Per) 31 (WP) 38 (Ifl) 42

Player name:
Character name:
Home World:
Background:
Role:
Elite Advances:
Notes:
(Per) (WP) (Ifl)

100 100
x 52
50 50
0 0
Subtlety Track

Player name: Tim
Character name: Lazrus
Home World: Voidborn
Background: Adeptus Ministorum
Role: Hierophant
Elite Advances:
Notes: Obsessed about his ship's key
(Per) 33 (WP) 89 (Ifl) 31

Player name: Max
Character name: Isen
Home World: Feral World
Background: Adeptus Mechanicum
Role: Seeker
Elite Advances:
Notes: Novice Tech-Priest
(Per) 43 (WP) 31 (Ifl) 33

Player name:
Character name:
Home World:
Background:
Role:
Elite Advances:
Notes:
(Per) (WP) (Ifl)

Warband Notes: Tracking down Spook dealer
Clues should lead them to dealer's room
Dealer already dead from spook overdose

Remember Jannasi has Keen Intuition!
Isen still follows native customs, wears ancestral bones under his mechanicum robes
Sophronia is warband leader, but defers to Lazrus for combat tactics
Jannasi is secretly an obscura addict

Two groups already aware of their actions:
-Associates of dealer, who saw them asking around about him earlier
-Undercover Sanctionary, who suspects they are rival spook dealers and possibly behind the string of recent deaths

Inquisitor is worried over spook outbreak
-She saw first-hand what psyker eruption looks like from Black Ship incident that lead to her freedom

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In these spaces, the GM can record any information about the current sessions, warband activities, how the Inquisitor is viewing the warband's progress, or anything else that can help run the game.



Chapter XII: NPCs and Adversaries

In the course of a Dark Heresy game, the Acolytes are sure to encounter a wide variety of Non-Player Characters (NPCs), from lowly hab-scum to powerful planetary rulers. NPCs can also range from inhuman xenos bent on eradicating mankind to unholy Daemons hungering for mortal souls. The responsibility for portraying these multitudes falls to the Game Master. Breathing life into the various NPCs that populate the 41st Millennium can be a difficult task, but also quite satisfying.

The NPCs presented in this chapter include full game profiles as well as background information, to give the Game Master an idea of how he can include them in his own adventures and campaigns. Game Masters should of course also feel free to adapt these for their own unique settings, or use them as the basis for fresh creations.

While many of the abilities and gear NPCs possess are primarily relevant during combat, many of these characters can and should be encountered on friendly, or at least non-hostile, terms. In particular, the NPCs detailed in the Imperial Servants and Citizens section can be potential informants, allies, or rivals for the Acolytes, or simply bystanders and incidental characters there to help immerse the players in the world of Dark Heresy. Of course, as all Acolytes soon learn, no one can be trusted, and each scribe or furnace worker is a potential traitor and foe.

Here the Game Master can find an assortment of NPCs based around Hive Desoleum, one of the main settings in the Askellon Sector for Dark Heresy. This chapter is only a beginning, and GMs are encouraged to create new and unique NPCs for their games. GMs should feel free to modify the NPCs presented here, or use them as a starting point for their own creatures and characters. The equipment and weapons listed in an NPC's profile are typical for such individuals, but certainly not exclusive; NPCs can carry whatever equipment the GM deems appropriate for the situation and the needs of his game.

Building and Balancing Encounters

"If a man can be judged by the quality and number of his foes, then I am indeed a great man."

–General Throm Percevus, Desoleum Oathsmen Grenadiers

Combat is an important and exciting component of Dark Heresy, but it is not always easy to ensure encounters are challenging for the players, without overwhelming their characters. This section covers the rules for NPCs and adversaries, including combat encounter building, so that GMs can build appropriately exciting confrontations for his players.

Using NPCs

NPCs are the characters in the game that the players do not control. The GM instead controls all NPCs, determining their actions and making their rolls for them. Much like PCs, NPCs possess characteristics, skills, talents, weapon, armour, and gear. Each NPC also has a type; this determines the importance of the NPC, and alters his rules slightly. Note that NPCs are always assumed to have whatever weapon training is needed to use the weapons they possess; if the GM changes their weapon selections, this still holds true. If, however, an NPC gains another new weapon (perhaps one of the Acolytes gifted a valued aide with a new sniper rifle), the GM should determine whether the NPC knows how to use it properly or suffers the untrained weapon penalty.

NPC Types

NPCs in Dark Heresy are divided into three broad types. An NPC's type is specified alongside its name in its profile.

Troop

Troops are the lowly characters and minor combatants encountered throughout a campaign. Alone, they are unlikely to be a large threat to the PCs and are usually simple pawns in a larger, more sinister plan. Troops operate under the following special rules:



- **Unimportant:** Troops cannot benefit from Righteous Fury in their attacks. If the GM and players also so desire, all hits against them can strike the Body location to speed game play.
- **Spectacular Demise:** Troop characters are instantly killed or incapacitated upon receiving any Critical damage.

Elite

Elites are nearly an even match for a Player Character, whether it be on the battlefield or in a duel of wits. Elite characters operate much like PCs, and can benefit from the Righteous Fury rules.

Master

Masters are incredibly dangerous individuals. They are formidable combatants, consummate leaders, and brilliant planners. Masters operate like Elites, but also have the following special rule:

- **Extraordinary Characteristics:** Master characters can have characteristics that exceed 100. These behave like regular characteristics; however, when determining the characteristic bonus of a characteristic over 100, both the tens and hundreds digit are used. For example, a character with Strength 113 would have a Strength bonus of 11.

NPC Profiles

NPC statistics are presented in condensed profiles that make them easy to use and reference. Each profile contains the following elements, as shown on the example NPC profile on page 381.

1 Name and Type

The NPC's unique name and his type (Troop, Elite, or Master).

2 Wounds

The NPC's number of wounds.

3 Characteristics

NPCs use the same characteristics as PCs, though only exceptional NPCs such as Masters have an Influence characteristic. When the characteristic bonus is not simply the tens digit of the characteristic, such as when the NPC has an Unnatural Characteristic trait, the total characteristic bonus is listed at the upper right.

4 Hit Locations and Armour

Every NPC has a chart that shows its Hit Locations. Each is represented by a box that shows several pieces of information:

A. **Hit Location Type:** This is either the head (H), body (B), right arm (AR), left arm (LR), right leg (LR), or left leg (LL) as indicated on the left side of the box.

B. **Armour Points:** The amount of Armour protecting a Hit Location is specified in a small box centred in the top of each Hit Location box. This is already factored into the total defence value, but is present for GM reference.

C. **Additional Defence Bonuses:** If the NPC gains additional defence from sources other than Armour, this total number of extra defence is printed here. This is already factored into the total defence value, but is present for GM reference.

D. **Total Defence Value:** The total defence value of each location is given here, and includes Toughness bonus, Armour, and any other bonuses.

E. **Hit Location Value:** Reverse the ones and tens digits of an attack roll to determine the Hit Location (see page 226).

Sample Hit Location Box



The majority of NPCs are humanoid, and use the same Hit Locations as PCs. However, some NPCs may have locations in their profiles that differ from humanoid Hit Locations. When determining Hit Locations on these NPCs, the attacker compares the reversed tens and ones digits of his attack roll to the values presented in that NPC's Hit Location boxes.

5 Movement

The NPC's Movement values for Half, Full, Charge, and Run distances in metres.

6 Threat Level

This represents how dangerous the NPC is. For more information on threat levels, see **Building Combat Encounters** on page 382.

7 Weapons

Any weapons the NPC normally carries, along with weapon profiles. For ease of use, these integrate the NPC's Strength bonus, psy rating, or other values into the weapon's statistics where applicable, completing any calculations that need to be done and collapsing it into one result. The original equation to determine that result is shown as a superscript after the number. The GM can use the superscripted equation to determine whether a change in characteristic bonus affects the weapon in any way, or to allow a different character to use the weapon.

Example

The Malatant's great weapon has a damage entry of 2d10+5^{SB} (R). When attacking with this NPC, the GM ignores the superscript "SB," rolling 21d10 and adding 5 to determine the damage total. However, if it dies and a PC takes the weapon, that PC uses the superscript section of the entry to determine the damage. The PC ignores the number underneath the superscript, rolling 2d10 and adding that to his own Strength bonus to determine the damage total.

All NPCs, except for creatures that use their own natural weapons and those stated otherwise, are assumed to also have a knife or some other basic combat blade. GMs should not feel limited to just these items though, and add or exchange other weapons as desired to best fit his adventure and current setting. A Rogue Trader who recently completed a trade with Eldar Corsairs could arrive at Hive Desoleum sporting twin shuriken pistols, for example, or a cult Preceptor might be wielding a plaguesword gifted to him after a successful daemonic ritual.

It is assumed that all NPCs have adequate ammunition for any weapons they are carrying, and the GM is not required to track this. However, if a GM wishes to track an NPC's ammunitions, it is assumed that each NPC possesses two clips of ammo for each weapon he is carrying.

Acolytes can have many opportunities to salvage weapons from felled NPCs, but must have the corresponding Weapon Training talent in order to use them without penalty. Weapons from non-human races, and those that lack Armoury entries, should count as Exotic unless otherwise specified, though the GM should also feel free to apply this to specialised or unique Imperial weapons that are far beyond an Acolyte's experience.

8 Skills, Talents, and Traits

Any skills the NPC has training in, along with the standard characteristic to be used for testing with this skill and a numerical modifier indicating his proficiency in that skill. Any talents NPCs possess, along with traits for particularly inhuman NPCs, are also shown here. Note that NPCs can have talents and traits without having the listed prerequisites a PC would need to possess them.

9 Gear

The NPC's standard gear including armour, though like weapons the GM can add or exchange items as desired. Gear can also be looted from slain NPCs, though the GM has final say on any salvage efforts. He might rule that a suit of armour is too damaged to be worn again, or a device was struck in combat and ruined.

10 Special Abilities

Any special abilities or rules the NPC possesses are described here.

Psychic Powers

Where applicable, any psychic powers the NPC possesses are also listed in its profile.

Sample NPC Profile



Skills: Athletics (S) +20, Survival (Per) +10 8
Talents: Crushing Blow, Iron Jaw
Traits: Size (5)
Gear: Scavenged flak armour, gruesome trophies 9
Smash to the Ground: Whenever a malatant strikes with an attack, the target also suffers 1d5+5 Agility damage. 10

Creative Wound Interpretation

With some particularly alien creatures, the configuration of their Hit Locations can differ greatly from those of a normal, human Player Character. Because of this, certain results from the Critical Effect tables might not seem quite as thematically appropriate for that particular NPC. When this happens, the GM has two choices:

- Increase the severity of the Critical Effect until the effect is something thematically appropriate for the Hit Location receiving the wound.
- Create an imaginative description for how the seemingly inappropriate Critical Effect result affects the character.

Building Combat Encounters

Each combat encounter should feel like a unique experience that challenges the PCs, but does not overwhelm them. This can be a difficult goal for the GM to meet, and many campaigns have ended with boring, easy encounters (or one far-too-challenging encounter). When preparing and building encounters for a game session, there are many factors that a GM must keep in mind to maintain this careful balance and sense of variety: the encounter's raw difficulty, the mix of NPCs involved, the environment surrounding the encounter, and the pacing of all of the encounters the warband has engaged in throughout the session.

Encounter Levels

Just as a Player Character's spent experience reflects his growth and power, a combat encounter has a level that indicates its difficulty and danger to the players. When a GM starts building an encounter, he calculates the encounter level according to the strength of the Acolytes. He then uses that number to determine the threat threshold, which recommends the number and power of enemy NPCs to provide the optimal challenge to his players.

To determine an encounter level, average the spent experience of all the PCs (adding together their aggregate spent xp and dividing by the total number of PCs in the warband). This usually offers the best balance between challenge and difficulty. However, it is recommended that the GM occasionally use encounters that are either one level above or below the PCs to add some variety to the game.

Threat Threshold

The threat threshold is a number that offers a guideline for the maximum number and strength of NPCs that should be included in an encounter. To determine the threat threshold for an encounter, use the encounter level on **Table 12–1: Threat Threshold** above to determine the multiplier (ranging from 4 to 35) to use with the total number of PCs in the warband. The result is the threat threshold value, which should be modified as needed should the Acolytes have NPC allies aiding them or other factors working for or against them.

Table 12–1: Threat Threshold

Encounter Level	Threat Threshold
0—499 xp	4 x Number of PCs in warband
500—999 xp	5 x Number of PCs in warband
1000—1299 xp	6 x Number of PCs in warband
1300—2299 xp	7 x Number of PCs in warband
2300—4499 xp	8 x Number of PCs in warband
4500—6999 xp	10 x Number of PCs in warband
7000—9999 xp	12 x Number of PCs in warband
10,000—13,499 xp	14 x Number of PCs in warband
13,500—17,499 xp	17 x Number of PCs in warband
17,500—21,999 xp	20 x Number of PCs in warband
22,000—26,999 xp	23 x Number of PCs in warband
27,000—30,999 xp	27 x Number of PCs in warband
31,000—35,999 xp	31 x Number of PCs in warband
36,000+ xp	35 x Number of PCs in warband

Using Threat Threshold

Once the threat threshold has been determined for an encounter, the GM can start creating the encounter by gathering NPCs to participate in it. As the GM adds NPCs to an encounter, he adds together all of their threat values as per the entry in their profile. Ideally, the combined total of the threat values in the encounter should equal the threat threshold. However, this is often difficult to accomplish. If the total threat value of an encounter exceeds the predetermined threat threshold by a large amount, the GM should consider recalculating the encounter level.

Balancing Encounters

Creating entertaining, balanced encounters goes far beyond simply choosing NPCs that will be an equal match for the PCs on the battlefield. The variety of NPCs in the combat encounter, the hazards of the surrounding environment, and the number of combat encounters the PCs have already participated in all contribute to a memorable encounter.

Composition

The level of an encounter gives a good abstraction of its power level, but what NPCs are chosen (and in what quantities) is what truly determines an encounter's potency. Additionally, the adversaries chosen can have a large effect on how long it takes the encounter to resolve. The following are several elements GMs should keep in mind when choosing NPCs for an encounter:

- **Variety:** Encounters should have a mix of the different NPC types of NPCs. An encounter with all Troops can result in a short and unsatisfying fight, while an encounter with only Elites and Masters can be incredibly challenging for the PCs, and tedious for the GM to track. A typical encounter should have roughly 1-3 Elites and Masters, with the rest of the threat threshold being filled in with Troops.
- **Appropriate Adversaries:** When choosing NPCs for an encounter, the GM should try to use NPCs appropriate for the PCs' current rank. Pitting a high-threat Master against a low-ranking group or many low-threat Troops against a high-ranking group can result in frustrating encounters for both the PCs and GM, with neither enjoying the game.
- **Changing Pace:** When creating an encounter, the GM should consider the encounters the warband has already faced, as well as the encounters they will face in the future. Each encounter should be composed a bit differently to change the pace of the adventures and keep the PCs on their toes.

Combat Circumstances

Fighting in sterile, featureless environments can become boring, and should be avoided unless it is intrinsic to the setting. An excellent way for GMs to create memorable encounters is to use the combat circumstances (see page 229) to create interesting tactical situations that stand out from other encounters. Describing a richly-varied combat setting also serves as an excellent way to get players ready for the fight. Following are several examples of how to integrate combat circumstances into encounters to create more variety:

- **Cover:** This can be anything from dense flora and overturned crates to tank wreckage and rockcrete barricades, and is always an excellent way to add a challenge to a fight. These provide tactical strongpoints for the characters, and each item can make for a major turning point in the combat's narrative.
- **Darkness and Shadow:** Dim or uncertain lighting can allow all manner of creatures to slither or creep about undetected. It can also make for difficulty in identifying friend from foe when the lasbolts start flying.
- **Difficult Terrain:** This can be swampland and snowfields, or limited areas such as a fresh crater. Such terrain slows down characters who rely on speed, and forces them to plan out their attack, or risk becoming an easy target.
- **Fog, Mist, and Smoke:** These can be tactically interesting, as they can shift during the combat, possibly changing to alter the tempo of the fight when needed. A character cannot rely on them to provide constant obscurity, as a rising wind can suddenly leave him exposed.
- **Higher Ground:** Charging up or down a hill provides for exciting combat scenes, but clever Acolytes can also exploit gravity to roll heavy objects down on their foes, for example. Higher ground can also include cliffs, pits, and other areas where one false step can result in a terrible fall.
- **Weather:** Fierce winds, acidic rains, and other intense weather can befoul all combatants with persistent or sudden effects, and can turn a simple fight into a dangerous survival situation. These could also include showers of ash from a volcanic eruption, or toxic dust after a nearby reactor explodes.

Most combat circumstances apply evenly to both the PCs and the NPCs in an encounter. However, when a combat circumstance hinders one group while benefiting the other, the GM might want to adjust the threat threshold of the encounter to account for the imbalance. Adding or subtracting the equivalent of half a PC from the threat threshold usually adequately compensates for an advantage from combat circumstances.

Pacing

Most characters can only take so much punishment before they are too injured or exhausted to keep fighting. The GM should carefully consider the number and difficulty of the combat encounters the PCs will face before they get a chance to rest and heal. Ideally, the PCs should feel pushed to the edge of their capabilities, challenged but not overwhelmed. Much like encounter building itself, pacing encounters throughout a session or adventure is more of an art than a science.

Usually, a group of Acolytes can handle one of the following sets of encounters before needing to rest:

- Three encounters 1 level below the warband's average spent xp value.
- Two encounters 1 level below the group's average spent xp value and one encounter equal to the group's value.
- Two encounters equal to the group's average spent xp value.
- One encounter 1 level below the group's average spent xp value and one encounter 1 level above the group's value.

Measuring Pacing

The guidelines for pacing given above are very rough estimates, and can vary greatly from group to group. A GM can also measure how much more punishment his group can take in a day by observing the PCs' overall health. Damage and levels of Fatigue are good indicators of how much more the PCs can handle before they collapse. If multiple Acolytes are suffering from unhealed injuries or Critical damage effects, for example, the group should not be pitted against any further truly threatening adversaries; certain planned encounters might need also to be weakened or skipped. Conversely, if the warband survives unscathed and unharmed after multiple combats, upcoming encounters might need to be strengthened to provide more of a challenge.

Group Variance

Each player group is different. One warband may focus on making skilled investigators, negotiators, and thinkers, while another might be composed entirely of deadly fighters. Because of this great variance between parties, there is no sure way to tell what encounters will be a true challenge to what group. Because of this, the rules for creating encounters should act as guidelines to Game Masters, rather than hard-and-fast rules.

It is up the GM to observe his group and determine how strong he feels they are in combat encounters. He can then adjust the encounter rank or threat threshold based on his observations. This can change as characters grow in experience and acquire new abilities, so the GM must be constantly aware of how much he is challenging his players, and keep an entertaining balance.

Hive Desoleum

"Look upon the crowd below and know this—for each honest and Emperor-fearing citizen, another harbours discontent and the seed of treachery in his heart. For every two such malcontents, a third plots against his betters. Out of each hundred such plotters, one has the resolve to act. Now realise this—Hive Desoleum is home to billions. How many, then, are there all around us, ready to drag this place into oblivion?"

–Overheard along a midhive habway, from persons unknown

Desoleum is one of the most ancient planets in the Askellon Sector, and Hive Desoleum its oldest and largest hive. The population of Hive Desoleum is impossible to accurately quantify, for the sheer scale of the hive, the communication difficulties between the various authorities, and the dangers of hive life ensure that only broad estimates are possible. This is compounded if one considers who or what populates the Gorges, those foul depths beyond even the lawless Underhive areas.

Most of the NPCs described below are inhabitants of Hive Desoleum. The hive is massive, though, and its size and age ensure that anything like a uniform culture is impossible. What is considered a polite gesture of greeting in one hab block, for example, could be seen as a grave insult worthy of violence in another.

Imperial Servants and Citizens

"Every man is a spark in the darkness. By the time he is noticed, he is gone forever. A retinal after-image that fades and is obscured by newer, brighter lights."

–Anon

The Askellon Sector is home to billions upon billions of souls. Each Imperial citizen has a duty to fulfil in service to the Imperium, yet not all are content with their lot in life. In order to prosecute their investigations and missions, Acolytes must interact with a wide range of Imperial society, from chem-addled dregs to mighty Rogue Traders. Some of these individuals gladly offer assistance, while others oppose the Acolytes through machinations, obstruction, and direct violence. Hive Desoleum alone is home to billions of people, and each day thousands of travellers pass through Port Gyre and the other surrounding ports, as well as the private landing pads of the Apex nobility. A wise Acolyte soon learns that each person is a potential heretic, and trust is a luxury for the foolish.

The Law of Desoleum

In a hive of billions, the rule of law is of paramount importance. It is law and order that separate the industrious Main Hive from the savage Gorges. Justice must be harsh and unforgiving, for to be otherwise invites the innumerable masses to forsake their oaths, and thereby condemn the hive to death. Numerous laws define various degrees of oath violation and provide guidance on punishment, but the final decision is left to the oath-keeper in many cases. Common citizens have no recourse should their oath-holder believe them guilty of a crime against him, hence many accused flee to the anarchic Underhive, despite their innocence.

Adeptus Arbites Arbitrator

The Adeptus Arbites is the unflinching arm of Imperial justice, meting out the Emperor's final judgment. The Arbitrators that watch over Hive Desoleum are stern men and women of unyielding resolve, zealous in their enforcement of Imperium's code of laws. They have no interest in enforcing petty hive laws such as theft or murder. However, should a crime threaten the Imperial tithe or involve even the lowest-ranked servant of the Adeptus Terra, it becomes a crime against the Imperium, and thus a matter for the Arbitrators to handle with their signature brutality.

Adeptus Arbites Arbitrator (Elite) 13

H 5 01-10 9		
Ar 5 11-20 9		Al 5 21-30 9
	B 5 31-70 9	
Lr 5 71-85 9		Ll 5 86-00 9

WS	BS	S
44	34	33
T	**Ag**	**Int**
48	31	30
Per	**Wp**	**Fel**
38	33	28
Ifl		
—		

Half 3 | Full 6 | Charge 9 | Run 18 | Threat 8

Shotgun — Class Basic

Rng 30m | RoF S/–/– | Dmg 1d10+4 (I)

Pen 0 | Clip 8 | Rld 2 Full | Wt 5 Kg | Avl Av

Special: Scatter

Shock Maul — Class Melee

Rng — | RoF — | Dmg 1d10+6[3+SB] (I)

Pen 0 | Clip — | Rld — | Wt 2.5 Kg | Avl SC

Special: Shocking

Stun Grenades (3) — Class Thrown

Dmg — | Pen 0 | Wt .5 Kg | Avl CM

Special: Blast (3), Concussive (2)

Skills: Athletics (S), Awareness (Per) +10, Common Lore (Underworld) (Int) +20, Dodge (Ag), Inquiry (Fel) +10, Interrogation (WP) +10, Intimidate (S) +10

Talents: Combat Master, Resistance (Fear), True Grit

Gear: Enforcer light carapace armour, helmet with integral photo-visor and micro-bead, manacles, respirator

Pursuit of Justice: The Arbitrator counts his Agility bonus as 2 higher (giving Movement values of 5/10/15/30) for the purpose of determining movement distance when he is chasing or moving towards a character whom he views as a criminal.

Desoleum Bounty Hunter

In Hive Desoleum, bounty hunters do not hunt men—for a man is inconsequential and easily replaced. Rather, they hunt oaths. Fundamentally, the commission of a crime is a violation of a citizen's oath to hive and master. Should a citizen compound his offence by fleeing justice, he takes with him his yet-unfulfilled oath. It is the job of oath hunters to track and return them to complete their service—possibly as a servitor. Though the practice is highly frowned upon, some oath hunters take the oath-cogs of their most notable hunts as trophies, creating a bureaucratic nightmare for oatherseers.

Desoleum Bounty Hunter (Elite) 12

H	AR	AL	B	LR	LL
4 (1) 01-10	6 (3) 11-20	6 (3) 21-30	6 (3) 31-70	6 (3) 71-85	6 (3) 86-00

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	Wp	Fel	Ifl
37	47	32	38	48	30	35	31	26	—

Half	Full	Charge	Run	Threat
4	8	12	24	8

Hand Cannon — Class Pistol

Rng	RoF	Dmg	Pen	Clip	Rld	Wt	Avl
35m	S/–/–	1d10+4 (I)	5	5	2 Full	3 kg	SC

Special: –

Chainsword — Class Melee

Rng	RoF	Dmg	Pen	Clip	Rld	Wt	Avl
—	—	1d10+5[2+SB] (R)	2	—	—	6 kg	AV

Special: *Balanced, Tearing*

Skills: Athletics (S), Awareness (Per) +10, Common Lore (Underworld) (Int) +10, Deceive (Fel), Dodge (Ag) +10, Inquiry (Fel) +10, Interrogation (WP), Intimidate (S) +10, Scrutiny (Per), Survival (Per) +10

Talents: Hard Target, Quick Draw, Takedown

Gear: Combat armour, bounty hunter license, 1 clip of manstopper bullets (included in the profile above), 3 doses of stimm, manacles, respirator, stylish overcoat, oath-cog

Ruthless: The bounty hunter inflicts an additional 2 damage on successful attacks made against characters with the Prone or Stunned conditions

Sanctioned Bondsman of the Oaths Involute

The Enforcers of Desoleum's laws are the Sanctioned Bondsmen of the Oaths Involute, more commonly known simply as the Sanctionaries. An institution of hive government, they are responsible for enforcing the laws of Hive Desoleum. In practice, however, the Sanctionaries work primarily to protect the varied interests of the Consortium.

Sanctionaries are largely callous and cold-hearted individuals, at best seeing the enforcement of the law as simply a day's work, or at worst as an exercise in abusing power. Due to the influence of the Consortium and the wealth that constantly flows through Hive Desoleum, they are well-equipped for local Enforcers, though not so well as the Adeptus Arbites. Most Sanctionaries have surprisingly little experience in combating the violent gangs of Desoleum, as this task is usually relegated to the bonded gangs in service to the Consortium. Likewise, they know not to interfere in the proxy wars these gangs wage on behalf of the Consortium.

Some Sanctionaries are too idealistic to stand for this status quo, and may even disobey their superiors in order to see justice done. These noble individuals seldom last long, as they are either swiftly disabused of their illusions, or else tragically killed in the line of duty.

Sanctionary (Troop) 10

H	AR	AL	B	LR	LL
7 (4) 01-10	7 (4) 11-20	7 (4) 21-30	7 (4) 31-70	7 (4) 71-85	7 (4) 86-00

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	Wp	Fel	Ifl
32	33	33	34	31	34	37	29	31	—

Half	Full	Charge	Run	Threat
3	6	9	18	5

Autopistol — Class Pistol

Rng	RoF	Dmg	Pen	Clip	Rld	Wt	Avl
30m	S/–/6	1d10+2 (I)	0	18	1 Full	1.5 kg	AV

Special: –

Skills: Awareness (Per) +20, Common Lore (Underworld) (Int), Inquiry (Fel), Navigate (Int), Scrutiny (Per) +10, Tech-Use (Int)

Talents: Disarm, Iron Jaw, Keen Intuition, Takedown

Gear: Sanctionary armoured uniform, manacles, micro-bead, respirator, detachable oath-cog (can be used as a truncheon)

Dispassionate: All skill tests made to socially interact with the Sanctionary suffer a –20 penalty.



The Lawless of Desoleum

Amongst the teeming billions of Hive Desoleum, it is inevitable that some will be unsatisfied with merely fulfilling their oaths through honest service to their betters, as is ordained by the rightful bearers of the Emperor's Will. These misguided souls violate the edicts of Desoleum law, in their attempts to gain personal wealth and power. From petty thugs and cutpurses to powerful crime barons who command legions of lesser recidivists, criminals infest the underbelly of the Imperial order as it exists in Hive Desoleum.

One of the more prominent criminal rings to operate in Hive Desoleum is the Insurrati. This network of thugs, narco-dealers, fences, thieves, paid killers, and worse is involved in everything from extortion to the trade in proscribed armaments. Though based out of the Main Hive, the Insurrati's reach extends into the Upper Hive and down to the Gorges, and some whisper that they even do business with the most dissolute of Apex nobility. The level of organisation and support possessed by the group makes it much more dangerous than the many independent racketeers and thieves in the hive.

In the main, the activities of the Insurrati and the various criminal factions of Hive Desoleum are not of interest to the Inquisition. This is not to say that criminal activities might not become of great concern to an Inquisitor. Crime lords could unknowingly enter into an arrangement with the servants of xenos creatures or even of the Ruinous Powers, and Chaos cults also often begin and grow in the darkness of the underworld.

Crime Lord

Organised crime in Desoleum City features a brutal process of natural selection, ensuring that Insurrati lords are ruthless and capable of keeping business running, despite interference from rival groups and the Sanctionaries. Though most crime lords prefer to keep their hands clean, leaving the "unpleasantness" to subordinates, they are fully capable of defending themselves, and more than willing to fight dirty.

Crime Lord (Master) 14

H	AR	AL	B	LR	LL
–	4	4	4	4	4
3	7	7	7	7	7
01-10	11-20	21-30	31-70	71-85	86-00

WS	BS	S
32	46	26
T	**Ag**	**Int**
34	22	49
Per	**Wp**	**Fel**
34	38	42
Ifl		
39		

Half 2	Full 4	Charge 6	Run 12	Threat 17

Bolt Pistol — Class Pistol

Rng 30m	RoF S/2/–	Dmg 1d10+5 (X)	
Pen 4	Clip 8	Rld 1 Full	Wt 3.5 Kg / Avl VR

Special: Tearing

Power Sword — Class Melee

Rng —	RoF —	Dmg 1d10+7[5+SB] (E)	
Pen 5	Clip —	Rld —	Wt 3 Kg / Avl VR

Special: Balanced, Power Field

Skills: Charm (Fel) +10, Command (Fel) +10, Commerce (Int), Common Lore (Underworld) (Int) +20, Deceive (Fel) +20, Intimidate (S) +10, Scrutiny (Per) +20, Sleight of Hand (Ag)
Talents: Halo of Command, Peer (Criminal Cartels), Precision Killer (Ballistic Skill), Resistance (Psychic Powers), Strong Minded
Gear: Mesh armour, stylish and expensive clothing
Battlefield Coordination: Once per round, as a Half Action, the character may make an Ordinary (+10) Command test to coordinate the efforts of his allies around him. If the he succeeds, a number of allies up to his Intelligence bonus in line of sight and earshot of the character can immediately make an out-of-turn Half Move action.

Desoleum Bondless Dealer

Chems, weapons, and proscribed tech are all within the reach of a bondless dealer, operating as he does outside the normal system of oath-debts. While fencing stolen goods is one aspect of a dealer's craft, another is to obtain more difficult-to-acquire items for his clientele. These may vary from designer chems and offworld weapons to new identities and false oath-cogs.

Desoleum Bondless Dealer (Troop) 9

H	AR	AL	B	LR	LL
–	2	2	2	2	2
3	5	5	5	5	5
01-10	11-20	21-30	31-70	71-85	86-00

WS	BS	S
30	32	25
T	**Ag**	**Int**
35	30	35
Per	**Wp**	**Fel**
38	33	39
Ifl		
—		

Half 3	Full 6	Charge 9	Run 18	Threat 5

Laspistol — Class Pistol

Rng 30m	RoF S/2/–	Dmg 1d10+2 (E)		
Pen 0	Clip 18	Rld Half	Wt 1.5 Kg	Avl CM.

Special: Reliable

Skills: Commerce (Int) +20, Common Lore (Underworld) (Int) +10, Deceive (Fel), Sleight of Hand (Ag), Tech-Use (Int)
Talents: Face in a Crowd, Jaded
Gear: Light flak armour under subtle clothing, assorted legal and somewhat illegal merchandise, several false oath-cogs
Shady Deals: A dealer can use his illicit connections to acquire hard-to-find items for PCs. If a PC uses this, he gains a +10 bonus to his next Requisition test. If the test fails, however, the warband's Subtlety value decreases by 2d10.

Thug

The Insurrati ranks are filled with these cruel and violent individuals. Though they might possess ambitions of power, their lack of imagination and intellect ensures a career of following orders, and an early "retirement" should their ambition exceed their abilities. Most, however, are happy to follow orders, break bones, and collect their scrip.

Thug (Troop) 9

H 01-10	–	3			
Ar 11-20	1	4	Al 21-30	1	4
B 31-70	1	4			
Lr 71-85	–	3	Ll 86-00	–	3

WS	BS	S
36	38	34
T	**Ag**	**Int**
31	33	26
Per	**Wp**	**Fel**
28	24	28
Ifl		
—		

Half 3	Full 6	Charge 9	Run 18	Threat 4

Stub Revolver — Class *Pistol*

Rng 30m	RoF S/–/–	Dmg 1d10+3 (I)		
Pen 0	Clip 6	Rld 2 Full	Wt 1.5 Kg	Avl PL

Special: *Reliable*

Skills: Athletics (S) +10, Dodge (Ag), Intimidate (S)
Gear: Hive leathers

Heavy

Sometimes enhanced by chem therapy or vat-grown tissue grafts, heavies are a fearsome sight, and often their mere presence ensures compliance to the Insurrati's wishes. Many are grotesquely formed, and the hyper-muscled appearance and strength of some might even be due to minor mutations.

Heavy (Troop) 15

H 01-10	–	4			
Ar 11-20	–	4	Al 21-30	–	4
B 31-70	3	7			
Lr 71-85	–	4	Ll 86-00	–	4

WS	BS	S
34	28	44
T	**Ag**	**Int**
47	33	25
Per	**Wp**	**Fel**
30	29	32
Ifl		
—		

Half 3	Full 6	Charge 9	Run 18	Threat 7

Chainaxe — Class *Melee*

Rng —	RoF —	Dmg 1d10+8^{4+SB} (R)		
Pen 2	Clip —	Rld —	Wt 13 Kg	Avl SC

Special: *Tearing*

Skills: Athletics (S) +10, Intimidate (S) +10
Talents: Crushing Blow
Gear: Flak vest
Shove: When the heavy successfully inflicts damage with a melee attack, he can choose to shove his target away in addition to dealing damage. If he does so, the target suffers damage as normal and is moved directly away from the attacking heavy a number of metres equal to half the damage inflicted (after reduction for Armour and Toughness).



Skulker

Skulkers are thieves and assassins with a knack for stealth. From eliminating business rivals to relieving nobles of their prized possessions, skulkers pride themselves on completing an assignment and departing before anyone knows of their arrival.

Skulker (Elite) 10

H	AR	AL	B	LR	LL
01-10 2	11-20 3	21-30 3	31-70 3	71-85 2	86-00 2

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	Wp	Fel	Ifl
34	32	26	25	48	28	42	31	28	—

Half 4 | Full 8 | Charge 12 | Run 24 | Threat 7

Autopistol — Class Pistol

Rng 30m | RoF S/–/6 | Dmg 1d10+2 (I)
Pen 0 | Clip 18 | Rld 1 Full | Wt 1.5 Kg | Avl Av
Special: –

Chainblade — Class Melee

Rng — | RoF — | Dmg 1d10+3[1+SB] (R)
Pen 1 | Clip — | Rld — | Wt 2 Kg | Avl SC
Special: Tearing

Skills: Acrobatics (Ag) +10, Sleight of Hand (Ag) +10, Stealth (Ag) +10
Talents: Assassin Strike, Catfall
Gear: Hive leathers, multi-key, stummer
Single Out: When making an attack, if the skulker is the only character engaging the target of his attack or the target is not engaged with anyone, the skulker gains a +20 bonus to all attack tests made against the target.

Insurrati Oiler

These recidivists lubricate the wheels of illegal hive life, seeing to the details in Insurrati strategies. They see and hear much that is hidden, and can be an excellent source of information for Acolytes.

Insurrati Oiler (Troop) 9

H	AR	AL	B	LR	LL
01-10 3	11-20 4	21-30 4	31-70 4	71-85 4	86-00 4

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	Wp	Fel	Ifl
23	32	28	30	32	39	37	30	51	—

Half 3 | Full 6 | Charge 9 | Run 18 | Threat 5

Laspistol — Class Pistol

Rng 30m | RoF S/2/– | Dmg 1d10+2 (E)
Pen 0 | Clip 18 | Rld Half | Wt 1.5 Kg | Avl CM.
Special: Reliable

Skills: Charm (Fel) +10, Commerce (Int), Common Lore (Underworld) (Int), Deceive (Fel) +10, Sleight of Hand (Ag), Tech-Use (Int)
Talents: Constant Vigilance (Per), Face in the Crowd
Gear: Robes, chrono, concealed holster, several false oath-cogs
Smooth Talker: Once per conversation, the oiler can re-roll one Charm or Deceive test.

The Faithful of Desoleum

The Temple of the Sacramentum Sacrosanctus is the face of the Imperial Creed in Hive Desoleum. It teaches that just as all men owe an oath-debt to their societal betters, so is all Mankind oath-bound to the Emperor. All oath debts, they say, ultimately serve to fulfil this greatest of bonds. The labourer that toils in a hive manufactorum to fulfil his oath to the Consortium also works toward his oath to the Emperor, for each cog in the machinery of Hive Desoleum serves in accordance with the Emperor's wishes. Faith is reinforced through these teachings, making the concept of oath-bonding fundamental and sacrosanct.

Pilgrim

As one of Askellon's oldest worlds, Desoleum is home to numerous holy sites that attract millions of pilgrims. A number are within the bounds of its main hive; some have been carefully preserved by religious orders, while others have been relocated to the Apex for a noble's private veneration. One of the most revered sites is the Avenue of the Hero, a stretch of road said to bear the huge boot prints of one of the mighty Primarchs of old, who led the Great Crusade to conquer the galaxy in the name of the Emperor. Unfortunately, a long-ago hivequake caused the Avenue to collapse into the depths. Though its exact location is unknown, its holy status is revered. Each year, thousands of pilgrims flock from across the sector to descend into the hive's depths in their quest for it. Virtually none return, and those rare few who do never speak of their experience.

Pilgrim (Troop) 9

H	AR	AL	B	LR	LL
01-10 3	11-20 4	21-30 4	31-70 4	71-85 4	86-00 4

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	Wp	Fel	Ifl
26	24	30	32	33	28	28	42	31	—

Half 3 | Full 6 | Charge 9 | Run 18 | Threat 3

Staff — Class Melee

Rng — | RoF — | Dmg 1d10+3[SB] (I)
Pen 0 | Clip — | Rld — | Wt 3 Kg | Avl Plent.
Special: Balanced, Primitive (7)

Skills: Awareness (Per), Navigate (Int) +10, Survival (Per)
Gear: Well-worn robes, assorted religious trinkets

Devout

Religion is a fact of life for the citizens of the Imperium, who all pay fealty to the living god who is the master of Mankind. This is no different in Hive Desoleum, from the private chapels of the nobility to the great hive cathedrals, where tens of thousands gather beneath macro-statues of saints to pray to their distant god. For some, faith consumes all and becomes the entirety of their existence. These devouts dedicate their lives to fulfilling the Emperor's Will. Some spend their lives as solitary mendicants, finding some isolated hole in the hive depths to exist in silent contemplation. Others roam the habways, warning of the dangers of sin and heresy. Corporal mortification is a practice many embrace, and bands of bloodstained flagellants stride throughout the middle and lower hive regions.

Devout (Troop) 10

H	AR	AL	B	LR	LL
3	4	4	4	4	4
01-10	11-20	21-30	31-70	71-85	86-00

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	Wp	Fel	Ifl
36	26	31	35	30	24	28	38	33	—

Half 3 | Full 6 | Charge 9 | Run 18 | Threat 4

Flail — Class Melee

Rng — | RoF — | Dmg 1d10+5^2+SB (I)

Pen 0 | Clip — | Rld — | Wt 8 Kg | Avl RA.

Special: Flexible, Primitive (8)

Skills: Common Lore (Ecclesiarchy, Imperial Creed) (Int) +10, Survival (Per)
Talents: Resistance (Fear)
Gear: Sackcloth robe, oath-cog
Devotion: Certain in his belief, a devout gains a +10 bonus on all Opposed tests against any character he perceives as interfering in his religious observances.

Burdener of the True Oath

There are some devouts who see it as their duty to cleanse the hive of the unrighteous. These fanatics band together to deliver the Emperor's judgement on any they find unclean, from mutants and criminals to simple hivers unfortunate enough to cross their paths. One group has grown to span the hive, calling themselves the Burdeners of the True Oath. Their violent pogroms can draw the wrath of the Sanctionaries, especially when their purges target Consortium interests. Any attempt to interfere in the Burdeners' persecutions is heresy in their eyes, and many an unprepared Sanctionary has found himself also on the pyre.

Burdener of the True Oath (Troop) 11

H	AR	AL	B	LR	LL
3	4	4	4	3	3
01-10	11-20	21-30	31-70	71-85	86-00

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	Wp	Fel	Ifl
36	26	31	35	30	24	28	38	33	—

Half 3 | Full 6 | Charge 15 | Run 18 | Threat 5

Eviscerator — Class Melee

Rng — | RoF — | Dmg 2d10+3^SB (I)

Pen 9 | Clip — | Rld — | Wt 15 Kg | Avl VR

Special: Razor Sharp, Tearing, Unwieldy

Fire Bombs (3) — Class Thrown

Dmg 1d10+2 (E) | Pen 0 | Wt .5 Kg | Avl PL

Special: Blast (2), Flame

Skills: Athletics (S), Intimidate (S) +10
Talents: Hatred (Everyone), Iron Jaw
Gear: Leather scrap armour, converted oath-cog
Zealous Speed: The Burdener counts his Agility bonus as 2 higher for the purpose of determining movement distance when performing the Charge action (included in his Movement above).





Temple Revelationist

The Revelationists of the Temple of the Sacramentum Sacrosanctus seek to carry the word of the Emperor across the hive. They travel everywhere, from manufactorums filled with those so crushed with oath-debts they can never leave, to the darkest Underhive regions where they seek to bring the Emperor's light to those benighted souls dwelling therein. Revelationists are hardy and very able to visit the Emperor's judgement on any unrepentant heretics whom they encounter, and those venturing downhive go especially well-armed. The Temple also conducts missions beyond the hive, to bring their teachings to the tribal nomads of the wastes. These seldom end well, but they continue, as often the relics they find can fund their holy work for years.

Temple Revelationist (Elite) 14

H – 01-10	4			WS	BS	S		
Ar 3 11-20	7	Al 3 21-30	7	28	42	31		
B 3 31-70	7			T	Ag	Int		
Lr 3 71-85	7	Ll 3 86-00	7	45	32	32		
				Per	WP	Fel		
				36	35	30		
				Ifl	—			

Half 3	Full 6	Charge 9	Run 18	Threat 7
Flamer			Class *Basic*	
Rng *20m*	RoF *S/–/_*		Dmg *1d10+4 (E)*	
Pen *2*	Clip *6*	Rld *2 Full*	Wt *6 Kg*	Avl *SC*
Special: *Flame, Spray*				

Skills: Charm (Fel) +20, Dodge (Ag), Linguistics (High Gothic) (Int) +10, Scholastic Lore (Ecclesiarchy, Imperial Creed) (Int) +20
Talents: Hatred (Heretics), Peer (Ecclesiarchy), Unshakeable Faith
Gear: Partial flack armour, respirator, sacred incense, several large holy books, battered oath-cog
Divine Protection: When the Revelationist performs an attack with a weapon with the Spray quality, the attack only strikes foes inside the affected area. All of his allies are unaffected.

Preacher

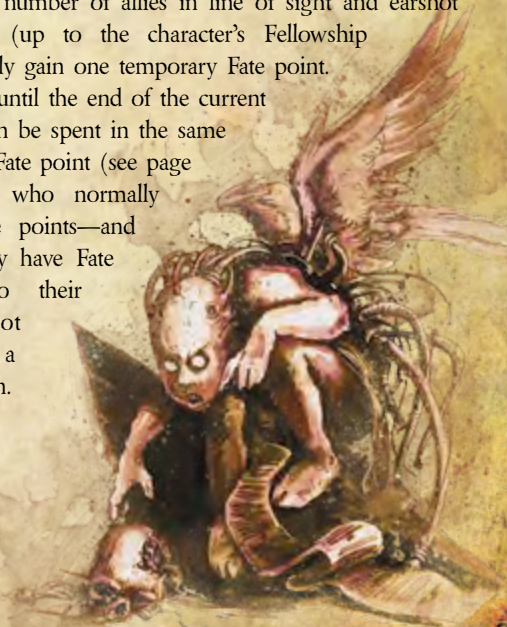
On a million worlds, the preachers of the Adeptus Ministorum speak the Emperor's word. As with most local dioceses, the Imperial Creed is adapted to local customs. The hive's many preachers exhort in fiery sermons that life is service, and faith is the repayment of the debt that all Mankind owes to the Emperor for His gifts and sacrifice. Just as all are oath-bound to their superiors, so all Mankind is oath-bound to the Master of Mankind, and this oath can only be fulfilled through a lifetime of dutiful service.

Preacher (Elite) 12

H – 01-10	3			WS	BS	S		
Ar 2 11-20	5	Al 2 21-30	5	28	22	25		
B 2 31-70	5			T	Ag	Int		
Lr 2 71-85	5	Ll 2 86-00	5	30	31	29		
				Per	WP	Fel		
				35	42	45		
				Ifl	—			

Half 3	Full 6	Charge 9	Run 18	Threat 6
Chainsword			Class *Melee*	
Rng —	RoF —		Dmg *1d10+4^{2+SB} (R)*	
Pen *2*	Clip —	Rld —	Wt *6 Kg*	Avl *AVG*
Special: *Balanced, Tearing*				

Skills: Charm (Fel) +10, Command (Fel), Intimidate (S), Linguistics (High Gothic) (Int) +10, Scholastic Lore (Ecclesiarchy, Imperial Creed) (Int) +20
Talents: Halo of Command, Jaded, Resistance (Psychic Powers), Strong Minded
Gear: Decorated flack robes, religious icons , ornate oath-cog
Holy Oration: Once per encounter, as a Full Action, a preacher may make an Ordinary (+10) Command test to inspire his allies. If he succeeds, a number of allies in line of sight and earshot of the character (up to the character's Fellowship bonus) immediately gain one temporary Fate point. These points last until the end of the current encounter, and can be spent in the same way as a normal Fate point (see page 293). Characters who normally cannot have Fate points—and those who already have Fate points equal to their thresholds—cannot gain Fate points as a result of this action.



The Servants of the Emperor

Hive Desoleum is home to many billions who toil endlessly in their assigned tasks, just to keep the hive running and trade flowing. To the masters of the hive, its citizens are just another resource to be used and consumed, no different from the reactor fuel that burns in a manufactorum. Even those possessed of specialised skills, such as Astropaths, must exert themselves until death takes them and another servant takes their place. Such is the Emperor's plan.

Astropath

The Imperium of Mankind is a vast and scattered realm. Within a single star system, interplanetary communication may be possible by technology, albeit with considerable time delay, but interstellar communication is only possible by messages carried by star ships, or through the Astropaths of the Adeptus Astra Telepathica. To transmit a psychic message over the vast gulfs of the void is a monumental and nightmarish task. Even those selected for the duty of the Astropath are not able to rely on their innate abilities, but must undergo years of training culminating in the ritual of soul binding, in which the Astropath is imbued with but the merest fraction of the Emperor's divine power. Soul binding strengthens the Astropath's abilities, as well as providing a measure of protection against the hazards of the Warp. Even despite these precautions, this life is difficult, the stresses placed on their minds and bodies in the course of their duties resulting in premature ageing and early death. To commune with the Emperor might be considered the ultimate pilgrimage for his subjects, yet for the Astropaths this blessing is not without its consequences. The soul-binding is intensely traumatic for the soft tissues, and thus most are blind, though their psychic senses compensate for their lack of sight. Their sacrifices are many, but they are a necessity for the survival of the Imperium. Most understand that their own sacrifices are minuscule next to those made by the Master of Mankind.

Astropaths are far too rare and valuable to be made available to the common people. Indeed, most who dwell in Desoleum have no reason to contact other hives, let alone other worlds. In Hive Desoleum, the tower of the Adeptus Astra Telepathica juts from the high reaches of the Apex. There, Astropaths spend their days in meditation when not engaged in the act of transmitting or receiving messages at the request of the Adeptus Administratum, Adeptus Ministorum, and the other divisions of the Adeptus Terra. Influential members of the nobility and Consortium, those with the right connections, are also able to utilise the Astropaths. At least one Astropath is permanently stationed at the fortress-precinct of the Adeptus Arbites, to allow the Arbitrators to get word out to the wider Imperium should the worst befall Desoleum.

Astropath (Elite)					9
H – 01-10 2			WS 25	BS 22	S 28
Ar 1 11-20 3		Al 1 21-30 3	T 25	Ag 30	Int 38
B 1 31-70 3			Per 42	WP 48	Fel 33
Lr 1 71-85 3		Ll 1 86-00 3		Ifl —	
Half 3	Full 6	Charge 9	Run 18	Threat 6	
Staff				Class Melee	
Rng —	RoF —		Dmg 1d10+2SB (I)		
Pen 0	Clip —	Rld —	Wt 3 Kg	Avl PL	
Special: Balanced, Primitive (7)					

Skills: Awareness (Per), Linguistics (High Gothic) (Int), Logic (Int), Psyniscience (Per) +10
Talents: Peer (Adeptus Astra Telepathica), Resistance (Psychic Powers), Warp Sense
Traits: Psyker (PR 3), Soul-Bound, Unnatural Senses (50)
Psychic Powers: Erasure, Psychic Shriek, Telepathic Link
Gear: Psy focus, robes



Citizen

The vast majority of Desoleum's populace can never hope to see the sky, or even the dirt of the wastes surrounding the hive. They toil by the billions in thousands of different occupations, unnoticed but essential to the hive's continuance. Despite regular ministrations by the Tech-Priests, accidents in the ancient facilities frequently result in maiming or death. Some are fortunate enough to receive bionic replacements for lost limbs. This allows them to continue to work off their oath-debt, and not face the penalties for failure of service.

Citizen (Troop) 8

H	AR	AL	B	LR	LL
01-10 3	11-20 3	21-30 3	31-70 3	71-85 3	86-00 3

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	Wp	Fel	Ifl
25	25	30	30	25	25	25	25	30	—

Half *2* | Full *4* | Charge *6* | Run *12* | Threat *3*

Knife — Class *Melee*

Rng — | RoF — | Dmg *1d5+3SB (I)*

Pen *0* | Clip — | Rld — | Wt *1 Kg* | Avl *PL*

Special: –

Skills: Any one skill
Gear: Civilian garb, oath-cog

Gilded Performancer

A rare few citizens operate outside of the oath-bond system, whether from release from service—an almost unheard of occurrence—or fleeing the life of servitude. Many of these escape downhive, but others remain in plain sight, serving as performancers. These acrobats, musicians, and dancers disguise themselves with elaborate facepaint and outlandish clothing. Those who gain patronage live pampered lives uphive or even in the Apex. Others eke out a living through street theatrics across the hive, subsisting on meagre offerings of food or scrip.

Once in a great span there are sponsored entertainments that draw performancers from all over the hive. These events run the gamut from Temple passion plays to raucous carnivals and pit-fights. Many skirt the bounds of heresy, such as carnivals that hide mutant performers behind costumed disguises, or secretive pit-fights that features xenos beasts for the delight of select patrons.

Gilded Performancer (Troop) 9

H	AR	AL	B	LR	LL
01-10 3	11-20 3	21-30 3	31-70 3	71-85 3	86-00 3

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	Wp	Fel	Ifl
33	28	24	31	42	28	35	29	46	—

Half *4* | Full *8* | Charge *12* | Run *24* | Threat *4*

Laspistol — Class *Pistol*

Rng *30m* | RoF *S/2/–* | Dmg *1d10+2 (E)*

Pen *0* | Clip *18* | Rld *Half* | Wt *1.5 Kg* | Avl *CM*

Special: *Reliable*

Skills: Acrobatics (Ag), Athletics (S), Charm (Fel) +10, Trade (Performancer) (Int) +30
Talents: Catfall, Leap Up
Gear: Colourful outfit, 1 dose of obscura, multiple oath-cogs
Entertaining: A performancer can re-roll a Charm test.



Merchant

Merchants can be found at every strata of Hive Desoleum, from Underhive slavers to specialised traders who deal with rare or illicit offworld rarities. Amongst the scrap-towns of the Gorges, trade is often conducted using a barter system, but some traders and merchants travel from settlement to settlement, selling their wares for scrip-coins scavenged from the rubble or pried from dead hands. In the Apex, wealth flows freely, and successful traders who cater to wealthy tastes can afford a life of luxury to rival that of the nobles themselves.

Merchant (Troop) 10

H	AR	AL	B	LR	LL
01-10 3	11-20 3	21-30 3	31-70 4 7	71-85 3	86-00 3

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	Wp	Fel	Ifl
30	25	32	32	30	45	38	25	40	—

Half 3	Full 6	Charge 9	Run 18	Threat 4

Laspistol — Class Pistol

Rng 30m	RoF S/2/–	Dmg 1d10+2 (E)
Pen 0	Clip 18	Rld Half	Wt 1.5 Kg	Avl CM

Special: *Reliable*

Skills: Charm (Fel), Commerce (Int) +10, Deceive (Fel)
Talents: Contact Network
Gear: Concealed mesh armour vest, good clothes, merchandise, one-day's earnings, oath-cog
Haggle: A merchant gains a +20 bonus when making an Opposed Commerce test.

Manufactorum Worker

Workers by the billions attend to the great manufactorums that dominate Hive Desoleum mid-levels. Here they produce the hive's many products, such as its renowned las-lenses and vox-caster vacuum tubes, in extreme conditions of blistering heat. Punishment is harsh for those who slacken in their efforts, and most can look forward only to an early death. Yet for these workers, it is the only way of life imaginable. It is will of the Emperor, and to question is to blaspheme.

Manufactorum Worker (Troop) 12

H	AR	AL	B	LR	LL
01-10 4	11-20 4	21-30 4	31-70 4	71-85 4	86-00 4

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	Wp	Fel	Ifl
38	31	45	46	30	25	29	28	28	—

Half 3	Full 6	Charge 9	Run 18	Threat 5

Welder Torch — Class Pistol

Rng 3m	RoF S/–/–	Dmg 1d10+3 (E)
Pen 1	Clip 8	Rld 2 Full	Wt 3 Kg	Avl CM

Special: –

Heavy Wrench — Class Melee

Rng —	RoF —	Dmg 1d10+4SB (I)
Pen 0	Clip —	Rld —	Wt 10 Kg	Avl CM

Special: *Primitive (7)*

Skills: Athletics (S) +10, Tech-Use (Int), Trade (Manufactor) (Int)
Talents: Resistance (Heat)
Gear: Manufactorum coverall, goggles, respirator, sturdy oath-cog



Rating

Most naval ratings are born to life in the void, never setting foot on a planet's surface. In fact, to them, the idea of leaving their home-ship is as terrifying as the thought of void travel is for others. Like the artificial edifice of Hive Desoleum, most space ships are ancient, their workings ill-understood even to those who labour to maintain them. The labyrinthine corridors and chambers are too many to maintain and patrol, and in the dark places and forgotten holds are hungry, inhuman creatures, as terrible as any that might be found in the Underhive.

Each ship has its own culture and traditions, as entrenched as Hive Desoleum's oath-system. The merchant freighter *Duke Tephynon*'s route brings it back to Desoleum approximately once every seven years. As cargo is transferred between the vessel and port, the ratings construct—primarily from orbital debris—an immense effigy of the original duke, dead some 500 years. Before the ship departs, they send the construct plummeting into the atmosphere, where it burns up on re-entry and scatters debris across the barren wastes. The crew refuses to explain the reasons for the tradition, and it continues despite the best efforts of the current ducal family.

Rating (Troop) 8

H	AR	AL	B	LR	LL
01-10 2	11-20 2	21-30 2	31-70 2	71-85 2	86-00 2

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Ifl
30	40	32	28	37	26	38	30	38	—

Half 4	Full 8	Charge 12	Run 24	Threat 4

Autopistol — Class *Pistol*

Rng 30m	RoF S/–/6	Dmg 1d10+2 (I)

Pen 0	Clip 18	Rld 1 Full	Wt 1.5 Kg	Avl AV

Special: –

Skills: Awareness (Per), Tech-Use (Int), Trade (Any One) +10
Gear: Crew uniform

Dreg

Dregs are the refuse of hive society, often mad and hooked on chems. They are oathless, either having forsaken their crushing oath-debts or fallen through cracks in the immense hive bureaucracy. In doing so, they have lost any oath-provided shelter or food, and must survive on their own. As they fall lower in deed and spirit, they sink lower in the hive itself, drifting down like sump-water to the dark and terrible hive depths. Many turn to crime in their desperation for obscura or featherdust. Dregs have little to lose, and are often desperate enough to undertake any action, no matter how vile, for the promise of payment or reward.

Dreg (Troop) 9

H	AR	AL	B	LR	LL
01-10 2	11-20 2	21-30 2	31-70 2	71-85 2	86-00 2

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Ifl
30	25	26	24	32	26	37	28	30	—

Half 3	Full 6	Charge 9	Run 18	Threat 3

Knife — Class *Melee*

Rng —	RoF —	Dmg 1d5+2SB (I)

Pen 0	Clip —	Rld —	Wt 1 Kg	Avl PL

Special: –

Skills: Survival (Per) +10
Gear: Rags, 1d5 human teeth, lice, one pack of cheap lho sticks
Desperate and a Bit Mad: Whenever a character attempts a skill test to socially interact with the dreg, if the ones digit is 1–5 then the test gains a +20 bonus; on a 6–10, the test suffers a –20 penalty.

Desoleum Involute Cadre Trooper

The Desoleum Involute Cadres see to the world's defence. They are well-armed and equipped, thanks to the manufacturing capacities of the hives. As the capitol, Hive Desoleum has numerous Cadre battalions stationed in and around the massive structure. The Involute Cadres also garrison Desoleum's orbital defence systems, including a number of auspex monitors and light warships. For the fortunate, an oath of service in the Involute Cadres is fulfilled when the bondsman falls in battle; otherwise, a family member is conscripted to take the dead soldier's place.



Involute Cadre Trooper (Troop) 11

H	AR	AL	B	LR	LL
4 8 (01-10)	4 8 (11-20)	4 8 (21-30)	4 8 (31-70)	4 8 (71-85)	4 8 (86-00)

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Ifl
36	43	38	42	35	28	44	32	36	—

Half 3	Full 6	Charge 9	Run 18	Threat 7

Lasgun — Class Basic

Rng 100m	RoF S/3/–	Dmg 1d10+3 (E)	
Pen 0	Clip 60	Rld 1 Full	Wt 4 Kg	Avl CM

Special: *Reliable*

Frag Grenades (3) — Class Thrown

Dmg 2d10 (X)	Pen 0	Wt .5 Kg	Avl CM

Special: *Blast (3)*

Krak Grenades (2) — Class Thrown

Dmg 2d10+4 (X)	Pen 6	Wt .5 Kg	Avl RA

Special: *Concussive (0)*

Skills: Athletics (S), Dodge (Ag), Medicae (Int) +10, Operate (Surface) (Ag) +10, Tech-Use (Int) +10
Talents: Rapid Reload, Technical Knock
Gear: Flak armour uniform, oath cog

Involute Cadre Officer (Elite) 15

H	AR	AL	B	LR	LL
4 – (01-10)	4 7 (11-20)	4 7 (21-30)	4 7 (31-70)	4 7 (71-85)	4 7 (86-00)

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Ifl
46	41	46	38	30	48	38	42	50	—

Half 3	Full 6	Charge 9	Run 18	Threat 10

Laspistol — Class Pistol

Rng 30m	RoF S/2/–	Dmg 1d10+2 (E)	
Pen 0	Clip 30	Rld Half	Wt 1.5 Kg	Avl CM

Special: *Reliable*

Chainsword — Class Melee

Rng —	RoF —	Dmg 1d10+6^{2+SB} (R)	
Pen 2	Clip —	Rld —	Wt 6 Kg	Avl AV

Special: *Balanced, Tearing*

Skills: Athletics (S), Command (Fel) +20, Navigate (Surface) (Int), Parry (WS) +10
Talents: Counter Attack, Halo of Command
Gear: Impressive flak armour uniform, medals, micro-bead, smoking pipe, oath cog
Dig In: As a Half Action, the Cadre Officer may make an Ordinary (+10) Command test to instruct his allies to take cover. If he succeeds, a number of allies in line of sight and earshot of the character (up to his Intelligence bonus) increase the armour granted to them by their current cover by 2. This bonus lasts until those characters leave their current cover, and does not stack with multiple uses.

Desoleum Involute Cadre Officer

The officers of the Involute Cadres primarily hail from the world's noble families. After completing their oath-service, many go on to serve in Desoleum's Imperial Guard regiment, the Oathsmen Grenadiers. Cadre Officers are both commanders and lords to those serving under them. When assigned to a new posting, a Cadre Officer receives oath-bonds from each officer, sergeant, and cadreman under his command. Penalties for insubordination are harsh, ranging from public flogging to quartering by chainaxe. It is traditional for the bones of those executed to be ground into the mortar of a command bunker, so they might serve in death better than they did in life.



Tech-Priest

For hive worlds such as Desoleum, the ministrations of the Tech-Priests are vital for survival. It is an enclosed city of metal, and for it to sustain life, the ancient air-scrubbers, aquafiltration systems, and heating and cooling systems must be maintained. Without these life-sustaining systems, it would swiftly become a tomb of billions. Tech-Priests and their servitor retinues roam the hive, overseeing these and other, more arcane technologies, serving the Omnissiah and keeping Hive Desoleum alive.

Tech-Priest (Elite) 14

H 01-10 8 (3)				
Ar 11-20 9 (3)		Al 21-30 9 (3)		
B 31-70 9 (3)				
Lr 71-85 9 (3)	Ll 86-00 9 (3)			

WS	BS	S
44	35	39
T	**Ag**	**Int**
52	31	57
Per	**Wp**	**Fel**
33	36	25
Ifl		
—		

Half 3	Full 6	Charge 9	Run 18	Threat 10

Inferno Pistol — Class Pistol

Rng 10m	RoF S/–/–	Dmg 2d10+10 (E)		
Pen 12	Clip 12	Rld 1 Full	Wt 3 Kg	Avl NU

Special: Reliable

Omnissian Axe — Class Melee

Rng —	RoF —	Dmg 1d10+7[4+SB] (E)		
Pen 2	Clip —	Rld —	Wt 8 Kg	Avl ER

Special: Power Field, Unbalanced

Skills: Awareness (Per), Common Lore (Adeptus Mechanicus) (Int) +10, Logic (Int) +10, Tech-Use (Int) +20
Talents: Luminen Shock, Mechadendrite Use (Utility), Prosanguine, Weapon-Tech
Traits: Machine (3), Mechanicus Implants
Gear: Heavy robes, combi-tool, 2 doses of sacred unguents, portable vox
Cybernetics: Luminen capacitors implant, one or more bionic senses and limbs, utility mechadendrite
Binaric Screech: The character releases a deafening screech in the mysterious language of the Mechanicum that causes technology to shut down or malfunction. The Tech-Priest chooses a point in line of sight within 30 metres, and as a Half Action makes an Ordinary (+10) Tech-Use test. If he succeeds on this test, a Haywire Field is created, centred at that point with a radius equal to the character's Intelligence bonus in metres, as if the location had been struck by a weapon with the Haywire quality (see page 147).

Servitor Drone

Ubiquitous throughout the Imperium, servitors are lobotomised cyborgs or vat-grown beings programmed to fulfil a variety of functions. The most common are monotasked drones, slaved to perform simple tasks ranging from operating a noble's autocarriage to scribing judicial proceedings. Some are so specialised that they are permanently hardwired in place, as in the case of lift-operators and pilot servitors.

Servitor Drone (Troop) 10

H 01-10 8 (3)				
Ar 11-20 8 (3)		Al 21-30 8 (3)		
B 31-70 8 (3)				
Lr 71-85 8 (3)	Ll 86-00 8 (3)			

WS	BS	S
25	20	35 (5)
T	**Ag**	**Int**
35 (5)	25	15
Per	**Wp**	**Fel**
20	20	05
Ifl		
—		

Half 2	Full 4	Charge 8	Run 12	Threat 3

Implanted Servo-Fist — Class Melee

Rng —	RoF —	Dmg 1d10+8[3+SB] (I)		
Pen 0	Clip —	Rld —	Wt 10 Kg	Avl RA

Special: –

Skills: Athletics (S) +10
Talents: Iron Jaw
Traits: Dark Sight, Machine (3), Mind Lock, Unnatural Strength (2), Unnatural Toughness (2)
Gear: Cybernetic physiology, integral micro-bead

Combat Servitor

Utterly loyal and tireless, servitors make excellent warriors. Combat servitors are bestowed with remorseless kill-patterns and combat-routines, and implanted with deadly weaponry. They often accompany senior Tech-Priests and guard Mechanicum domains in the hive. Blasphemous hereteks who have abandoned the Omnissiah's true path also utilise them, fitting them with unsanctioned technologies and programming.

Combat Servitor (Troop) 16

H 01-10 10 (4)				
Ar 11-20 10 (4)		Al 21-30 10 (4)		
B 31-70 10 (4)				
Lr 71-85 10 (4)	Ll 86-00 10 (4)			

WS	BS	S
35	30	40 (6)
T	**Ag**	**Int**
40 (6)	25	15
Per	**Wp**	**Fel**
20	20	05
Ifl		
—		

Half 2	Full 4	Charge 6	Run 12	Threat 8

Implanted Heavy Stubber — Class Heavy

Rng 100m	RoF –/–/8	Dmg 1d10+4 (I)		
Pen 3	Clip 400	Rld 2 Full	Wt 30 Kg	Avl RA

Special: Reliable

Implanted Chainaxe — Class Melee

Rng —	RoF —	Dmg 1d10+10[4+SB] (R)		
Pen 2	Clip —	Rld —	Wt 13 Kg	Avl SC

Special: Tearing

Skills: Parry (WS) +10
Talents: Crushing Blow
Traits: Auto-stabilised, Dark-sight, Machine (4), Mind Lock, Unnatural Strength (2), Unnatural Toughness (2)
Gear: Backpack ammo supply (already included in weapon profile), cybernetic physiology, integral micro-bead



Repair Servitor

These servitors perform routine maintenance and simple repairs throughout the hive. Some serve directly under a Tech-Priest or technomat, while others operate autonomously under preloaded instructions. They are a common sight, unnoticed but vital to the hive's innumerable mechanisms.

Repair Servitor (Troop) 10

H	AR	AL	B	LR	LL
01-10 8	11-20 8	21-30 8	31-70 8	71-85 8	86-00 8

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	Wp	Fel	Ifl
25	20	40	36	25	20	25	20	05	—

Half 2 | Full 4 | Charge 6 | Run 12 | Threat 3

Implanted Lascutter — Class Heavy

Rng	RoF	Dmg	Pen	Clip	Rld	Wt	Avl
2m	S/–/–	2d10+16 (E)	10	5	2 Full	15 kg	RA

Special: Can only be used on stationary targets

Implanted Servo-Fist — Class Melee

Rng	RoF	Dmg	Pen	Clip	Rld	Wt	Avl
—	—	1d10+9^{3+SB} (R)	0	—	—	10 kg	RA

Special: Tearing

Skills: Tech-Use (Int)
Traits: Dark Sight, Machine (3), Mind Lock, Unnatural Strength (2), Unnatural Toughness (2)
Gear: Cybernetic physiology, integral micro-bead, multi-tool

The Lords of Desoleum

A wide gulf separates the rulers of Hive Desoleum from the masses who toil below. Whether actively engaged in the running of the hive, or only interested in private affairs and intrigues, these decadent nobles lead lives that common hivers cannot begin to fathom. Most hold a variety of oaths, huge webs of debts that bind millions firmly to their service. They also have tangles of oaths with their fellow lords, based on intricate favours and promises that bind them together just as tightly.

Apex Noble

The Apex is home to many ruling houses, which trace their ancestry back for millennia. Many nobles have few or no responsibilities, other than keeping up a proper presence amongst Apex society and maintaining their family name. These wealthy elite jockey for position in complex competitions for social status, which often escalate into secretive wars of blackmail and assassination.

Apex Noble (Elite) 13

H	AR	AL	B	LR	LL
01-10 3	11-20 3	21-30 3	31-70 7	71-85 3	86-00 3

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	Wp	Fel	Ifl
31	40	28	34	36	38	41	46	38	—

Half 3 | Full 6 | Charge 9 | Run 18 | Threat 8

Bolt Pistol — Class Pistol

Rng	RoF	Dmg	Pen	Clip	Rld	Wt	Avl
30m	S/2/–	1d10+5 (X)	4	8	1 Full	3.5 kg	VR

Special: Tearing

Skills: Awareness (Per), Charm (Fel) +10, Commerce (Int), Linguistics (High Gothic) (Int), Logic (Int), Medicae (Int)
Talents: Peer (Imperial Nobility), Disarm
Gear: Ornate mesh vest, ornate oath-cog, stylish and expensive clothing and jewellery
Do You Know Who I Am?: The Apex noble can, as a Full Action, make an Ordinary (+10) Charm test. If he succeeds on the test, a number of characters in line of sight and earshot (up to the noble's Fellowship bonus in metres) suffer one level of temporary Fatigue from his overpowering presence. This lasts for a number of rounds equal to the noble's Fellowship bonus and does not stack with multiple uses. When used in narrative time, this action can be taken as part of conversation.



Apex Prince

Those who wield immense power and influence even by the standards of the nobility are sometimes called Apex princes or princesses. While often used as a derogatory term by lesser, jealous nobles, in truth these mighty individuals are second only to Lady Desoleum herself in power. Such positions are often tenuous and highly coveted, and only the utterly ruthless can survive for long.

Apex Prince (Master) 19

H 01-10	3								
Ar 11-20	7			Al 21-30	7				
B 31-70	7								
Lr 71-85	7			Ll 86-00	7				

WS	BS	S
34	29	32
T	**Ag**	**Int**
35	41	45
Per	**Wp**	**Fel**
46	40	50
Ifl		
43		

Half 4	Full 8	Charge 12	Run 24	Threat 24

Plasma Pistol — Class Pistol

Rng 30m	RoF S/2/–	Dmg 1d10+8 (E)	
Pen 6	Clip 10	Rld 3 Full	Wt 4 Kg	Avl VR

Special: Maximal, Overheats

Power Sword — Class Melee

Rng —	RoF —	Dmg 1d10+8^5+SB (E)	
Pen 5	Clip —	Rld —	Wt 3 Kg	Avl VR

Special: Balanced, Power Field

Skills: Awareness (Per), Charm (Fel) +20, Command (Fel), Common Lore (Askellon Sector, Imperium) (Int) +10, Deceive (Fel) +10, Linguistics (High Gothic) (Int), Parry (WS) +10
Talents: Halo of Command, Peer (Imperial Nobility)
Gear: Stylish and expensive clothing over concealed mesh armour, ornate oath-cog, Best quality refractor field, fine jewellery

Dissolute Noble

Many nobles, especially the youngest offspring, have nigh-limitless resources, yet no responsibility. These dissolute nobles indulge in every vice Desoleum offers. If their fortunes turn sour, the worst find it simple to cross the line from the merely illegal to the forbidden and damning.

Dissolute Noble (Elite) 16

H 01-10	3								
Ar 11-20	4			Al 21-30	4				
B 31-70	4								
Lr 71-85	4			Ll 86-00	4				

WS	BS	S
53	48	38
T	**Ag**	**Int**
32	45	35
Per	**Wp**	**Fel**
31	28	33
Ifl		
—		

Half 4	Full 8	Charge 12	Run 24	Threat 8

Hand Cannon — Class Pistol

Rng 35m	RoF S/–/–	Dmg 1d10+4 (I)	
Pen 2	Clip 5	Rld 2 Full	Wt 3 Kg	Avl SC

Special: –

Sword — Class Melee

Rng —	RoF —	Dmg 1d10+3^SB (R)	
Pen 0	Clip —	Rld —	Wt 3 Kg	Avl CM

Special: Balanced

Skills: Acrobatics (Ag), Deceive (Fel) +20, Parry (WS), Sleight of Hand (Ag) +10
Talents: Face in a Crowd, Keen Intuition
Gear: Expensive but worn clothing, assorted rings and other jewellery, somewhat tarnished oath-cog, 3 doses of obscura
Do You Know Who I Was?: The dissolute noble can, as a Full Action, make an Ordinary (+10) Deceive test. If he succeeds on the test, a number of characters in line of sight and earshot (up to his Fellowship bonus in metres) suffers one level of temporary Fatigue from his sordid presence. This effect lasts for a number of rounds equal to his Fellowship bonus and does not stack with multiple uses. When used in narrative time, this action can be taken as part of conversation.

Consortium Merchant Magnate

The merchant magnates of the Consortium wield power comparable to, or in excess of, many Apex lords. In the case of some of the most established Consortium members, their own scions are all but indistinguishable from their counterparts in the Apex. A ruthless and cutthroat atmosphere exists amongst upper echelons of the Consortium, for each magnate knows that his position is only secure so long as his interests remain profitable.

Consortium Merchant Magnate (Elite) 13

	H – 01-10 3			WS	BS	S		
AR – 11-20 3		AL – 21-30 3		34	37	29		
	B 4 31-70 7			T	Ag	Int		
				35	36	46		
				Per	WP	Fel		
				42	47	48		
Lr – 71-85 3		Ll – 86-00 3		Ifl —				

Half 3	Full 6	Charge 9	Run 18	Threat 8

Bolt Pistol — Class Pistol

Rng 30m	RoF S/2/–	Dmg 1d10+5 (X)		
Pen 4	Clip 8	Rld 1 Full	Wt 3.5 Kg	Avl VR

Special: Tearing

Skills: Awareness (Per), Charm (Fel), Commerce (Int) +20, Deceive (Fel) +10, Logic (Int), Tech-Use (Int)
Talents: Contact Network, Peer (Criminal Cartels, Rogue Traders)
Gear: Concealed mesh armour vest, fine clothing, oath-cog
Socially Resilient: Once per conversation, the magnate may make another character in the conversation re-roll one successful skill test which targeted him.

Rogue Trader

Many Rogue Trader houses possess numerous holdings across Askellon; several have glorious manses within the hive itself, mostly clustered in the Apex. Wielding their Warrant of Trade, they prowl within and without the sector in search of new Warp routes to explore, systems to plunder, and civilisations to exploit in the name of profit and conquest. Outside of Imperial space, a Rogue Trader's word is law, and he may establish colonies, wage war, and exterminate civilisations as he deems fit. In order to accomplish his mission, each possesses void ships to rival those of the mighty Imperial Fleets. Indeed, many Rogue Trader vessels are modified warships. While a newly-minted Rogue Trader might possess only a single ship, established dynasties command veritable armadas. Most Warrants are millennia old, passed down through the generations of a Rogue Trader Dynasty. Though only the bearer of the Warrant can truly be called a Rogue Trader, every daughter, son, and cousin in a Dynasty wields star-spanning wealth and power.



Rogue Trader (Master) 24

	H – 01-10 3			WS	BS	S		
AR 5 11-20 8		AL 5 21-30 8		58	45	37		
	B 5 31-70 8			T	Ag	Int		
				33	46	42		
				Per	WP	Fel 6		
				48	50	47		
Lr 5 71-85 8		Ll 5 86-00 8		Ifl 64				

Half 4	Full 8	Charge 12	Run 24	Threat 25

Plasma Pistol — Class Pistol

Rng 30m	RoF S/2/–	Dmg 1d10+6 (E)		
Pen 6	Clip 10	Rld 3 Full	Wt 3 Kg	Avl VR

Special: Maximal, Overheats

Xenos Blade — Class Melee

Rng —	RoF —	Dmg 1d10+8[5+SB] (E)		
Pen 4	Clip —	Rld —	Wt 1 Kg	Avl ER

Special: Balanced, Power Field

Skills: Charm (Fel) +30, Commerce (Int) +20, Command (Fel) +20, Forbidden Lore (Rogue Traders) (Int) +20, Deceive (Fel) +20, Dodge (Ag) +20, Parry (WS) +20
Talents: Blade Master, Combat Master, Halo of Command, Quick Draw, Peer (Rogue Traders), Two-Weapon Wielder (Melee, Ranged)
Traits: Unnatural Fellowship (2)
Gear: Carapace armour, flamboyant and expensive clothing, rare trinkets and jewellery, Best craftsmanship refractor field
Leverage: Once per round, the Rogue Trader may use his Influence in place of another characteristic for a single test. If used in narrative time, the effects of this last for one hour.

Lady-Captain Hesiah Luftius

Rogue Trader Hesiah Luftius is a frequent visitor to Hive Desoleum. In expectation of a visitation by the Lady-Captain, speculation becomes a popular pastime amongst the nobility, primarily as to the wondrous artefacts that are a hallmark of Luftius' return. She maintains a number of holdings in the Apex, and business arrangements with many Consortium members. Luftius additionally has a number of allies amongst the Apex nobility, and is no stranger to Lady Desoleum's court. Nor is she out of place, for Hesiah Luftius makes every effort in her appearance, always presenting a noble and well-coiffed bearing. Despite the time she spends exploring Wilderness Space beyond the bounds of the sector, she never fails to display the most incredible and impressive styles on her return.

Desoleum is one of the most productive manufacturing worlds in the sector, yet some question that this is enough to draw such attention from a Rogue Trader. Though most are content to point to Desoleum's age and the Luftius Dynasty's ancient holdings on the world, some senior Arbitrators and Inquisitors suspect a darker motive, perhaps connected to the ancient xenos ruins to be found in the planet's desolate wastes.

Flora and Fauna of Askellon

"What an interesting specimen! Worry not—it is completely harmless."

–Last words of Adept Machellan Droun

Askellon hosts a wide range of flora and fauna, most of them valued resources on many worlds, but there are also many inimical to Mankind. Some are so deadly that any evidence of their presence is enough to incite a full-scale purge, lest an infestation develop. Even civilised worlds can contain native species still unnoticed or untamed. Hive depths can host strange and unnatural vermin in the dank, unlit reaches amongst the toxic effluent and rad-waste. In the dark, untouched worlds of the sector, even stranger creatures and plants—the distinction sometimes difficult to detect—await discovery.

Creatures

A variety of native animals, indigenes, and beasts can be found across the sector, alongside many species introduced by humanity during Askellon's millennia of existence. Some are even thought to be the result of forbidden gene-sculpting from the Dark Age of Technology.

Corpse-Crawler

Corpse-crawlers are large, worm-like parasites found mainly on the cemetery world of Thaur. They make their way into dead bodies, wrapping their grotesque forms throughout the corpse's innards and around its spine. Crawlers are able to motivate the invaded body using bio-electric jolts, animating it like a horrid, decaying puppet. For unknown reasons, they seem to prefer the corpses of sentient beings.

Instinct drives them to gather and use the host bodies to dig a large pit in the soil, wearing hands down to the bone in the process. Once finished, the creatures then direct their hosts inside, where the crawlers release a caustic acid that putrefies the corpses in minutes. The creatures gestate in this rotten swamp of liquefied flesh and floating bones, growing fat and bloated. Finally, the worms burst, each releasing dozens of spawn to grow until ready to seek their own host corpses, leaving behind nothing but a pile of sticky bones.

When a corpse-crawler is obstructed in its instinctual mission, it fights back using its host body, with strange, jerking motions. If threatened, it can also spray its acid, usually from the host's mouth, to inflict terrible damage.

If deprived of corpses, the creatures wrap themselves around skeletons and hibernate until disturbed or they sense decaying flesh. If they cannot find corpses to inhabit, the desperate creatures attack the living, favouring the sick and decrepit, and attacking with lamprey-like mouths filled with dozens of sharp, jagged teeth.

Corpse Crawler (Troop)				8
H – 01-10 2			WS 36	BS 30	S 31
Ar – 11-20 2	Al – 21-30 2		T 25	Ag 5 38	Int 27
B – 31-70 2			Per 48	WP 32	Fel —
Lr – 71-85 2	Ll – 86-00 2			Ifl —	
Half 3	Full 6	Charge 9	Run 18	Threat 5	
Acid Spray				Class Pistol	
Rng 10m	RoF S/–/–		Dmg 1d10+3 (E)		
Pen —	Clip —	Rld —	Wt —	Avl —	
Special: Spray, Toxic (2)					
Fangs				Class Melee	
Rng —	RoF —		Dmg 1d5+4[1+SB] (I)		
Pen 0	Clip —	Rld —	Wt —	Avl —	
Special: –					

Skills: Dodge (Ag) +10
Talents: Resistance (Poison)
Traits: Blind, Burrower (3), Crawler, Size (2), Deadly Natural Weapons, Unnatural Agility (2), Unnatural Senses (30)
Animate Corpse: As an Extended Action requiring two Full Actions, the corpse-crawler can animate and control a dead body by entering it and attaching to its nervous system. The corpse-crawler becomes an Elite NPC, but uses the Strength, Toughness, Agility, traits, and weapons of its host. The corpse-crawler can still use its acid spray, usually through the host's mouth.

While inhabiting a host body, the corpse-crawler cannot be targeted directly. If its host is killed, the corpse crawler is also killed. The corpse-crawler can exit its host as a Half Action. This destroys the host, removing all damage from the corpse-crawler and returning it to the normal profile above. Unless the creature is killed, or exits the host, it can continue to animate a host indefinitely.

Grox

Grox are found across the Imperium, raised for food and leather. In addition to being quite palatable, they are able to derive nutrients from nearly anything, and can even live for weeks on nothing save rocks and soil. Consequently, grox are raised on many agri-worlds as a major food source, and are a prized part of many Desoleum meals. They would perhaps be the perfect Imperial beast, were it not for their overly aggressive nature. To overcome this problem, many in Askellon are lobotomised, or kept subdued with chems or shock-units wired directly to their primitive brains. On the agri-world of Hannover, breeding grox are easily identifiable by the control mechanisms bolted to their skulls. Despite these precautions, and their natural mental slowness, herding is still a dangerous occupation. An enraged grox is easily able to toss a man high into the air, or quickly trample him to death. When encountered outside of their enclosures or in the wild, they are best approached with extreme caution. Thanks to their preponderance, "grox" has become a byword for both stupidity and strength across the galaxy.

Grox (Troop)						36
H 01-10 7			WS 34	BS —	S 5 46	
Ar 11-20 7		Al 21-30 7	T 7 49	Ag 37	Int 04	
B 31-70 7			Per 40	WP 21	Fel —	
Lr 71-85 7		Ll 86-00 7	Ifl —			
Half 5	Full 10	Charge 15	Run 30	Threat 5		
Horns and Claws				Class Melee		
Rng —	RoF —		Dmg 2d10+5SB (I)			
Pen 0	Clip —	Rld —	Wt —	Avl —		
Special: Tearing						

Talents: Thunder Charge
Traits: Deadly Natural Weapons, Quadruped, Size (6), Unnatural Strength (1), Unnatural Toughness (3)

Skargaul

Vicious predators, skargauls are the stuff of nightmares for voidfarers of the Askellon Sector. They are winged carnivores with a tough outer carapace, usually a flecked grey colour. Skargauls have no eyes, and even their maw of razor-sharp teeth is hidden behind their shell until they attack. The exoskeleton allows them to survive extended periods of time in hard void by entering a state of hibernation. In addition to their teeth and long, sharp claws, skargauls have a long tail ending with a hooked spike of bone, capable of piercing armour. They often use these to hitch a ride on a spacecraft's outer hull, the tail puncturing metal and latching the beast securely.

After such a long journey, skargauls are ravenously hungry and attack anything they can find. They leave nothing behind of their prey, even devouring bones and clothing. This can make their presence difficult to detect, with the only evidence being a string of mysterious crew disappearances and unexplained hull breaches.

For mysterious reasons, skargauls are attracted to artificial structures, posing a danger for void-ships, orbital stations, and even hive cities. It is also not known where these creatures originated, or how they came to Askellon. Over time, populations have established themselves on certain orbitals and even particular void-ships. Aboard a vessel with a known infestation, crews must be wary when entering seemingly empty holds, lest a hungry skargaul swoop from above. These vessels are considered ill-omened by void stations and planetary ports, for obvious reasons.

Skargaul (Elite)						8
H 01-10 4			WS 31	BS —	S 39	
Ar 11-20 4		Al 21-30 4	T 44	Ag 5 46	Int 23	
B 31-70 4			Per 40	WP 35	Fel —	
Lr 71-85 4		Ll 86-00 4	Ifl —			
Half 4	Full 8	Charge 12	Run 24	Threat 8		
Whip Tail				Class Melee		
Rng 2m	RoF —		Dmg 1d10+4I+SB (I)			
Pen 1	Clip —	Rld —	Wt —	Avl —		
Special: Flexible, Razor Sharp						
Claws and Fangs				Class Melee		
Rng —	RoF —		Dmg 1d5+4I+SB (I)			
Pen 0	Clip —	Rld —	Wt —	Avl —		
Special: –						

Skills: Dodge (Ag), Survival (Per) +10
Talents: Assassin Strike, Hard Target, Step Aside
Traits: Blind, Deadly Natural Weapons, Flyer (10), Size (3), Unnatural Agility (1), Unnatural Senses (150)
Void Predator: Skargauls are immune to the effects of vacuum and can, for all practical purposes, survive indefinitely without oxygen.



Smelt-Rats

Hive Desoleum hides innumerable mysteries and strange creatures. Smelt-rats, also known as smelters or scav-rats, exemplify both. These skeletal vermin have been present in the hive's dark and filthy corners for centuries, if not longer. No mere animals, they are marked out by the cybernetic components each features, with bionic eyes, reinforced tails, and metallic claws. Some specimens sport a single bionic part, while others are almost entirely covered in steel. Invariably, the bionics are in poor shape, corroded and sullied to match their verminous hosts. That they continue to be encountered, and in large numbers, after so many centuries speaks to either an innate method of reproduction, or that some unknown party is actively engaged in their fabrication. Both possibilities are equally disturbing.

Smelt-rats are most often found in the Gorges, but can lurk in abandoned or ill-maintained areas throughout the hive. They are usually timid, and flee from the light and the presence of humans. However, if individuals with bionics are nearby, smelt-rats are driven into a voracious frenzy, attacking in overwhelming waves of gnashing teeth, whirring servos, and chain-blade claws. Should the smelt-rats succeed in dragging down their prey, they continue to bite and tear, ripping the poor soul apart. Once done, the pack recedes, carrying with it the victim's cybernetics, while leaving most of the flesh and bone behind.

Smelt-Rat Swarm (Troop) 13

H 01-10	Ar 11-20	Al 21-30	B 31-70	Lr 71-85	Ll 86-00
3	3	3	3	3	3

WS	BS	S
34	—	28

T	Ag	Int
35	55	14

Per	WP	Fel
47	20	—

Ifl: —

Half 3 | Full 6 | Charge 9 | Run 18 | Threat 5

Mechanised Claws — Class Melee

Rng — | RoF — | Dmg 1d10+2SB (I)

Pen 0 | Clip — | Rld — | Wt — | Avl —

Special: *Tearing*

Talents: Resistance (Poison)

Traits: Amorphous, Dark-sight, Deadly Natural Weapons, Size (2 as swarm, 1 as single rat), Unnatural Senses (20)

Merge: If the smelt-rat swarm is in contact with two other smelt-rat swarms, it can, as a Full Action, merge with them to form a single smelt-rat king. All three swarms are destroyed, and in their place, the king operates on this swarm's Initiative.

Swarm: The smelt-rat swarm reduces damage taken from weapons without either the Blast or Spray qualities by 2.

Smelt-Rat King

Unsubstantiated rumours persist of so-called smelt-rat kings, composite creatures formed of numerous smelt-rats fused together in hideous and unnatural ways. Such tales speak of dozens or even hundreds of individual creatures conjoined by artificial components, with tails, wires, and cables tangled together and cemented with rust and filth. Some sources claim that smelt-rat kings display a kind of gestalt intelligence, the entwined creatures moving with single-minded purpose in the presence of bionic prey.

Smelt-Rat King (Elite) 30

H 01-10	Ar 11-20	Al 21-30	B 31-70	Lr 71-85	Ll 86-00
4	4	4	4	4	4

WS	BS	S 5
48	28	33

T	Ag	Int
43	36	14

Per	WP	Fel
52	33	02

Ifl: —

Half 3 | Full 6 | Charge 9 | Run 18 | Threat 8

Amalgam Weapons — Class Melee

Rng — | RoF — | Dmg 2d10+5SB (I)

Pen 0 | Clip — | Rld — | Wt — | Avl —

Special: *Concussive (0)*

Skills: Awareness (Per), Survival (Per)

Talents: Crushing Blow, Luminen Charge, Resistance (Poison)

Traits: Dark-sight, Deadly Natural Weapons, Multiple Arms (4), Size (4), Unnatural Senses (20), Unnatural Strength (2)

Split: As a Full-Action, a smelt-rat king can split into multiple smelt-rat swarms. The king is destroyed, and in its place, three smaller smelt-rat swarms are created. For each full 10 points of damage the smelt-rat king is suffering from, one less swarm is created, to a minimum of 1. The new swarms operate on this king's Initiative.

Tech-Eater: Smelt-rat kings and all smelt-rat swarms within 5m add +3 to all damage inflicted against vehicles, creatures with the Machine trait, or when they inflict a strike on a Hit Location that houses a cybernetic system.

Plantlife

Across the sector, native plant life both ordinary and exotic covers most worlds. As with the animal life of Askellon, the plants can be deadly—some deceptively so. Desoleum itself is mostly barren, and what might lurk in its dark oceans remains unknown. Inside the main hive, endless fungal species dominate within the iron walls. Many Underhive areas like the Gorges are only lit by these luminescent tendrils that line forgotten passages like ghostly fingers.

Boneweed

Found primarily on the agri-world of Kalto, this vine takes its name from its hard, segmented internal structure. The parasite takes root alongside other plants, coiling around them as it grows. It robs other plants of sunlight, but worse, uses vicious barbs to pierce victim plants, siphoning away nutrients. A single vine can spread across a wide field, decimating crops.

More disturbing is the effect boneweed has on animal life. Those that come near succumb to a violent psychosis, becoming mindlessly homicidal. This has resulted in many costly incidents, including the deaths of a great many animal stock and several massacres involving agri-workers. The plant is also believed to be the cause for incidents in other systems, where it has taken root on other planets. It is unknown if it is a resurgent native species; some even fear its introduction was a deliberate act of xenos sabotage, and that the plant might even be unnatural in origin.

Plant Physiology: Boneweed has a uniform Toughness of 20 (TB=2) and no Armour. It does not have Hit Locations and does not suffer from Critical effects. Each metre length of boneweed is treated as a separate target with 5 wounds (although once severed from the root, it dies in a matter of hours). Most growths are from 2 to 5 metres, although longer is possible. A boneweed's roots descend from 1 to 3 metres underground, and unless removed, the plant begins to regrow in days. When needed, treat a boneweed growth as having a Threat Level of 8.

Banemind: At the end of every third consecutive round a character spends within 15 metres of boneweed, he must make an Ordinary (+10) Willpower test. If he fails, he enters a Frenzy (as per the talent on page 127) and attacks the nearest character with whatever melee weapon is closest to hand. This condition lasts for 1d10 minutes after leaving the boneweed's presence.

Mind-Mould

Of the many hazards on the frontier world of Temperance, few are as insidious as the strain of parasitic fungus simply known as mind-mould. Aside from some minor respiratory irritation, the first sign of infection after inhaling its spores is a terrible rash, which presages the appearance of tuber-like growths that slowly and painfully tear their way through the skin. The fungus enters the brain, and the infected individual begins to exhibit increasingly erratic behaviour, before his body shuts down. Soon, the mind-mould completes its life cycle, when a build-up of gasses causes the victim's head to burst, scattering new spores everywhere.

Psykers seem especially susceptible, and the fungus attacks them more rapidly, disrupting use of their powers with more horrible results should they perish. When a psyker's brain explodes, it also disperses the mould's Warp-presence, somehow infecting other psykers far out of range of the physical spores.

A character exposed to mind-mould spores must make an Ordinary (+10) Toughness test to withstand infection. Over the next day, an infected character develops a painful rash. After a further 2d10 hours, fungal growths begin to emerge agonisingly from the character's skin. From this point, the character must make a Toughness test every hour, with a cumulative –10 penalty on each attempt. If he succeeds on any of the tests with three or more degrees of success, he has fought off the fungus and fully recovers. Those with the Medicae skill can assist, as per page 25.

Whenever an infected character fails this test, he suffers 10 points of Toughness damage and 5 points of Intelligence damage, and must roll on **Table 5–3: Hallucinogenic Effects** on page 146. He continues to test as above every 1d5 hours, but once his Toughness reaches 0, his head detonates, killing him instantly. This scatters a spore cloud over a 5 metre radius.

Psykers suffer a –20 penalty to the initial Toughness test to withstand infection. When using psychic powers, an infected psyker must always Push to 2 above his base psy rating. Psykers who perish from mind-mould infection not only emit a spore cloud, but also generates a psychic eruption. Each psyker within a number of kilometres equal to 1d10 times the dead psyker's Willpower bonus must also pass an Ordinary (+10) Willpower test to avoid infection.

The Enemy Within

"Be vigilant! Report suspicious activity to your immediate oatherseer or the nearest confessor."

–Parchment posted outside a smelt-haven tavern

Of all the threats to humanity's survival, none are so insidious as the enemy within. Xenos invaders may batter themselves bloody against the bulwark of the Imperium's mighty armed forces, but even the mightiest gate is of no use should a traitor unlock it from within. It was arch-treachery that nearly doomed the nascent Imperium in the dark days of the Horus Heresy, and ever since, the Imperium has remained vigilant against the enemy within.

Few realise the scope of the threat posed to Hive Desoleum from its inhabitants. Even Lady Desoleum and the Consortium are ignorant, by necessity, of many of the more profane heresies committed in the hive's history. From the Apex down, Warp dabblers, mutants, and profane covens infest its foundations. Heretics both noble and poor offer sacrifices to fell gods, all out of sight of the Sanctionaries and good, Emperor-fearing citizens.

Hive Desoleum has spawned numerous cults and secret societies. The Hidden Hand, Blessed Deliverance, the Children of the Red God, Carnival Pandaemonia—these are just a few of the malefic cults purged over the millennia. Some pose little danger apart from the innate heresy of their beliefs, while others have caused great devastation, fighting like a desperate animal when cornered. The Helbringers of Deth wielded dark powers and unnatural weapons, slaying numerous Arbitrators and incinerating three whole companies of the Involute Cadre in what became known as the Battle of Skabton. The knowledge of such cults is harshly suppressed, and the damage they wreak is frequently attributed to gang activity. Many cults have been purged, only to reappear time and again, some even spreading to Jarvin and Suzzum. One of the most entrenched and dangerous cults currently threatening Desoleum is that known as the Callers of Sorrow.



The Callers of Sorrow

Like a cancer worming its way throughout an unsuspecting body, the Callers of Sorrow spread their corruption unseen amongst the hive populace. They have numerous aid houses under a variety of covers, where they offer assistance to the sick and injured lacking access to medicae support. They also comfort those crushed with despair, carefully hiding the cult's true nature from all those seeking help. The cult's flesh savants can tend to the pain of the sick and dying with supernatural efficacy, and can even extend life—for the right price, paid in much more than mere hive-scrip or oath-extensions.

Hive Desoleum is sometimes likened to a living thing, a great creature of metal. To the Callers of Sorrow, the hive is all but dead, and their purpose is to hasten its inevitable collapse. They look to the Underhive's decrepitude as Desoleum's ultimate fate, and see any attempts to forestall this as futile and foolish. With morose glee, they seek to accelerate the hive's fall. When first inducted, members are educated on these elements, and they often view it as an act of rebellion against their cruel masters. As they are inducted deeper into the cult's beliefs, they learn that the decay is not symbolic, but literal, as the higher echelons seek to harness the power of the Warp to bring about their goals.

The Callers of Sorrows are organised in a cell structure, each functioning as a complete cult in its own right, each subservient to a charismatic and powerful Preceptor. Only the higher-ranked members even realise there are levels beyond the bounds of their sect. Each cell, known as a Strain within the cult, centres its activities and rites on a different aspect of decay or disease. When a Strain takes action against the hive, it does so in a way that corresponds to its speciality, viewing the hive as a living creature supported by numerous organ systems. A Strain that focuses on diseases of the respiratory system, for instance, might plot to damage the hive's air-cyclers, or use them to dispense an airborne pathogen.

As if in imitation of disease itself, most Strains are content to bide their time before making a move, festering unseen as they lay careful plans, taking pains not to reveal themselves until it is too late for the hive to halt its infection. Sanctionaries and Arbites are often caught unprepared, as when nearly a decade ago the Leech Children slowly introduced a deadly affliction into a major water distillery. The total death count from this pollution of the hive's lifeblood is unknown, but still rising. To date, five districts have been placed under quarantine.

The Profane and Heretical

These humans have forsaken the Emperor's Light in the worship of the Pestilent Lord, and exist only to see Hive Desoleum brought low with decay and death. Many cultists twist their oath-bonds to the cult's ends, from a labourer slowing production to a noble funnelling his family's wealth to finance his loathsome Strain. The longer one remains in the cult, however, and the greater his dedication, the more his body reflects the decay in his soul. As the cultists engage in blasphemous rituals to call on the pestilent powers of Chaos, their own living flesh decays or succumbs to unnatural diseases, leaving them alive yet horribly afflicted. Even their oath-cogs become rusted beyond all function, decayed and layered with grime.

Preceptor

It takes a strong personality to lead a cult, along with the capability to twist minds against all that a good citizen of the Imperium believes. The leaders of the Callers of Sorrow are no exception. Preceptors, as they call themselves, often present an aura of morose amusement, rather than the fiery bombast other cult leaders utilise. They allege absurdity in the oath-system, providing an exit for disillusioned hivers unhappy with their lot. Some Preceptors are drawn to the worship of Chaos primarily as a way to further their personal power and influence, while others are fanatically devoted to the tenets of the Callers of Sorrow. All are charismatic and strong-willed, and extremely dangerous foes.

Preceptor (Master) 33

H	AR	AL	B	LR	LL
01-10 6	11-20 2 8	21-30 2 8	31-70 2 8	71-85 2 8	86-00 2 8

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Ifl
37	41	45	6 42	27	56	43	46	42	38

Half 2	Full 4	Charge 6	Run 12	Threat 29

Boltgun — Class Basic

Rng 100m	RoF S/3/–	Dmg 1d10+5 (X)		
Pen 4	Clip 24	Rld 1 Full	Wt 7 Kg	Avl VR

Special: *Tearing*

Skills: Awareness (Per), Command (Fel) +20, Deceive (Fel) +20, Dodge (Ag), Forbidden Lore (Daemonology) (Int) +10
Talents: Jaded, Peer (Heretical Cults), True Grit
Traits: Touched by the Fates (2), Unnatural Toughness (2)
Gear: Flak robes, ceremonial talismans
Look Out Sir!: Once per round, as a Reaction, after a successful attack test is made against the Preceptor (but before Hit Locations are determined), he can nominate one other allied character within 5 metres. That character becomes the new target of the attack, and the attack proceeds as normal.

Pox Magister

Whether through the emergence of psychic abilities or pacts with Daemonic entities, many Preceptors are practitioners of the dark arts. Fearsome displays of unfettered sorcery further cement their control over the cult, proving the might of Chaos. These sorcerers are horrific in action, their honeyed words and gestures able to tear reality itself apart to draw forth the Warp's corrupting energies.

Pox Magister (Master) 21

H	AR	AL	B	LR	LL
01-10 5	11-20 3 8	21-30 3 8	31-70 3 8	71-85 3 8	86-00 3 8

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Ifl
48	38	35	6 45	34	44	52	66	38	27

Half 3	Full 6	Charge 9	Run 18	Threat 30

Force Sword — Class Melee

Rng —	RoF —	Dmg 1d10+7[I+PR+SB](E)		
Pen 5[2+PR]	Clip —	Rld —	Wt 5 Kg	Avl NU

Special: *Balanced, Force*

Skills: Awareness (Per) +10, Command (Fel) +10, Parry (WS), Forbidden Lore (Daemonology) (Int) +20, Psyniscience (Per) +10
Talents: Bastion of Iron Will, Resistance (Disease, Psychic Powers), Strong Minded, Warp Sense
Traits: Psyker (PR 3), Touched by the Fates (1), Unnatural Toughness (2)
Psychic Powers: Endurance, Enfeeble, Life Leech, Nurgle's Rot (see sidebar on page 406)
Gear: Flak robes, tomes and scrolls of arcane lore



Contagion Demagogue

These foul spreaders of untruth and heresy are one of the most dangerous enemies an Acolyte might encounter. This is not due to combat prowess, though they may indeed be formidable, but the power these traitors wield over their followers. Some were formerly loyal preachers, now turned apostate and capable of corrupting those from their flock and beyond. Even those without a background in the Cult Imperialis possess such strength of faith and oration that their speeches can draw great crowds. Poisoned in mind and spirit, the masses readily hail the demagogue as prophet.

Contagion Demagogue (Elite) 15

H	AR	AL	B	LR	LL
2	3	3	3	3	3
01-10	11-20	21-30	31-70	71-85	86-00

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	Wp	Fel	Ifl
41	35	37	28	32	44	46	47	39	—

Fel 5

Half 3 | Full 6 | Charge 9 | Run 18 | Threat 10

Laspistol — Class Pistol

Rng 30m	RoF S/2/–	Dmg 1d10+2 (E)		
Pen 0	Clip 18	Rld Half	Wt 1.5 Kg	Avl Cm

Special: Reliable

Chainsword — Class Melee

Rng —	RoF —	Dmg 1d10+5²+SB (R)		
Pen 2	Clip —	Rld —	Wt 6 Kg	Avl Av

Special: Balanced, Tearing

Skills: Charm (Fel) +10, Command (Fel) +10, Deceive (Fel) +10, Intimidate (S) +10
Talents: Hatred (Everything), Adamantium Faith
Traits: Unnatural Fellowship (2)
Gear: Cult robes, and religious or blasphemous icons
Unholy Oration: As a Half Action, the demagogue may make an Ordinary (+10) Command test to sap the will of those who oppose him. If he succeeds at this test, a number of targets (up to his Fellowship bonus) that are in line of sight and earshot suffer 1 level of Fatigue. Note that a character can only be affected by this action once during an encounter; multiple uses do not stack on the same target.

Strain Initiate

New recruits to the Callers are found everywhere in the hive, from sickly dregs in the Gorges to ailing Apex nobles fearing the emptiness of their lives. Regardless of their birth or previous deeds, each has forfeited his soul by turning to the power of Chaos. Most are able to continue in their old lives and occupations as they rise in the cult, their appearance as yet unblemished by Chaos. Many accept or self-inflict ritual wounds and brands, allowing them to fester until few can avoid noticing the stench and filth.

Strain Initiate (Troop) 11

H	AR	AL	B	LR	LL
4	4	4	4	4	4
01-10	11-20	21-30	31-70	71-85	86-00

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	Wp	Fel	Ifl
30	33	35	34	37	24	36	29	32	—

Half 3 | Full 6 | Charge 9 | Run 18 | Threat 5

Stub Revolver — Class Pistol

Rng 30m	RoF S/–/–	Dmg 1d10+3 (I)		
Pen 0	Clip 6	Rld 2 Full	Wt 1.5 Kg	Avl Pl

Special: Reliable

Skills: Medicae (Int) +10
Gear: Dirty robes

Nurgle's Rot

The psyker focuses his mind on the generosity of Grandfather Nurgle, drawing forth from the Warp a great gift of disease to share with those around him. A noxious and unnatural slime splashes across all those nearby, infecting them with the galaxy's most perfect disease.
Action: Half Action
Focus Power: Difficult (–10) Willpower test
Range: 2 metres x Psy Rating
Sustained: No
Subtype: Attack
Effect: Each character within range (excluding Daemons of Nurgle and those sufficiently devoted to the Plague God) must make a Toughness test. Each target that fails the test immediately suffers 2 x PR Strength damage and 2 x PR Toughness damage. If this results in a character's death, the character is reborn after 2d5 rounds as a loathsome Plaguebearer (see page 415).

Strain Infector

Full Strain members gain further access into the mysteries of the Callers of Sorrow, and their minds and souls become twisted beyond redemption as their devotion deepens. They often wear concealing clothing, for their forms are marked with the infections and diseases they eagerly share as ordered. Knowing the fate that awaits them at the hands of the Sanctionaries, infectors refuse to surrender, and are rarely taken alive.

Strain Infector (Troop) 13

H 01-10	–	4			
Ar 11-20	1	5	Al 21-30	1	5
B 31-70	1	5			
Lr 71-85	–	4	Ll 86-00	–	4

WS	BS	S
34	42	35
T	**Ag**	**Int**
42	48	28
Per	**WP**	**Fel**
44	37	27
Ifl		
—		

Half 4	Full 8	Charge 12	Run 24	Threat 6

Autogun Class Basic

Rng 100m	RoF S/3/–	Dmg 1d10+3 (I)		
Pen 0	Clip 30	Rld 1 Full	Wt 5 Kg	Avl Av

Special: –

Skills: Acrobatics (Ag), Dodge (Ag) +10, Medicae (Int) +10, Sleight of Hand (Ag) +10
Talents: Hip Shooting
Gear: Hive leathers
Unholy Resilience: Attacks targeting the infector's insensitive form cannot trigger Righteous Fury.

Pestilentant

Fanatically devoted to the Callers of Sorrow, these zealots show little regard for their own lives. They are steeped in the corruption of Chaos, their bloated bodies deformed in reflection of their impure souls. Though less affected than mutants, the touch of the Warp is evident on them through festering wounds, pus-filled boils, and hideous pox-scars. In order to operate publicly, pestilentants must conceal their wretched forms completely, commonly using heavy rebreathers, enclosed furnace suits, or hooded robes. Most are far too insane to be trusted with delicate assignments, so their appearance is often the prelude to an all-out attack.



Pestilentant (Troop) 15

H 01-10	–	5			
Ar 11-20	–	5	Al 21-30	–	5
B 31-70	1	6			
Lr 71-85	–	5	Ll 86-00	–	5

WS	BS	S 6
45	21	43
T 5	**Ag**	**Int**
44	36	32
Per	**WP 5**	**Fel**
43	39	20
Ifl		
—		

Half 3	Full 6	Charge 9	Run 18	Threat 8

Sword Class Melee

Rng	RoF —	Dmg 1d10+6SB (R)		
Pen 0	Clip —	Rld —	Wt 3 Kg	Avl CM

Special: Balanced

Skills: Acrobatics (Ag) +10, Intimidate (S) +20
Talents: Devastating Assault
Traits: Unnatural Strength (2), Unnatural Toughness (1), Unnatural Willpower (2)
Gear: Leather scrap armour
Exploit Weakness: When making a melee attack a target with at least 1 level of Fatigue, the pestilentant gains a +10 bonus to the Weapon Skill test for each level of Fatigue the target has.

The Twisted and Monstrous

For those afflicted by mutation, hope is a luxury long since cast aside. It is a constant problem in Hive Desoleum, often the result of toxic manufacturing by-products and ancient radiation hazards in the deep hive. Hivers are taught from birth to hate and shun the mutant, a common decree from the pulpit. They know that mutation is an outward sign of an evil nature, a punishment and mark of sin. Indeed, the touch of Chaos and exposure to the Warp cause mutation at least as surely as any toxic hazards. No matter the source, a hiver with a minor mutation might attempt to hide it and go about his life, but always knows even his family would turn on him should they discover the truth.

Mutants are common in the Gorges, where dangerous environmental pollutants combine to result in horrifically unstable genes. Entire mutant populations gather and thrive in these dark reaches. Certain manufactorums in the lowest hive levels, collectively denigrated as blighted factories, tolerate mutants among their workforce. Even by hive standards, these labourers are treated brutally. Within the Main Hive, mutants must be cautious, as wandering into the wrong hab might get them attacked and burned alive. It is no surprise that many discard their oaths and flee far downhive. Isolated in the Dark far below Desoleum, they often become the flesh-eating monsters that hivers assume them to be.

Fleshbent

The Callers of Sorrow offer a natural home for mutants whose deformities are an obvious symptom of the hive's decay, and hail them as the blessed fleshbent. Some are motivated to join by hatred for the hive that has persecuted them, others simply to be amongst like-minded souls and individuals who care not for, or even celebrate, their mutations. Worse still are those who became mutants in the course of their service to the Callers of Sorrow. As cult members partake further in the worship of the Lord of Decay and the rituals of the Warp, their flesh rebels at the unnatural influence of the Immaterium. Many cultists view these mutations as blessings from the Gods of Chaos, and as they pay their respect to the Lord of Decay, the gifts often include writhing tentacles, jointed eyestalks, extra heads, bestial features, or crowns of flickering balefire.

Some are horrifically altered creatures beyond even the grotesqueries of mutant wretches. With no place in society, it is natural that they flock to Chaos cults. While some retain their minds, at least as much as any servant of Chaos can, others are afflicted by madness and mental decay. They are often a great asset to the cult for their ferocity in combat, but of little use otherwise. Depending on the nature of their physical mutations, such dim-witted or insane creatures might be given a place of respect amongst the cult. Known as the Favoured of the Father, their nonsensical ramblings are taken as prophecy, and they act as advisors to the cult leadership.

Fleshbent (Troop) 11

H	AR	AL	B	LR	LL
4	4	4	5	4	4
01-10	11-20	21-30	31-70	71-85	86-00

WS	BS	S
37	46	33

T	AG	INT
37	35	35

PER	WP	FEL
43	44	25

IFL —

Half 3	Full 6	Charge 9	Run 18	Threat 7

Shotgun — Class Basic

Rng 30m	RoF S/–/–	Dmg 1d10+4 (I)		
Pen 0	Clip 8	Rld 2 Full	Wt 5 Kg	Avl Av

Special: Scatter

Skills: Survival (Per) +10
Traits: Unnatural Strength (1), Unnatural Toughness (1)
Gear: Scavenged leather armour, broken trinkets and mementos
Fleshbent: These lowly mutants exhibit a wide array of strange and terrible alterations from the blessed form of humanity, and the GM should apply appropriate traits and entries from **Table 8–16: Mutations** on page 292 to create unique mutants to face the PCs.

Malatant

Some mutants grow to inhuman size, their profane nature marked by impossible masses of muscle and dense flesh. The Callers of Sorrow actively seek out these creatures for their sheer physical bulk, their misshapen bodies a reflection of their Pestilent Father's corpulent bounty.

Malatant (Elite) 27

H	AR	AL	B	LR	LL
6	9	9	9	6	6
01-10	11-20	21-30	31-70	71-85	86-00

WS	BS	S
41	27	55

T	AG	INT
61	30	31

PER	WP	FEL
44	36	28

IFL —

Half 4	Full 8	Charge 12	Run 24	Threat 10

Great Weapon — Class Melee

Rng —	RoF —	Dmg 2d10+5SB (R)		
Pen 0	Clip —	Rld —	Wt 7 Kg	Avl SC

Special: Unbalanced

Skills: Athletics (S) +20, Survival (Per) +10
Talents: Crushing Blow, Iron Jaw
Traits: Size (5)
Gear: Scavenged flak armour, gruesome trophies
Smash to the Ground: Whenever a malatant strikes with an attack, the target also suffers 1d5+5 Agility damage.

Necrophage

These hideous mutants have taken on diseased and even necrotic appearances. In the most extreme cases, they must even feed on human flesh to sustain their own decaying forms. They are especially favoured within the Callers of Sorrow, who see them as the most blessed of Nurgle's mortal children.

Necrophage (Elite) 19

H	AR	AL	B	LR	LL
3	4	4	4	3	3
01-10	11-20	21-30	31-70	71-85	86-00

WS	BS	S
64	36	44

T	AG	INT
39	50	28

PER	WP	FEL
47	45	33

IFL —

Half 5	Full 10	Charge 15	Run 30	Threat 10

Cleaver — Class Melee

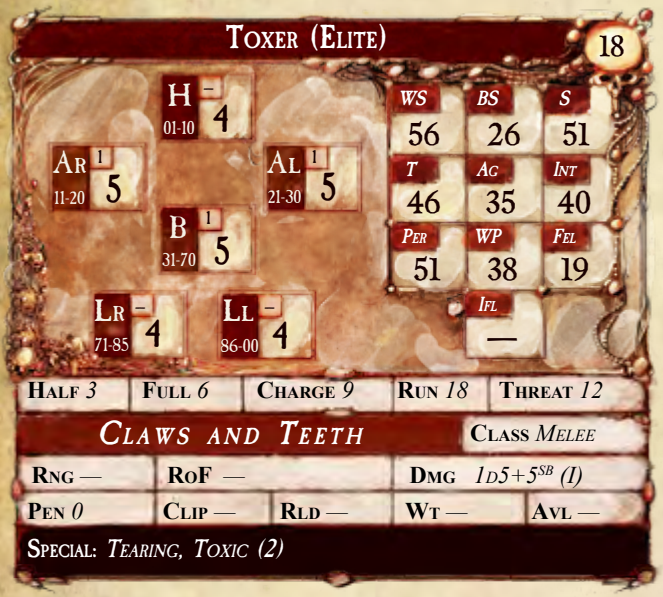
Rng —	RoF —	Dmg 1d10+4SB (R)		
Pen 1	Clip —	Rld —	Wt 3 Kg	Avl CM

Special: Unbalanced

Skills: Acrobatics (Ag) +10, Dodge (Ag) +10, Survival (Per) +10
Talents: Assassin Strike, Constant Vigilance (Per)
Traits: Fear (1), Regeneration (6)
Gear: Scavenged leather armour
Leaching: Whenever he successfully inflicts damage to an enemy with a melee attack, the necrophage immediately removes 1d5+4 damage from himself.

Toxer

The mutants known to some as toxers often thrive amidst the noxious chemical lakes of the Dark. These impossible creatures' twisted forms exude blighted chemicals fatal to normal humans, and often house hideous nests of twisted vermin in place of internal organs.



Skills: Survival (Per) +20
Talents: True Grit
Traits: Amphibious, Deadly Natural Weapons
Gear: Scavenged leather armour
Toxer Cloud: Whenever the toxer suffers damage, he immediately creates a debilitating miasma centred at his location with a radius of 3 metres that lasts for 5 rounds. While within a toxer cloud, enemy characters suffer –20 penalty on all tests; this penalty does not stack if an enemy is within multiple clouds.

Psykers

Psykers who do not submit to the Black Ships of the Adeptus Astra Telepathica are universally dangerous, for even the least of them can still be the doom of an entire world. Every unprotected mind is a potential gateway through which the Daemons of the Warp can enter reality.

Unsanctioned psykers can hope for no peace in Hive Desoleum. Eventually, their nature is discovered, and they must fight or flee death by fire at the hands of a fearful mob. Some turn to the Dark Gods, for Chaos promises a path to power and perhaps even safety. A cult is one of the few places where rogue psykers are welcomed; the Callers of Sorrow in particular seek them out eagerly. From minor Warp-callers to terrifying Warp-priests, they are often used in cult rituals to beseech the Plague Father for new blessings to inflict on their foes.



Skills: Psyniscience (Per) +20
Traits: Psyker (PR 2), Unnatural Willpower (2)
Psychic Powers: Enfeeble, Hallucination, Misfortune
Gear: Robes, assorted talismans and fetishes, malefic texts



Skills: Dodge (Ag) +10, Psyniscience (Per) +30
Talents: Constant Vigilance (Per), Warp Sense
Traits: Psyker (PR 4), Unnatural Willpower (1)
Psychic Powers: Assail, Fiery Form, Iron Arm, Life Leech, Smite
Gear: Robes, false oath-cog
Psy Drain: As a Free Action, once per round, the Warp-priest may target one psyker ally within 10 metres who possesses a psy rating lower than his own. The target immediately suffers 1d5+5 Willpower damage and the Warp-priest then increases his psy rating by 1 for the remainder of the round.

Spawn of Chaos

The Ruinous Powers reward their followers with all manner of gifts. These twist bodies and minds in ways impossible to imagine, perhaps adding acidic saliva, an exoskeleton of red-hot rock, or leathery wings. To follow the Path of Chaos is to accept these gifts, no matter what deformities they bring, for at the end is the ultimate blessing of ascension to a Daemon Prince. There is, however, only so much mortal flesh can withstand before sanity and physical control is forever lost. If a mortal is not transformed into a Daemon, there comes a time when the mutations become overwhelming and he becomes a Spawn of Chaos.

A Spawn is a monstrous sight, each a unique, gibbering mass of tissue that should not possibly live but still does, powered through the unholy energy of the Dark Gods. Some might have multitudes of oily tentacles, or have grown insectoid eyes, or even sprouted new faces along their body that scream their pain with each motion. The Callers of Sorrow often have small numbers of Spawn chained in the lower depths of their strongholds, where they are worshipped as divine revelations of the power of Chaos made manifest. Often the Spawn are fed with captured enemies, or set loose to cause terror as part of larger cult actions.

Spawn of Chaos (Elite) 35

H 01-10			WS †	BS †	S †
Ar 11-20 †		Al 21-30 †	T †	Ag †	Int —
B 31-70 †			Per †	Wp †	Fel —
Lr 71-85 †		Ll 86-00 †	Ifl —		

Half *AB*	Full *2AB*	Charge *3AB*	Run *6AB*	Threat *11*

Clawed Tentacles — Class *Melee*

Rng *2m*	RoF —		Dmg *1d10+†SB(I)*	
Pen *1*	Clip —	Rld —	Wt —	Avl —

Special: *Flexible, Snare (I), Toxic (I)*

Traits: Deadly Natural Weapons, Fear (3), From Beyond, Regeneration (12)

†Constant Mutation: Roll 30+3d10 to determine each of the Chaos Spawn's characteristics at the start of each new encounter. GMs should feel free though to alter these as desired to create specific Spawn, and are encouraged to apply traits and results from **Table 8–16: Mutations** on page 292 to fashion even greater variety for these monstrous creatures.



Preceptor Poxifex Achkovas Spengh

Known only to the Preceptors of the various cult Strains, the overall master of the Callers of Sorrow is Achkovas Spengh, the Preceptor Poxifex. Spengh's history is unclear even to the cult's inner circle. None would suspect it was his dark ambitions that founded the cult centuries ago. The blessings of Nurgle have kept Spengh alive far beyond his natural lifespan, though whether he can still be considered alive in the conventional sense is an open question. Though possessed of an unnatural vigour, the touch of the Plague God is evident. Spengh is horrible to look upon, a bloated mass of ruptured and rotting flesh swathed in filth-encrusted robes that he has worn as long as any can remember. He directs the cult from a concealed abode deep within the darkest and oldest recesses of the Hive, his hideous visage safely hidden from prying eyes.

The Preceptor Poxifex is an appallingly powerful sorcerer, swollen with Nurgle's pestilence. As long as Spengh exists, so do the Callers of Sorrow. Even were each Strain purged and each mutant heaped on the pyre, he could regrow the cult like a corrupt weed. Though it may take centuries for his plans to reach full effect, Spengh is nothing if not patient.

The Enemy Without

"He who provides shelter and aid to the xenos shares its crime of existence."

–Deacon Loethe

Since Mankind first travelled to the stars, he has faced the threat of the alien. Myriad xenos races populate the galaxy, some old beyond comprehension, others even younger than humanity. Most of these have proved hostile to Mankind and its divine right to rule the galaxy. During the Great Crusade and in the time since, the Imperium has destroyed numerous species, whether in defence of its borders, in the name of conquest, or simply for their crime of existence. Though Askellon faces obvious threats from a variety of alien races, the ancient Eldar represent a more subtle but no less important danger to the sector.

Craftworld Miandrothe

While many within Askellon know of the Eldar's presence in the sector from their continual raiding attacks, none are aware that one of their huge city-ships, known as craftworlds, is within the sector. Drifting silently in the void, the Eldar craftworld of Miandrothe's presence in Askellon is as-yet unknown to the Imperium.

For their own reasons, the Eldar of Craftworld Miandrothe have come to the sector, concealing their presence to unknown ends. The craftworld has traversed Askellon for many centuries, ever vigilant for an eternal foe. As the Pandaemonium has risen, the Eldar have not fled for safer reaches. Rather, they have chosen to remain, even should it spell their doom and eternal damnation. What peril might cause an entire craftworld and its people to sacrifice themselves in this manner remains a secret only the Eldar could comprehend.

The Eldar have proven time and again unfathomable to the human mind. Their behaviour seems both erratic and callous, for the Eldar value the survival of their race above all else. The seers who guide the craftworlds are gifted with great foresight, and would bring about the death of millions of humans if in so doing the life of a single Eldar was saved. Their schemes might develop for many years, even centuries, before their true goals become apparent to human perceptions.

So it is that Miandrothe came to Askellon long ago, perhaps in order to instigate some great event, or to stop it, or perhaps simply to be present come the appointed hour. It might be that some threats lie buried within the sector, ready to eradicate the entire Eldar race. In such a battle, the works of Man are as nothing to the Eldar, the Emperor's domains no more than battlegrounds to be fought over in a war of cosmic proportions.

While the Eldar of Craftworld Miandrothe have yet to reveal themselves to the Imperium, the sector has long suffered at the predations of Eldar Corsairs, most notably the band known as the Dusk Vipers. Corsairs do not stifle themselves with self-imposed restrictions of the Paths, as do the Craftworld Eldar, but pursue a lifestyle much closer to that enjoyed before the Fall. The Dusk Vipers lead lives of excitement and experience, ever travelling, ever seeking to prove their superiority over the younger races. Through their raids, the Dusk Vipers seek wealth and renown, but perhaps above all they seek the exhilaration of battle. Eldar experience every facet of life, from the heights of joy to the depths of sorrow, to a greater extent than humans can comprehend. This extends to the experience of combat, both the pursuit of perfection in the art of warfare, and in the visceral thrill of spilling an enemy's blood and ending a life.

In the eyes of the Dusk Vipers, the Eldar are, as they ever were, the masters of the galaxy. For the Navy and merchant fleet of Askellon, however, they are an inscrutable terror that lurks in the darkness between stars. As with all of their kind, the Eldar pirates in the sector have shown time and again that they are unpredictable and erratic in the extreme. The apparent purpose of their raids is often to obtain wealth and resources, and some Eldar captains have been known to give quarter and avoid unnecessary bloodshed so long as they receive their bounty. At other times, the Eldar have behaved as if their only desire was to inflict pain and death on humanity, as was the case on the colony world of Polthos, where the Eldar butchered the population and dragged away the survivors to an unthinkable fate. On a few occasions, though, Eldar vessels have unexpectedly come to the aid of beleaguered Imperial ships.

Though Craftworld Miandrothe is hidden from the Imperium, this is not to say that its inhabitants have been inactive. Under the guidance of Farseer Mandr'thiel, the Miandrothe Eldar enact small-scale operations to their own inscrutable ends. Each year, the frequency of these Eldar attacks increases, and some in the craftworld fear that Mandr'thiel is becoming too reckless. So far, Askellon's rulers have attributed many of these incidents to Corsair activity, while remaining completely ignorant of others. In addition to these raids and other, stranger, missions on Imperial soil, Miandrothe's Eldar have engaged in skirmishes and battles with an ancient and implacable foe, arising from its slumber on scattered, dead planets across the sector. Of late, its Rangers have especially deigned to tread farther in some mysterious search. The Bone-World of Thaur and the cursed realm of Tuchulcha have been of particular interest to them, and whatever they hope to find must be of considerable import.

Despite their radically different viewpoints, the Dusk Vipers have long been allies and accomplices to the Eldar of Craftworld Miandrothe. As well as trading extensively, often in Miandrothe's favour, the Dusk Vipers have assisted their craftworld cousins on many occasions. In addition to providing information and resources obtained in their piratical raids, the Dusk Vipers have been known to accompany Miandrothe Eldar in their offensives against the Imperium and other foes.

Eldar Guardian

Artisans, intellectuals, craftsmen, poets—all Eldar must also be prepared to take up the mantle of Guardian in the defence of their craftworld. Though their abilities are far less than those who tread the Path of the Warrior, Eldar Guardians are nonetheless a deadly force, capable of defeating many times their own number, even when facing the elite soldiery of the lesser races. Their natural speed and grace put them at a great advantage over human warriors.

They are commonly armed with shuriken catapults—sophisticated weapons that fire hails of monomolecular-edged discs, scything down numerous foes in moments. Catapults slice discs from a solid ammunition core and launch them with incredible speed through gravitic means that baffle the Adeptus Mechanicus. That they equip their militia with weaponry that defies the understanding of humanity's greatest minds speaks highly to the sophistication of Eldar technology.

Even compared to other craftworlds, Miandrothe has a small population, and its citizen-warriors are enlisted only in the direst of circumstances. For its Guardians to travel from their home surely indicates a truly grave prediction by Miandrothe's Seers.

Eldar Guardian (Troop) 12

H 4 01-10 7			WS 34	BS 38	S 38
AR 4 11-20 7		AL 4 21-30 7	T 32	Ag 6 39	Int 35
	B 4 31-70 7		Per 4 38	WP 33	Fel 32
LR 4 71-85 7		LL 4 86-00 7		Ifl —	

Half 6	Full 12	Charge 18	Run 36	Threat 7

Shuriken Catapult — Class Basic

Rng 80m	RoF S/3/10		Dmg 1d10+4 (R)	
Pen 3	Clip 100	Rld 1 Full	Wt 2.5 kg	Avl Er

Special: Razor Sharp, Reliable

Skills: Acrobatics (Ag) +30, Awareness (Per) +10, Dodge (Ag) +10, Operate (Surface), Stealth (Ag) +20
Talents: Hip Shooting, Independent Targeting, Sprint
Traits: Unnatural Agility (3), Unnatural Perception (1)
Gear: Eldar mesh armour, spirit stone
Battle Focus: Once per round, on his turn, the Guardian can move a number of metres equal to his Agility bonus as a Free Action.

Dusk Viper Corsair

While the Eldar of Craftworld Miandrothe only take up arms in times of great need, their cousins from the Dusk Vipers Corsair fleet roaming the sector are no strangers to frequent violence. Whether out of need, spite, or the mere thrill, the Dusk Vipers leap from one assault to another, ever eager for spoils and glory. They are more than a thorn in the sector's side; they are akin more to a blade, one that stabs again and again, and each time from an unexpected quarter. The frontier world of Zasse, the asteroid mining colony of Sulliman's Ascent, and countless vessels of Askellon's merchant fleets—all have known the predations of these vicious Eldar raiders.

Dusk Viper Corsair (Elite) 12

H 4 01-10 7			WS 43	BS 37	S 42
AR 4 11-20 7		AL 4 21-30 7	T 39	Ag 7 44	Int 39
	B 4 31-70 7		Per 6 46	WP 39	Fel 44
LR 4 71-85 7		LL 4 86-00 7		Ifl —	

Half 7	Full 14	Charge 21	Run 42	Threat 8

Shuriken Catapult — Class Basic

Rng 80m	RoF S/3/10		Dmg 1d10+4 (R)	
Pen 3	Clip 100	Rld 1 Full	Wt 2.5 kg	Avl Er

Special: Razor Sharp, Reliable

Eldar Sword — Class Melee

Rng —	RoF —		Dmg 1d10+5[1+SB] (R)	
Pen 1	Clip —	Rld —	Wt 3 kg	Avl Vr

Special: Balanced

Skills: Acrobatics (Ag) +30, Awareness (Per) +10, Dodge (Ag) +10, Operate (Aeronautica, Surface, Voidship) +20, Parry (Ag), Stealth (Ag) +20
Talents: Blade Master, Swift Attack, Whirlwind of Death
Traits: Unnatural Agility (3), Unnatural Perception (2)
Gear: Eldar mesh armour, spirit stone
Elusive: After performing a successful Dodge test, the Corsair imposes a –10 penalty on all attacks which target him until the beginning of his next turn.



Eldar Ranger

For some Eldar, the structured life of a craftworld is too much to shoulder. They undertake the Path of the Outcast—leaving their home to experience the full range of experiences the galaxy has to offer. Known as Rangers, these Eldar wander the forgotten paths of the webway, travelling from planet to planet and even visiting other, distant craftworlds. Few totally forsake their home; most return periodically, bringing news of significant events, or particularly interesting experiences. Each year, more of Miandrothe's children undertake this path. Their elders know better than to try to deter them, for as long as that wanderlust remains unquenched, it is impossible to properly devote oneself to a Path within the craftworld.

Rangers are masters of stealth. The natural grace of the Eldar, combined with sophisticated chameleoline cloaks, guarantees that their presence is seldom known until they launch their attack. However, Rangers are by their nature unconventional, and as likely to act simply on their own curiosity as for the good of Miandrothe. Though Rangers sometimes operate on their own, they often band together, both for defence and for the kinship of their own kind. Where there is one Ranger, any number of others could be hidden, appearing as vengeful ghosts when they strike.

Eldar Ranger (Elite) 12

H	AR	AL	B	LR	LL
4 7 (01-10)	4 7 (11-20)	4 7 (21-30)	4 7 (31-70)	4 7 (71-85)	4 7 (86-00)

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Ifl
42	49	37	34	7 48	39	6 44	42	44	—

Half 7 | Full 14 | Charge 21 | Run 42 | Threat 14

Eldar Long Rifle — Class Basic

Rng 250m | RoF S/–/– | Dmg 1d10+12 (E)

Pen 2 | Clip 18 | Rld 1 Full | Wt 4 Kg | Avl NU

Special: Accurate, Felling (2), Reliable

Skills: Acrobatics (Ag) +10, Awareness (Per) +10, Dodge (Ag) +10, Stealth (Ag) +30, Survival (Per) +10
Talents: Marksman
Traits: Unnatural Agility (3), Unnatural Perception (2)
Gear: Light Eldar mesh armour, chameleoline cloak, spirit stone
Living Ghost: The Ranger scores two extra degrees of success on successful Stealth tests.

Eldar Pathfinder

While most Eldar who tread the Path of the Outcast remain on it only for a time before returning to their craftworld, there are a few who become locked on the Path. Over many human lifetimes, these Pathfinders perfect the skills that keep them alive on their journeys, becoming unparalleled marksmen and masters of stealth. By the standards of Miandrothe, they are strange and eccentric, their presence often merely tolerated. Like all Eldar, though, Pathfinders ferociously protect the secretive existence of their craftworld from the lesser species.

Eldar Pathfinder (Elite) 12

H	AR	AL	B	LR	LL
4 7 (01-10)	4 7 (11-20)	4 7 (21-30)	4 7 (31-70)	4 7 (71-85)	4 7 (86-00)

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Ifl
45	54	43	38	7 49	46	7 46	47	37	—

Half 7 | Full 14 | Charge 21 | Run 42 | Threat 17

Eldar Long Rifle — Class Basic

Rng 250m | RoF S/–/– | Dmg 1d10+12 (E)

Pen 2 | Clip 18 | Rld 1 Full | Wt 4 Kg | Avl NU

Special: Accurate, Felling (2), Reliable

Skills: Acrobatics (Ag) +10, Awareness (Per) +20, Dodge (Ag) +20, Stealth (Ag) +30, Survival (Per) +10
Talents: Keen Intuition, Marksman, Target Selection
Traits: Unnatural Agility (3), Unnatural Perception (3)
Gear: Light Eldar mesh armour, chameleoline cloak, spirit stone
Living Ghost: The Pathfinder scores two extra degrees of success on successful Stealth tests.
Uncanny Aim: When the Pathfinder Aims as a Half Action, it counts instead as a Free Action. When he Aims as a Full Action, it counts instead as a Half Action.



Dire Avenger

Clad in stronger armour and armed with specialised shuriken catapults, Dire Avengers are even more deadly than Guardians. For while Guardians are common citizens who fight only when they must, Dire Avengers walk the Path of the Warrior, centring their entire existence on the study and perfection of their deadly craft.

As the most numerous and tactically flexible of Craftworld Miandrothe's Aspect Warriors, they are commonly used when Farseer Miandr'thiel's visions drive the Eldar to act against their foes. With lightning precision, the Dire Avengers leave behind nothing but death, ensuring none within Askellon learn of the craftworld's presence.

Dire Avenger (Elite) 16

H	AR	AL	B	LR	LL
4 7 (01-10)	4 7 (11-20)	4 7 (21-30)	5 8 (31-70)	5 8 (71-85)	5 8 (86-00)

WS	BS	S
46	47	40

T	Ag	Int
36	7 44	38

Per	WP	Fel
5 43	42	34

Ifl —

Half 7 | Full 14 | Charge 21 | Run 42 | Threat 12

Avenger Shuriken Catapult — Class Basic

Rng 120m | RoF S/3/10 | Dmg 1d10+4 (R)
Pen 3 | Clip 100 | Rld 1 Full | Wt 3 Kg | Avl NU
Special: Razor Sharp, Reliable

Eldar Sword — Class Melee

Rng — | RoF — | Dmg 1d10+5^1+SB (R)
Pen 1 | Clip — | Rld — | Wt 3 Kg | Avl VR
Special: Balanced

Skills: Athletics (S) +20, Awareness (Per) +10, Dodge (Ag) +10, Parry (Ag) +10, Tech-Use (Int)
Talents: Counter Attack, Deathdealer (Ranged), Hip Shooting, Sprint, Target Selection
Traits: Unnatural Agility (3), Unnatural Perception (1)
Gear: Aspect armour, spirit stone
Bladestorm: Once per round, as a Half Action, the Dire Avenger can apply the Spray quality to the next attack he makes with his Avenger Shuriken Catapult.

Eldar Warlock

While Farseers are responsible for guiding a craftworld, its Warlocks concern themselves exclusively with the art of war, and how they might bend their powers toward it. Before pursuing the Path of the Seer, they trod the Path of the Warrior. In battle, these battle-mystics combine martial skill and potent psychic ability. They are deadly swordsmen, wielding a powerful weapon known as a Witchblade. Each also exhibits many strange and terrible psychic powers, capable of annihilating his foes with blasts of Warp energy, or quickening the already-superhuman reflexes of his comrades.

Taking the Path of the Seer also helps Warlocks to better understand the terrible weight of destiny that the Farseers bear, and aid their efforts. Farseers are too vital to a craftworld's future to risk in any but the direst circumstances, so Warlocks often carry out their plans beyond the craftworld's bounds. Mandr'thiel frequently tasks Warlocks with leading strike forces, the battle-psykers helping to better ensure the Farseer's visions come to pass through their own adjustments to the twisting skeins of fate.

Eldar Warlock (Master) 22

H	AR	AL	B	LR	LL
4 7 (01-10)	5 8 (11-20)	5 8 (21-30)	5 8 (31-70)	5 8 (71-85)	5 8 (86-00)

WS	BS	S
53	46	41

T	Ag	Int
38	7 42	43

Per	WP	Fel
6 42	7 47	48

Ifl 54

Half 7 | Full 14 | Charge 21 | Run 42 | Threat 35

Shuriken Pistol — Class Basic

Rng 30m | RoF S/3/– | Dmg 1d10+4 (R)
Pen 3 | Clip 50 | Rld 1 Full | Wt 1.2 Kg | Avl ER
Special: Razor Sharp, Reliable

Witchblade — Class Melee

Rng — | RoF — | Dmg 1d10+10^1+PR+SB (R)
Pen 8^3+PR | Clip — | Rld — | Wt 3 Kg | Avl UN
Special: Balanced, Force

Skills: Awareness (Per) +10, Dodge (Ag) +20, Forbidden Lore (Psykers, The Warp) (Int) +20, Parry (Ag), Psyniscience (Per) +30
Talents: Bastion of Iron Will, Blademaster, Resistance (Psychic Powers), Strong Minded, Warp Lock, Warp Sense
Traits: Psyker (PR 5), Touched by the Fates (2), Unnatural Agility (3), Unnatural Perception (2), Unnatural Willpower (3)
Psychic Powers: Destructor (see below), Forewarning, Invisibility, Mental Fortitude, Misfortune, Psychic Shriek
Destructor: The Warlock draws forth his anger and inner desire for destruction, focusing it as a roiling wave of devastating energy.
Action: Half Action
Focus Power: Ordinary (+10) Willpower attack test
Range: 10 metres x psy rating
Sustained: No
Subtype: Attack

Destructor — Psychic Blast

Rng 10m x PR | Dmg 1d10+10^5+PR (E) | Pen 1
Special: Spray

Gear: Rune armour, runic charms, spirit stone
Unnatural Speed: At the start of combat, the Warlock rolls Initiative twice. He then gets two separate turns, one at each Initiative rolled. He receives a new allotment of actions during each of his turns, and he can perform one Action with the Attack subtype in each. Each new turn provides him a Reaction, which is lost if unused before his next turn begins (and so he never has more than one Reaction). All effects that would trigger or cause an effect on the character's turn only activate on his first turn each round.

The Enemy Beyond

"Of creations most foul I beheld the Lord of All and knew that I was dead."

–Inquisitor Brand

All knowledge is carefully controlled in the Imperium, but no secrets are so desperately guarded as those concerning Daemons. Survivors of a daemonic encounter are routinely purged, their lives less important than containing the horrific revelation that these creatures exist. Only the most important are permitted to know of Daemons, and even those august individuals are subject to careful screening for the taint of corruption. Even such figures as planetary governors are subject to mind-wiping, or execution if an Inquisitor deems it necessary.

The true number of daemonic incursions in Askellon's history is unknown, for such information is often kept only in the minds of those who faced the denizens of the Warp. The corridors of Hive Desoleum have been trod by beings from beyond the veil, though none alive speak of it. In centuries past, the entirety of the Voslar Hab block was cleansed at the behest of an Inquisitor whose name is lost to history, condemning hundreds of thousands to the pyre. Though the facts of this incident are unknown to the population of Hive Desoleum, residents still consider the area to be ill-omened. Many adorn their chambers with purity writs and blessed tokens purchased from street vendors, but outbreaks of feral insanity still occur all too frequently every eighth year.

Nurgle

The Fly Lord, the Grandfather of Pestilence, the Plague God—these are a mere few of the many names mortals use for Nurgle, the Chaos God of corruption and decay. His foul Daemons represent the death and decay that await all mortals. As the Chaos God of disease and decay, only Nurgle has the power to save a person from the ravages of disease and mortality. Indeed, those who earn his favour can avoid death itself, living indefinitely as an unnatural abomination of pestilent flesh.

New Trait: Nauseating

A character who fails a Fear test against a Nauseating foe does not roll on **Table 8–11: Shock**. Instead, the character is Stunned for one round per degree of failure, as he doubles over and retches uncontrollably. The character still suffers all other effects of failing a Fear test, such as possibly gaining Insanity points. If the character succeeds on the Fear test, he suffers one level of Fatigue as he contends with the bile rising in his throat.

Plaguebearer

The Nurgle's foul foot-soldiers are the Plaguebearers, Warp-spawned embodiments of disease and decay. These rotten paladins solemnly serve the Heralds and other higher-order Daemons of Nurgle both in the Realm of Chaos and when the Plague God's forces erupt forth into reality. On those momentous occasions when their plans burst forth like maggots from rotten meat, the Callers of Sorrow summon Plaguebearers to accompany their assaults on Hive Desoleum as shock troops, or to act as guardians when the hive's defenders seek retribution.

The mere sight of a Plaguebearer is more than enough to induce overwhelming madness and physical illness, for they represent the greatest fears and most visceral disgusts of humanity. Most feature stained horns and a single, rheumy eye, while their decay afflicts each in a unique manner. Their putrefying flesh and spilling innards are impossibly revolting, further amplified by the unnatural aura surrounding all creatures of the Warp. As they advance, the Plaguebearers sonorously chant, counting the innumerable diseases that Nurgle has gifted to the galaxy, forming a maddening drone like the buzzing of countless flies.

It is written that Plaguebearers are formed from the souls of mortals who succumbed to Nurgle's Rot; as the victim's living body decays in the physical world, so does the soul rot in the Warp, slowly birthing a Daemon to serve the Plague God. Thus does a mortal who receives Nurgle's greatest gift spend the rest of eternity repaying the debt.

Plaguebearer (Elite) 20

H	AR	AL	B	LR	LL
3 13 (01-10)	4 14 (11-20)	4 14 (21-30)	4 14 (31-70)	4 14 (71-85)	4 14 (86-00)

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Ifl
52	32	6 48	10 51	36	37	47	6 49	01	—

Half 3 | Full 6 | Charge 9 | Run 18 | Threat 17

Vomit Attack — Class Pistol

Rng 5m	RoF S/–/–	Dmg 1d10+2 (E)	
Pen 2	Clip —	Rld —	Wt —	Avl —

Special: Corrosive, Spray, Toxic (2)

Plague Sword — Class Melee

Rng —	RoF —	Dmg 1d10+13[7+SB] (R)	
Pen 0	Clip —	Rld —	Wt 7 kg	Avl un

Special: Toxic (2)

Skills: Athletics (S) +30
Talents: Iron Jaw, True Grit
Traits: Baneful Presence (10), Daemonic (2), Deadly Natural Weapons, Fear (2), From Beyond, Nauseating (see sidebar), Unnatural Strength (2), Unnatural Toughness (3), Unnatural Willpower (2), Warp Instability
Gear: Rot armour

Nurgling

Vulgar and mischievous imps of the Plague God, Nurglings are said to originate within the bowels of the greatest of Nurgle's Daemons. When the Warp waxes strong, they gather into large groups, falling over one another in their eagerness to attack the enemies of their beloved Grandfather Nurgle. Though individually weak, in groups they can overwhelm and drag down foes many times their own size. As manifestations of disease and filth, even the slightest scratch from their jagged claws or pointed teeth results in horrific infection and necrosis. Nurglings also pose a significant moral threat, as does any exposure to the denizens of the Warp.

Being so small in stature and power, Nurglings can remain in the corporeal universe longer than other Daemons. In areas heavily saturated with corruption, such as the hidden redoubts of the Callers of Sorrow, they can exist almost indefinitely, drawing strength from the surrounding filth and decay. Though the Preceptors teach that the presence of Nurglings is a blessing from the Plague God, they often find it to be a frustrating one, as the tiny Daemons delight in absconding with relics, smearing excrement on the pages of forbidden texts, gibbering constantly in unearthly pitches, and generally acting as a nuisance even to those who worship their presence.

Nurgling (Troop) 12

H	AR	AL	B	LR	LL
01-10 8	11-20 8	21-30 8	31-70 8	71-85 8	86-00 8

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Ifl
43	22	35	8 43	38	32	48	4 36	06	—

Half *1* | Full *2* | Charge *3* | Run *6* | Threat *7*

Claws and Teeth — Class *Melee*

Rng — | RoF — | Dmg *1d10+6^3+SB (I)*

Pen *0* | Clip — | Rld — | Wt — | Avl —

Special: *Toxic (1)*

Traits: Daemonic (2), Deadly Natural Weapons, Fear (1), From Beyond, Nauseating (see sidebar on page 415), Size (2), Unnatural Toughness (2), Unnatural Willpower (1)

Clinging: While engaged in melee with one or more Nurglings, a character reduces his Agility bonus by 1 for the purposes of determining Movement values.

Putricifex, Herald of Nurgle

Amongst the daemonic legions, there are those that stand out as leaders of their kin and arch-corrupters of mortals. Though they do not possess the dark majesty of the terrifying Greater Daemons, these Heralds nonetheless tower over the ranks of other Daemons and are perhaps possessed of a greater spark of their god's essence. These entities are often a source of fear and worship, and have a place in the legends of innumerable cultures across the galaxy, both human and otherwise. One such Herald is most commonly known to mortals by the name Putricifex. He is the Maggot King, the Gifter, and the Emissary of Nurgle.

Putricifex first manifested over a millennium past, during what is known in the forbidden archives as the Scouring of Jarvin. His presence has been felt on numerous occasions since, as the Daemon reveals itself in the fever-dreams of the sick and dying. It was just such a visitation that first opened the eyes of a lowly servant named Achkovas Spengh to the glory of Nurgle. Putricifex sees it as a duty and pleasure to deliver the gifts of Father Nurgle to those unfortunate mortals who have not felt his touch. He is ever eager to aid Nurgle's mortal worshippers in their efforts to spread disease and corruption. To this end, he whispers secrets of disease and unholy power to supplicants, damning them in the process.

Putricifex's manifested form is nightmarish to behold. His body is bloated with corruption, even beyond that of the Plaguebearers he superficially resembles. Fat and disgusting maggots wriggle forth from the rents in his decayed flesh, plopping to the ground and wriggling away. These Warp-born insects make their way into water supplies and food stores, and even feed on living flesh. Their noxious saliva narcotises quickly, allowing them to swiftly burrow inside living creatures and rot bodies from the inside out. Victims usually remain alive for much longer than expected, drawing out the excruciating pain and allowing plenty of time to cry out to Nurgle for mercy.

Putricifex, Herald of Nurgle (Master) 35

H	AR	AL	B	LR	LL
01-10 16	11-20 2 18	21-30 2 18	31-70 2 18	71-85 2 18	86-00 2 18

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Ifl
65	43	8 52	16 73	32	55	54	7 58	13	68

Half *4* | Full *8* | Charge *12* | Run *24* | Threat *50*

Rotgifter Sword — Class *Melee*

Rng — | RoF — | Dmg *1d10+15^7+SB (I)*

Pen *2* | Clip — | Rld — | Wt *14 kg* | Avl *UN*

Special: *Corrosive, Toxic (3)*

Skills: Athletics (S) +30, Parry (WS) +20, Psyniscience (Per) +20

Talents: Combat Master, Iron Jaw, Killing Strike, True Grit, Thunder Charge

Traits: Baneful Presence (20), Daemonic (4), Fear (3), From Beyond, Nauseating (see sidebar on page 415), Psyker (PR 6), Size (5), Unnatural Strength (3), Unnatural Toughness (5), Unnatural Willpower (2)

Psychic Powers: Enfeeble, Haemorrhage, Iron Arm, Life Leech, Nurgle's Rot (see the sidebar on page 406)

Gear: Rusted mail

Embodiment of Decay: Mere exposure to Putricifex's presence can rust and degrade even the strongest materials. While within 10 metres of Putricifex, all equipment, weaponry, and armour functions as though it were Poor Craftsmanship, regardless of its actual craftsmanship.



Chaos Fury

Furies are bestial, ravenous Daemons who desire only to inflict destruction and death. It is written in some tomes of forbidden lore that they are formed from the souls of mortals who sought to advance themselves by giving fleeting worship to each of the Dark Gods in turn. Upon their death, these individuals are rewarded for their insincerity with an eternity of hunger as a lowly, winged Fury. Yet, certain sealed archives speak of Furies that clearly bear the sign of a particular Dark God. Those Furies marked by Nurgle soar impossibly on wings of tattered flesh and exposed bone, their mouths filled with rows of rotten teeth. Whether these Furies have redeemed themselves in the eyes of the Lord of Decay or been enslaved to his service, none can say. Of course, to attempt to discern the ways of Chaos is to invite madness and damnation, and for most Inquisitors it is enough to know that Furies are Daemons, and anathema to Mankind.

Furies ever seek ingress into the material universe to vent their insatiable rage. Opportunistic, they sometimes arrive unexpectedly when a cult seeks to summon Daemons of the higher orders, for the ways of the Warp are unpredictable, and even the most accomplished of the Caller's Warp-priests can never be certain what will appear when he draws back the veil. Like unholy buzzards in the Sea of Souls, Furies also circle the souls of psykers, and hunt ships passing through the Immaterium. When a reckless psyker opens a Warp rift, or a vessel's Gellar Field fluctuates, Furies are often the first of the Warp's denizens to emerge, tearing apart all around them with ravenous claws and teeth.

Chaos Fury (Elite) 13

	H – 01-10 5				
Ar – 11-20 5		Al – 21-30 5			
	B – 31-70 5				
Lr – 71-85 5		Ll – 86-00 5			

WS	BS	S 5
49	40	34
T 1	**Ag 6**	**Int**
46	43	47
Per 6	**WP**	**Fel**
47	46	23
	Ifl	
	—	

Half 7	Full 14	Charge 21	Run 42	Threat 17

Claws and Fangs — Class *Melee*

Rng —	RoF —	Dmg 1d10+6[1+SB] (I)		
Pen 2	Clip —	Rld —	Wt —	Avl —

Special: *Tearing*

Skills: Acrobatics (Ag) +20, Dodge (Ag) +10

Talents: Assassin Strike

Traits: Baneful Presence (10), Daemonic (1), Deadly Natural Weapons, Fear (2), Flyer (7), From Beyond, Size (5), Unnatural Agility (2), Unnatural Perception (2), Unnatural Strength (2), Warp Instability

Dive Attack: If the Fury is flying when it performs the Charge action, it gains a +20 bonus to the Weapon Skill test and its attack gains the Crippling (3) quality.

Furies of Nurgle: The Furies summoned by the Callers of Sorrow, deliberately or not, often bear the blessings of the Plague Father. Furies of this type gain the Nauseating trait (see page 415) and their attacks gain the Toxic (1) weapon quality.

Using Daemons

As immortal creatures that exist outside of space and time, Daemons do not usually possess Fate points. Nevertheless, important Daemons, such as Heralds, can make for excellent recurring foes. When defeated, a Daemon is not truly killed, but rather banished to the Warp. Occult texts and forbidden lore hold that when banished, it cannot return to the material universe until a certain amount of time has passed. Some sources may cite a number such as 1,000 years and a day, while others hold that a number of factors, such as the nature of the Daemon, the method of banishment, and the alignment of the cosmos together determine the duration. Time has little meaning in the Warp, however, and even the wisest of Daemonhunters and the most gifted prognosticators can only provide a rough idea of when a Daemon shall return. In Dark Heresy, a Daemon's return depends primarily on the needs of the plot. A Daemon can reappear whenever the GM determines appropriate. This could come as an unexpected and shocking twist for the Acolytes, or an entire adventure could revolve around the Acolytes' efforts to uncover and halt a summoning plot. The reappearance of a Daemon that the Acolytes previously banished should make for a dramatic and frightening event, as the only thing worse than facing a Daemon is facing a Daemon with a grudge.



Chapter XIII: Dark Pursuits

The Tech-Priest studied the holo-image hovering above his vox console, the translucent figure dissolving into a foam of static as the link terminated. He knew the supplier was not to be trusted, given his predilections for offering items of untold value to Apex dilettantes, items essential for his researches. But what the supplier was offering in this latest offworld delivery was of unmatched worth, yet also of unmatched risk. To possess something so unique though, so powerful, so worthy of his study…

Data flowed in the dark meldings of heretical cogitator and spliced neural tissue within his altered skull, and Somnius Halbrel arrived at a decision. The item would be his, even if it meant Hive Desoleum collapsing into a pit of rusted metal and mangled, violated flesh.

Dark Pursuits is an introductory adventure intended to familiarise players and GMs with the system and themes that define the Dark Heresy roleplaying game. The adventure thrusts the Acolytes into the centre of a complex web of trade in proscribed objects both criminal and outright heretical. Faced with the immediate threat of a particularly dangerous cargo, the Acolytes must stop the prospective buyer from laying his hands on it before they can worry about tracing the source.

This adventure has an investigative nature at its core, but there are many opportunities for action and combat, and the challenges that face the Acolytes allow for multiple paths to success. In this way, it can accommodate groups with differing play styles, while giving each Acolyte a chance to showcase his particular aptitudes.

GM's Brief

"There is data in the aether that a unique item is available, one I calculate will be ideal for my experiments. Nothing can be allowed to interfere with its procurement."

–Somnius Halbrel, personal vox-log

Dark Pursuits finds the Acolytes investigating the source of unclean xenos artefacts that have appeared in Hive Desoleum in greater and ever more alarming numbers. In fact, these illicit goods are just one facet of the many-headed beast known as the Faceless Trade, a catch-all term for a vast network of loosely affiliated criminal cartels, smuggling operations, and recidivist traders dealing in proscribed items. As multifarious as it is, the defining characteristic of the Faceless Trade in the eyes of many Arbitrators and Inquisitors is the trade of items that go beyond the merely criminal and into the blatantly heretical—xenos relics, dismal texts, Warp-tainted objects, and even artefacts of the Dark Gods. In some cases, these items are relics of long-dead xenos races that inhabited the sector before the arrival, or even the advent, of Mankind. Perhaps more disturbingly, some of these items can be tied to xenos races that even now plague the Imperium. Whether these items are scavenged, stolen, or bartered for is a question to which many Inquisitors would like to find

an answer. Further, Warp-polluted artefacts can spread their taint, and each trader and smuggler through whose hands they pass is a potential vessel for corruption. Hence, to truly deal with such a threat requires not only the destruction or isolation of the tainted object, but an extensive investigation and purge to ensure no trace remains, tracing the heresy back to its source and eliminating each link in the chain.

Such forbidden artefacts come with a high price, and generally only nobles and wealthy merchants can afford them. Buyers might be interested in proscribed objects for a number of reasons. Perhaps the primary reason is simply their forbidden nature. Such individuals are often jaded, and when their wealth affords them any possible pleasure within the bounds of the law, they grow bored and extend their interests outside of it. Other cases may be more sinister, such as a desire to advance their own power and wealth at any cost, or even the harbouring of anti-Imperial sentiments, to say nothing of the malefic cults and xenophiles who covet such artefacts.

Within Desoleum, the group known as the Trade Sable dominates these pursuits. The Acolytes' Inquisitor is aware of several recent incidents in Hive Desoleum tied to profane xenos objects, and the adventure begins with the Inquisitor having tasked the Acolytes with discovering who is responsible for bringing these foul artefacts into the hive.

Adventure Background

The Trade Sable has been smuggling xenos artefacts into Hive Desoleum for many years, perhaps centuries, and none can say how many alien curios and blasphemous trinkets are hidden away in the manses of the Apex. Recently, a number of grisly deaths have occurred with clear links to xenos objects, found either among the victim's effects or in the vicinity. Thus, it appears that the extent of the trafficking may be increasing, or some other danger has arisen. For the most part, these alien trinkets do not appear to be weapons, making the connection to the deaths unclear; if the victims were murdered for possessing such objects, would not the killer take or destroy the artefacts? Known to none outside of Inquisitorial investigation is the fact that these xenos relics show the taint of the Warp.

The Trade Sable deals in a wide range of wares. In many cases, the purpose and function of an item is unknown. Many objects are either damaged or are in fact small components of a larger device, unable to function alone. Only the most well-versed in forbidden xenos lore are capable of properly identifying many of these objects, which results in traders often simply making up "facts" or highlighting the mystery itself—whichever they think will draw in a higher price. Such objects can range from shattered xenos statuary, to ossified skeletal remains, to actual weapons and armour. For many customers, the specifics are not so important as the taboo and the thrill of flouting Imperial law.

Somnius Halbrel is a dangerous arch-heretek with connections to the Trade Sable, interested in xenos lore and paraphernalia. He is also involved with a cult obsessed with artefacts of xenos origin. The cult provides Halbrel with opportunities to further his research. In turn, his links with the Trade allow him to provide the cult with the objects they desire. Halbrel provides the valuable service of authenticating these items, which also provides him with the opportunity to examine them for his own research.

A Sable Trader by the name of Zax Holthane is currently operating out of Hive Desoleum. Holthane is only loosely connected to Halbrel, and knows nothing of Halbrel's cultist allies, but both use the same contacts and smugglers to obtain the xenos artefacts that they, in turn, deliver to their own buyers. This cumbersome chain of disparately connected traders is one of the elements of the Trade Sable that makes it so hard for the authorities to infiltrate. Holthane has allied himself with one of the notorious Cloudboys gangs (see page 336), which provides an effective link between Holthane and those nobles willing to pay high prices for the illegal and forbidden.

The events of the adventure illuminate only a sliver of the web of recidivism and heresy involved, and tracing the objects back to their source could provide a basis for follow-up adventures. GMs should understand that the players' actions can, at best, illuminate only a small part of this vast heresy. Yet, at the same time, simply intercepting a single shipment of tainted artefacts could prevent all manner of horrors too terrible to imagine. And whether the Acolytes realise it or not, holding back the darkness for one more day is all they can ever truly accomplish.

Adventure Synopsis

After the Acolytes receive a briefing on their assignment—to discover the means by which these objects are entering the hive and, if possible, stop it—the adventure begins in earnest with the Acolytes investigating the unusual behaviour of a lesser noble named Lans Guljian, to determine if he is connected in any way to the trade and the deaths. With these suspicions confirmed, the Acolytes must then investigate Guljian's connection to the Trade Sable. Their search brings them lower into the hive, where they encounter a dangerous Sable Trader named Zax Holthane. Holthane has enlisted the aid of a hive gang of Cloudboys, scions of nobility who get their thrills through violence and criminal behaviour, in distributing his proscribed goods. Clever or sharp-tongued Acolytes may be able to navigate this part of the adventure without resorting to combat, but the Cloudboys are more than happy to engage in a spot of violence with the slightest provocation.

The Acolytes' investigations lead them to Gyre Voidport, situated outside of Hive Desoleum. The port is massive and hides many secrets—and many dangers—for unwary Acolytes. Through questioning workers and port authorities, the Acolytes uncover a climate of wilful blindness and outright duplicity, with clerks and factotums taking bribes in exchange for doctoring records to hide the activity of smugglers. Amidst this atmosphere of corruption, the Acolytes discover that a Trade Sable shipment is set to arrive soon via orbital transport. Amongst other proscribed cargo, the smugglers are delivering a bound and subdued Daemonhost to the arch-heretek Somnius Halbrel. Whether the Acolytes choose to destroy the lighter in mid-air or confront its crew on arrival, this terrifying, unnatural entity escapes from its stasis prison and into the tunnels beneath the port. The Acolytes must stop the Daemonhost from escaping into the hive, while dealing with the cargo's intended recipient as he attempts to recapture it.

By the Authority of the Holy Inquisition

Dark Pursuits is written with the assumption that the Inquisitor is not a Player Character, as is usually the case with starting Acolytes. Depending on the specifics of the campaign, the Acolytes could be vested with fully documented authority to act on their Inquisitor's behalf, or they might be acting on their own. Invoking their master's name could seem like an easy way to get results, and it often is—but not necessarily the results desired. Once word is out that the Inquisition is involved, most enemies are likely to shut down activities, at least temporarily. While in the short-term this could stop heretical activities, in the end it merely causes slight delays. In the case of **Dark Pursuits**, such indiscriminate use of authority does not shut down the adventure, as the Daemonhost cargo is one that must be moved quickly and the drop cannot be postponed.

Drawing on their Inquisitor's authority should have benefits, but also drawbacks. If the Acolytes repeatedly take actions that reduce Subtlety, their enemies are increasingly aware of their presence and the GM should feel free to introduce reasonable consequences. A failed Subtlety test could result in a poor reception and worsening Disposition, especially in the lower hive areas or whenever dealing with disreputable NPCs. The GM could have a group of Cloudboys attack to warn them off, should the warband's activities become too well known. Minor spoiler attacks could also be launched simply to stall the warband as they seek to complete illicit trades or change rendezvous locations. The GM's goal should not be to punish the players, but to indicate that the PC's overt actions can have consequences to their investigations. Their actions could even impact other areas within Hive Desoleum, leading to greater hazards in future adventures in the city.

Part I: City of Lies

The Acolytes begin by investigating a possible lead in the form of a lesser noble, Lans Guljian. Guljian is indeed involved, but the Acolytes are too late to save the man's sanity. If the Acolytes are quick or thorough, they can find a link to Guljian's supplier, a criminal trader named Zax Holthane. Finding Holthane takes the Acolytes deeper into the hive, and into confrontation with a dangerous gang. Should they deal successfully with Holthane, the Acolytes then head to Port Gyre.

Part II: Beneath the Sky

At Gyre, the Acolytes must determine when and where the next shipment is due to arrive. Their investigations reveal corruption within the port authority, where bribes and worse ensure cooperation with the traders. Through careful questioning or harsh interrogation, they discover the details of an incoming shipment, for which they have only a short time to prepare. Whether they stop the inbound lighter by force or observe it covertly, they discover a cargo more terrifying and damning than they knew.

Part III: Hunting Damnation

With a Daemonhost loose in the voidport, the Acolytes must act quickly to contain the threat. They soon discover that they are not the only ones pursuing the unholy creature, and the intended recipient of the shipment is there with his own forces. The Acolytes must contend with the dangers of the underport while hunting down—and surviving against—the Daemonhost, as well as thwarting the efforts of a dangerous arch-heretek named Somnius Halbrel. Ultimately, this game of cat-and-mouse concludes with a final encounter between the Acolytes, the Daemonhost, and the arch-heretek's forces.

Beginning the Adventure

"I don't know why they want it, nor do I want to. As long as the pay is good and solid, I don't much care. I just know I sure as sump won't touch it myself."

–Zax Holthane

Dark Pursuits is intended as a starting adventure for new players, but there is no reason it cannot be inserted into an on-going campaign. If the Acolytes are more experienced, the GM might find it necessary to add additional enemies, or even to use the Daemonhost's "full-strength" profile, rather than its weakened state.

The adventure begins with the Acolytes gathered together to receive instructions from their Inquisitor. In the case of a group of new players, the GM might wish to have this as the first time the characters have met together, with the players providing descriptions along with in-character introductions. Depending on the nature of the Acolytes' master, they could receive instructions from the Inquisitor personally, through an intermediary, or even via a cipher-locked dataslate set to self-destruct after its contents have been revealed.

The GM should read the following aloud to the players, adopting it as needed to best fit the Inquisitor's nature and method of delivery:

Hive Desoleum holds many heresies and horrors, and you are gathered here for but one of them. There are increasing reports of horrible deaths within the hive's upper levels, with odd items of a possible xenos or archaeotech nature found with each corpse. Fellow nobles have related these were preceded with bouts of erratic and troublesome behaviour, and worry that a hive noble named Lans Guljian has exhibited many of the same behaviours.

You are tasked with the Emperor's Work: to investigate the deaths and possible connections to any illicit artefacts, determine if they are potential dangers of a wider nature, and terminate their distribution. Recover and contain any items uncovered, lest they corrupt others.

Carry the Emperor's Light with you throughout the hive, for there is little proper illumination to be found in this festering, ancient edifice. Desoleum teeters on the blade's edge of damnation, and one further heresy could topple the entire hive into the abyss.

Rumours, Hearsay, and False Leads

Investigations can be used to feed other information to the players throughout the adventure. Tests that are very successful, or good roleplaying on a player's part, can impart useful rumours or gossip that can aid the warband's quest. GMs should also be ready to use any NPC interactions to ensure the players have multiple avenues to gain necessary clues. If the warband is drifting away from the main plot, questioning could reveal data to steer them back on the planned direction. For example, if the Acolytes have not yet decided to visit Guljian's manor, the nobles they talk to could reinforce that as the likely place to find their suspect.

Failed tests can also provide more than simply a lack of information. Those interrogated might offer up erroneous leads, false rumours, or even tidbits hinting of other Faceless Trade activities not connected to this adventure. Many of these can be created through twisting the true revelations into incorrect versions, such as a noble stating Guljian is merely misunderstood and suffering from the malicious rumours of rivals.

Part I: City of Lies

"Have you heard the latest of Lans? On my oaths, it seems every cycle it's another lordling with his cog coming unwound."

–Oslen Knebbari, Apex prince

With the Acolytes having received their mission briefing from the Inquisitor or one of his servants, they are free to explore Hive Desoleum in the pursuit of their investigation (for information on Hive Desoleum, see page 328). Acolytes with connections here could seek them out for more information, perhaps calling on relevant Peer or Specialist talents or prior experiences in the hive. However, the most promising lead the Acolytes is Lans Guljian, as mentioned in the briefing. If the Acolytes are keen to head off in a different direction, it is perfectly fine to do so if the GM feels comfortable improvising. For new GMs or players, it might be best to suggest that the Acolytes follow up on this lead, as to do otherwise could give the appearance of questioning their Inquisitor's judgement. Guljian's behaviour has been erratic, often giving the impression that he is unaware of those around him, and speaking in strange and nonsensical riddles. The Apex nobles are somewhat scandalised by the lack of effort Guljian has made in his appearance, often appearing dishevelled and ragged. Being who they are, they have made Guljian a major topic for gossip, which has not escaped the Inquisitor's notice.

Fall of the House of Guljian

The Guljian family is a shadow of its former glory, having lost much of its wealth and standing in the eyes of the other nobility. Lans Guljian resides in a manse situated at the lowest level of the Apex—meaning that in the eyes of most of the nobility, he is little better than the merchant princes and wealthy gentry of the Upper Hive. As of late, rumours of Guljian's strange behaviour have circulated even amongst the nobles within the Apex. The Acolytes can discover the following through **Routine (+20) Inquiry tests** questioning Guljian's fellow nobles, with each degree of success garnering one of the following items:

- For many weeks, he has been rarely seen outside of Hesentanz Manor, his formerly opulent manse. He has refused visits even from family friends and important business associates.
- The Guljian family has grown concerned about Lans' expenditures, with great sums of money being diverted to unknown purposes.
- Lans has been sighted descending into the Main Hive, something the nobility usually avoid unless they have unavoidable or pressing business reasons.
- When he has been seen in public, his appearance has been dishevelled and unkempt, with an air of urgency and irritation.

Hesentanz Manor

When the Acolytes arrive at Hesentanz Manor to seek out Guljian, read or paraphrase the following aloud:

It is clear at a glance that Guljian's manse has seen better days—crumbling stonework and tarnished plasteel show a shocking degree of neglect. Two lumin-globes, one flickering intermittently, illuminate the large arched doorway, which houses a set of heavy wooden doors inlaid with elaborate carvings of mythical wasteland beasts from Desoleum's most ancient legends. A short flight of broad steps leads to the doors, set with a knocker cast in the form of a coiled serpent.

If the Acolytes attempt to open the doors they find that, though thick, the doors are unlocked. Whether they let themselves in or use the heavy brass door knock, a surprised servant in the livery of House Guljian quickly meets the Acolytes. It is clear that the servant was not expecting visitors, and Acolytes who succeed on a **Routine (+20) Scrutiny test** notice that the servant is fearful of them, even before they identify themselves.

No Warm Welcome

After a moment of stunned silence, the servant welcomes the Acolytes to Hesentanz Manor, and politely inquires as to their identities and business. Depending on their skills and attitudes, Acolytes are likely to favour one of two general approaches here: either identifying themselves honestly as servants of the Throne, or relying on a cover story to gain entrance. If the latter, hopefully the Acolytes prepared a suitable cover story in advance, perhaps on the trip to the manse.

Guljian's servants are by no means ready to lay down their lives for their master, and will flee, cower, or surrender should the Acolytes threaten violence. This is not true of Lans's bodyguard, Sank Strenwell, who is willing to kill and die to fulfil his oath-bond to protect his liege. When the Acolytes first enter, Sank is leaning over the railing on the second floor landing and keeping eye on them. Should they threaten violence, Sank responds in kind; should they draw weapons, he attacks immediately.

While unaware of the particulars, the servant knows his master is in no condition to see visitors, and does his best to rebuff the Acolytes' attempts to enter the house. If they identify themselves as friends, business associates, or even distant relatives, the servant politely but resolutely informs them that his master is unavailable, thanks them for visiting, and recommends that they return at a later date. Depending on the Acolytes' chosen approach, the GM should call for appropriate tests, most likely Charm, Deceive, or Intimidate. The servant begins with a Disposition of 30, as he does not wish to deal with visitors. The most promising approaches are to intimidate the servant, or to indicate that his master is in some kind of danger, either to his person or reputation, and that they must see him immediately. Depending on how challenging the GM wants this encounter to be, he could require several tests using different interaction skills, making a Disposition test for the servant each time the Acolytes are successful, to determine if he acquiesces. Alternatively, if the Acolytes present a very convincing case through good roleplaying, the GM might only require a single successful test on their part. Once the Acolytes convince him, the servant grudgingly shows them to a welcome room and asks them to wait while he informs Master Guljian of their arrival, before disappearing down the hall and up a spiral staircase.

While the servant is gone, the Acolytes can do some quick looking around. There are no signs of Guljian's involvement in heretical activities to be found on the first storey, only ageing and ill-kept trappings of finery—dust-covered paintings, verdigris-coated brass sculptures, decorative rugs, tinted lamps, and curios imported from across Askellon. When the servant returns, a successful **Ordinary (+10) Awareness test** allows an Acolyte to notice that the servant is shaken, as if witness to something disturbing. Moving quickly, even urgently, he informs them that his master is unwell, and attempts to usher them out of the house. If the Acolytes concede and move to leave, as they reach the door a chilling scream sounds out from upstairs. The servant, as well as other ones waiting in the wings, rush up the stairs to their master's aid, leaving the Acolytes free to follow.

Sank Strenwell

Sank Strenwell is Lans Guljian's oath-bound bodyguard. Strenwell takes his duty very seriously, and does not tolerate threats to his master's well-being. He is tall and broad-shouldered, and keeps his clothing neat and his weapons visible. A humourless man of few words, Strenwell keeps a close eye on the Acolytes, unless convinced they pose no threat. To represent Sank Strenwell, use the Bounty Hunter profile on page 384.

Guljian's Fate

When they reach the source of the screaming, a study on the third floor of the manse, read or paraphrase the following aloud to the players:

The study before you is a scene of chaos: embossed books and fine quills are strewn about haphazardly, while parchment, ink, and a lamp have been knocked from the desk, leaving only a small black orb sitting atop it. Kneeling on the floor, a man in ripped and shredded finery screams and babbles incoherently as he claws at his own face—his lips are ripped to tatters, and blood streams from numerous cuts and tears across his face. Lying near him is a bloody letter opener and two pulped white globs—his eyes.

This scene of horror calls for the Acolytes to test against **Fear (1)**; indeed, the servants who are present are either frozen in terror, fleeing, or voiding the contents of their stomachs on the once-fine carpet. Guljian's exposure to a xenos artefact he recently acquired has driven him irrevocably insane; the unfathomable visions the orb has placed in his mind have blasted his sanity and caused him to dig out his own eyes in an attempt to stop them—and it was not successful. It is difficult to get much information out of Lans in his current state; in order for him to even react to the Acolytes' presence, they must restrain him and prevent his further self-mutilation. Lans's Disposition begins at 25, and in his current state he has the Unhinged Personality. If necessary, use the Dissolute Noble profile on page 398 to represent Guljian. The Acolytes can use the Medicae skill to bind Lans's wounds before questioning him; most medicae kits include a sedative, which helps to calm him slightly. A success with the First Aid use of the Medicae skill improves Lans's Disposition by +10. If the Acolytes use the Medicae skill to try and diagnose Lans, a **Routine (+20) Medicae test** reveals that his wounds are self-inflicted, but not what drove him to do it.



A psyker using telepathy powers to examine Lans's mind can discover the same information given below, as well as a mental impression of Eldric Havofast (see page 438) and the Screaming Wheel cantina, but the thoughts are jumbled and the psyker cannot learn the names to the face or the location. Each round the psyker maintains the power, he must test against **Fear (1)**, as he reveals impossibly alien thoughts and images, with a cumulative –10 penalty on the test in each round.

Lans can reveal the following information, albeit laced with nonsense and contradictory statements:

- He has seen great and wondrous things. If asked to elaborate, he laughs madly and speaks of forgotten kingdoms and cyclopean cities.
- The black orb is the latest addition to his "collection."
- He obtained the black orb from "the pale child" at the "wheel that wails."

Once they have questioned him, Lans ceases his struggles and calmly and in monotone begins speaking in an alien tongue, unrecognisable regardless of any Lore or Linguistics skills an Acolyte possesses. The GM should allow Acolytes to roll to see if they recognise the language, but even the most successful result merely reveals it appears to be of alien origin. After a few more moments, Lans expires due to his self-inflicted wounds and the shock to his system. Acolytes with the Medicae skill can attempt to save Guljian, but he is far past the point of recovery. However, a successful **Ordinary (+10) Medicae test** reveals that Guljian's self-inflicted injuries are not nearly severe enough to explain his death. It is as if his brain simply shut down.

If the Acolytes are unable to obtain answers from Lans before his death, questioning Strenwell can also reveal information needed to aid the investigation; searching the room also reveals several useful clues. The nobleman's oath-cog lies on the floor; it is badly damaged, apparently having been bashed repeatedly against a hard surface. The GM can call for a **Routine (+20) Awareness test** to reveal further clues, but simply taking the time to look through the scattered books reveals Lans' journal. Amidst the many pages of idle musings, vain gossip, and matters of commerce are a few relevant entries, revealing much of the same information. The last few entries—undated—speak of "lost palaces," "forgotten gods," and "towers of bone," before trailing off into incoherent ramblings, scattered with crude renderings of unidentifiable and alien symbols, and rough sketches of the vistas Lans saw in his visions. If any of the Acolytes succeed on the Awareness test, they also find a crumpled piece of parchment under Guljian's desk noting the location of the Screaming Wheel, with a note about "conducting business."

With the master of the house dead, panicking servants attempt to revive him and others rush to summon a chirurgeon, while one scullery maid begins looting valuables. In the confusion, none of them attempt to stop the Acolytes from leaving, but likewise they are not good for much if questioned. None of the servants know the nature of the black orb, nor are they sure when he acquired it or from whom. If the Acolytes succeed in calming or intimidating a servant, they discover that Lans's personality has been slowly changing for over a year, and his behaviour became particularly strange within the last four months, as he neglected the affairs of his family, often locking himself away in his study for hours on end and refusing to be seen, even going entire days without eating.

The Orb

The object is a perfectly smooth black orb, heavy and cold to the touch, about the size of a clenched fist. It never rolls—when placed on a slanted surface, it slides, but the light reflected on it gives the clear indication that its orientation does not change. The Acolytes may decide to take the orb with them, and well they should, as it is far too dangerous to leave behind. After a time, the orb begins to affect any Acolyte possessing it, just as it did Guljian. Once one of the Acolytes has been carrying the orb for a few hours, even if stored in a pack, the Acolyte experiences a brief vision, like a waking dream, of a vast and barren alien landscape, studded with massive and bizarre structures. This experience requires testing against **Fear (1)**. For best effect, have this occur at an inopportune time, such as while questioning an NPC or even when engaged in combat. This experience repeats at irregular intervals, perhaps hours or even days apart. Handing the orb over to another Acolyte is not enough to end the visions, which continue so long as the character is in proximity to the orb.

When a psyker first comes into close proximity with the orb, he can attempt a **Routine (+20) Psyniscience test**. If he succeeds, he senses the stink of the Warp clinging to the object. If the psyker achieves three or more degrees of success on the test, he immediately experiences a vision as described above.

Following the Leads

After questioning Guljian or searching his study, the Acolytes should come away with one very important clue: Guljian obtained the xenos artefact from what he termed "pale children" at the "wailing wheel." Guljian is referring to the Babyfaces, a gang of Cloudboys who do some of their business out of a cantina in the Main Hive called the Screaming Wheel (see page 424). Guljian's cryptic words offer several potential leads.

The Acolytes might wish to authenticate the madman's words before acting on them, leading them to question the late nobleman's servants. Only Guljian's bodyguard, Sank Strenwell, knows anything about Guljian's business with the Babyfaces—he was there, though more focused on watching for threats than on the transaction being conducted. If Strenwell is still alive, he might willingly answer the Acolytes' questions with useful information, depending on how they have conducted themselves in the manor. He can, however, identify the orb as the object Guljian purchased from the Babyfaces.

The Acolytes can try to track down either the "pale children" or the "wailing wheel." Doing so is much easier once they determine what the phrases mean, either from Sank Strenwell or through other means. Acolytes with established knowledge of or experience with Hive Desoleum's middle levels can connect the phrase with the Screaming Wheel cantina in the Main Hive without the need for a test. Asking around is another possibility, but the nobles of the Apex are unlikely to know of the Screaming Wheel, and even less likely to admit it. This, in itself, might identify to the Acolytes that they should direct their search lower in the hive.

The orb is a very important and damning clue. Any of Guljian's servants, if pressed, recall that the orb came into their late master's possession about four months ago, concurrent with the dramatic changes in his behaviour. Guljian kept the orb in his study, where he spent the majority of his last weeks of life. He was also fiercely protective of the object, visiting harsh punishments on any servant who drew near it.

The Pale Children and the Wheel

Having seen the unfortunate fate of Lans Guljian, the Acolytes have several leads with which to trace the source of the black orb that was responsible. Sooner or later, the trail leads to lower reaches of the Main Hive and the Screaming Wheel cantina.

Desoleum City

The Main Hive, commonly known as Desoleum City, is home to the majority of the hive's known citizens. The sights, sounds, and smells of industry abound, for it is devoted almost entirely to production, controlled at the whims of the Consortium and a few of the more commercially active noble houses. The air is stale and thick with smog, despite the constant whirring of the hive air-cyclers. During shift changes, walkways and thoroughfares are crowded with exhausted, blank-eyed workers, while mag-trains screech past overhead on ill-kept railways. The sounds of the hive's life-sustaining systems and the machinery of the manufactorums overlap, creating a constant drone of background noise. The harsh light of the flickering chem-lamps and electro-torches cast deep shadows, bursts of flame from manufactorums vents periodically providing illumination, and citizens do well to stick to the main roads, averting their gaze from the dark crevices and alleyways.



The Screaming Wheel

The Screaming Wheel is a lower Main Hive cantina that caters to gangers, toughs, and manufactorum labourers involved in illicit pastimes or just hoping to introduce some excitement and danger into their bleak lives. More importantly, it sits in the territory of the Babyfaces, and provides a convenient place for the gang to conduct business. The Babyfaces are one of the hive's many Cloudboy gangs (see page 336), and provide a link between the Trade Sable and eager buyers in the Apex. Nobles who fancy themselves to be dangerous enjoy dealing with Cloudboys, with whom they share much in common. Cloudboy gangs such as the Babyfaces are more than willing to go places and meet with people where nobles maintaining a respectable face would balk.

Accessible from a less-than-sturdy gantry, the cantina is a rough, windowless chamber set amidst the sprawling array of interconnected structures that make up the habways of the midhive. A rusted ladder leads from the roof of the cantina up to a wide thoroughfare, about twenty metres above.

When the Acolytes enter the Screaming Wheel, read or paraphrase the following aloud to the players:

As you step inside the Screaming Wheel, the odour of stale lho-smoke and obscura, the stench of bodysweat, and loud, pounding music issuing from a tinny vox system assault your senses. Even compared to the street outside, the place is dark, lit only by a few weak glow-globes and chemical lumen-signs. An assortment of unsavoury-looking patrons populate the room, from obvious gangers in battle-leathers and electoos, to vacant-eyed labourers strung-out on chems. Only a few bother to look up as you enter. Behind the bar, a heavy-set man cleans glasses with a dirty cloth clutched in his poorly maintained claw of a bionic arm. Seated at a table at the far end of the room, several well-coiffed, rakish fellows—appearing quite out of place—laugh as a man in manufactorum coveralls seemingly pleads with them.

The Babyfaces

Three members (or more as desired, through using the threat threshold guidance system on page 382 to provide a suitable encounter) from the Babyfaces gang sit at a wooden table, laughing callously at the pleadings of a manufactorum worker unable to pay his debt. The most senior ganger and de-facto leader of the group is known as "Skinner," although his real name is Eldric Havofast. Shortly after the Acolytes enter, or as soon as they approach the Babyfaces, the worker's right knee explodes in a burst of blood, as Skinner shoots him from underneath the table. Other than a few curious glances, the rest of the patrons show no reaction as the man collapses to the ground, wailing in pain and clutching his ruined knee while the Babyfaces chortle. Unless the Acolytes intervene, another of the Babyfaces stands up and crosses to the man, draws a narrow-bladed knife as he kneels down, and then stabs the man rapidly and repeatedly in the gut, leaving him to bleed to death as they laugh and finish their drinks, before shouting for the staff to clean up the mess as they go to leave.

What happens next depends very much on the Acolytes' actions. As dangerous as the Babyfaces are, they are (usually) willing to talk first, but respond with violence to any implied threats. The Babyfaces begin with a disposition of 40. As the leader of the group, Skinner does most of the talking, although his comrades may interject from time to time—probably to make a crude jest. Acolytes with the Highborn background have a distinct advantage in dealing with the Babyfaces, who see anyone not of noble birth as beneath them, gaining a +10 bonus to any social interaction skill tests. The gangers are ruthless, cruel, and quite possibly insane. They also tend to view everything as a game—especially matters of life and death. The gangers present a jovial and cultured appearance, belying their bloodlust. The Acolytes should have trouble gauging the Babyfaces, as even when discussing business matters of great import, they treat it as a grand jest.

If the Acolytes pose as potential buyers of xenos artefacts, the Babyfaces are initially suspicious, but successful Deceive tests put them in a mind to conduct business. They are not forthcoming with the name of their supplier, but with successful skill tests and good roleplaying, the Acolytes can trick or possibly coerce them into revealing this information. Posing as fellow associates of the supplier, angry customers, and even as servants of a powerful noble house (perhaps that of Havofast; the threat of lost inheritance is a powerful one) are all possible approaches. This is most likely to work if the Acolytes have been subtle in the investigation so far. If the Acolytes have been operating openly, the GM can make a Subtlety test to determine if the Acolytes' prior investigation has raised the Babyfaces' suspicions. If the Subtlety test fails, Acolytes receive a –20 penalty on Deceive or Charm tests (see page 271 for more on the effects of Subtlety).

If the Acolytes reveal their true identities, the Babyfaces attempt to flee, knocking over tables and chairs in their wake, having no desire to tangle with the Inquisition. If the Acolytes attack or give chase, the Babyfaces draw their own weapons to fight back. The Babyfaces split up in their attempt to escape, exiting both through the front door and the ceiling hatch in the back room. Pursuing one or more of the gangers up the tall, rusty ladder should be tense and exciting, as the higher they go, the higher the stakes should anyone lose his grip. When an attack hits a character while climbing the ladder, whether or not he suffers an injury, the GM can call for a Challenging (+0) Agility or Strength test. On a failure, the character can only perform a single Half Action on his next turn, as he focus on maintaining his hold, while a failure by three or more degrees indicates the character loses his grip and plummets to the roof of the Screaming Wheel.

The other patrons of the Screaming Wheel are no strangers to violence, but also have no desire to be struck by a stray lasround. If a gunfight breaks out, the other patrons attempt to flee the room with all haste, potentially getting in the Acolytes' way, which the GM can represent with a –10 penalty to combat actions. GMs might decide that in the bustle and confusion, any Ranged Attacks that fail by 4 or more degrees instead strike one of the bystanders, potentially drawing additional hostility to the Acolytes.

Whether through deception or interrogation, the Acolytes can learn that the gangers' supplier is a man named Zax Holthane, who operates out of a decrepit area of the hive called Three Stakes' Rest. The gangers have been there, and can potentially direct the Acolytes to the location.



The Screaming Wheel

If the Acolytes kill all of the gangers before learning of Zax Holthane, they have a bit of a problem—dead men offer much less information. Generous GMs can allow them to uncover the clue in the form of a note written on a piece of parchment or dataslate somewhere about one of the corpses, or the GM might decide they need to track down additional gang members and repeat the process. If the bartender is still alive after the fight, he can tell the Acolytes that additional Babyfaces are likely to be arriving soon.

The Dishonest Merchant

Having traced the mysterious orb back to a trader called Zax Holthane, the Acolytes travel to the region near the hive's edge known as Three Stakes' Rest. Depending on how the Acolytes conduct themselves, and their luck, this part of the adventure could involve a good deal of combat. Holthane and his men are familiar with the environment of Three Stakes' Rest, giving them a decided advantage if they come to blows with the Acolytes.

Three Stakes' Rest

Three Stakes' Rest is the unofficial name given to an ill-delineated area of forlorn, decaying habs, forgotten chambers, and structurally unsound passages and roadways, all connected through collapsing gantries, pressure-sealed hatchways, and tunnels of corroded metal. Though it lies many levels above the generally accepted boundary, Three Stakes' Rest is in many ways an extension of the lower hive. Sanctionaries do not patrol here, nor do law-abiding citizens have any reason to visit. The kilometres of decrepit tunnels are home to maddened dregs, outlaws on the lam, and nests of dangerous vermin. Many gangs use the area as neutral ground for conducting business, though from time to time one gang or another attempts to claim it as their territory, resulting in vicious fighting.

Zax Holthane has set up residence here while conducting business in Hive Desoleum, having selected an area consisting of several chambers and hab sleep-cells to function as lodgings for himself and his men. Part of this territory is an ancient and crumbling manufactorum, which Holthane uses as storage for the various illicit goods in which he deals. All known points of ingress to this region are laced with screamers (see page 177) so that Holthane can avoid being caught unawares; these are well hidden and four or more degrees of success are needed on a **Hard (–20) Awareness test** to spot them all.

What happens when the Acolytes reach here depends on their chosen approach, be it arranging a meeting, sneaking in, or going in autoguns blazing. Holthane has a dozen men in all, consisting of hired lasguns and career criminals, some of whom are minor Sable Traders in their own right. A frontal assault should be extremely difficult for the Acolytes, so this number can be adjusted upward slightly for particularly combat-capable groups.

The Manufactorum

The abandoned manufactorum appears ready to collapse at any moment. With no functioning lights inside, the various rusted equipment and machinery of all shapes and sizes creates something of a maze. Crates, chests, and lockers of various goods are stored here, with the most valuable and illegal goods hidden beneath iron floor grates or inside decaying machinery. Many of the containers are empty, but show signs of recent use. Acolytes searching the room can discover doses of obscura or other drugs, counterfeit artwork, and small xenos statuary that, while disturbing, is not intrinsically dangerous. If any of the Acolytes succeed on a **Challenging (+0) Awareness test**, they discover a small box of black metal hidden beneath a floor grate, containing what appears to be the mummified hand of an alien, with three clawed fingers. Such a curio is of no use to gangers and recidivists, and clearly links Holthane to the Trade Sable and the trade with dissolute nobles such as Lans Guljian. If any of the Acolytes are carrying the black orb from Guljian's study, the hand twitches slightly if brought in close proximity (half a metre or so.)

Unless a combat with the Acolytes has already drawn them away from their posts, between three and five of Holthane's men are here at any given time, patrolling around the room on both the floor level and the precarious catwalks that criss-cross it. Several portable lamps are set at various points, casting stark shadows of the dead machinery that dominates the chamber.

A fight in the manufactorum allows for plenty of cover, but also danger, as corroded catwalks give way, rusted machinery comes toppling down, and stray shots knock out the lights, plunging the combatants into darkness. GMs can include the following effects, and are encouraged to come up with additional events:

- If a character shooting at a target on a catwalk gets a result of doubles on a successful attack roll, he has also damaged the walkway. A three-metre section of the catwalk collapses, dropping the intended target to the floor four metres below, or possibly pitching him into an open machine.
- One of the tarnished fuel tanks in the room is filled with promethium, still volatile after many decades (or perhaps because of them). If a character takes cover behind the tank, any hits from a weapon with the Energy damage type that inflict enough damage to penetrate the cover cause it to ignite, exploding and inflicting 2d10 damage with the Flame quality to each character within four metres. At the GM's discretion, the explosion can collapse catwalks or ignite other volatile chemicals in the vicinity.
- The first character to roll a fail a Ballistic Skill test with three or more degrees of failure hits a chest or locker containing a tainted xenos relic, which has been absorbing the emotional discharge of the combatants. Roll on **Table 6–2: Psychic Phenomena** on page 196, adding +5 for each elapsed combat round, to see what results from the release of energy (the shooter counts as the psyker for these results). The artefact then crumbles to dust.

Additional Clues

Several of the shipping containers are affixed with labels and manifests stamped with the seal of the Port Gyre Auctoriate. Any player who states that his Acolyte is carefully examining the room notices this, with no test necessary.

The Shooting Range

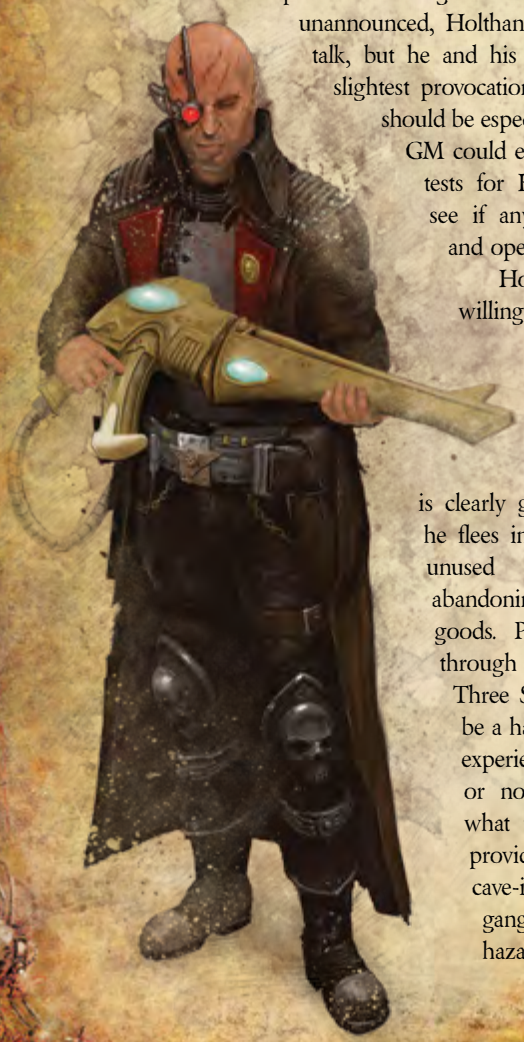
Holthan's men have converted this corridor into a shooting range. Ancient statues from Desoleum's past are arranged against the far end of the passageway, but are so riddled with bullet holes that their original subject matter is unrecognisable. Fragments of the statues litter the area around, along with a veritable carpet of stone dust. Near the entrance is a gun rack holding two autoguns, a sniper rifle, and a shotgun. An ammunition locker contains two clips' worth of ammunition for each weapon.

It is quite obvious where the shooters take their mark, as weapon recoil has resulted in boot scuffs on the metal floor. Close inspection and a **Difficult (–10) Awareness test** reveal a charred residue amongst the scuff marks. An Acolyte with the Peer (Adeptus Mechanicus, Chartist Captains, or Imperial Navy) talent (or an appropriate connection or history in these areas) can attempt a **Challenging (+0) Awareness test**. On a success, he realises that the residue is not from firearms, but most likely left by the scorching thrust of an inter-orbital lighter.

Meeting Holthane

The Acolytes' actions thus far determine the circumstances under which they meet Zax Holthane. As an always-eager trader, Holthane is amenable to meeting with potential buyers or even sellers. Without a known factor to vouch for them, though, he approaches a meeting with utmost caution and suspicion, with his men ready for trouble. When arranging a meeting, Holthane insists on selecting the meeting place—one of the larger chambers of Three Stakes' Rest, situated about a kilometre away from the boundary of his own territory, which offers hiding places for his own men so that they can make a quick end of the Acolytes should negotiations turn hostile.

If they have a suitable cover story, the Acolytes can attempt to deal with Holthane and uncover information. His Disposition starts at Confident and 35, and the GM should adjust any test difficulties based on the cover story and time the warband spent establishing it. If the Acolytes come unannounced, Holthane is still willing to talk, but he and his men attack at the slightest provocation. Such a meeting should be especially tense, and the GM could even roll Willpower tests for Holthane's men to see if any lose their nerve and open fire.



Holthane is perfectly willing to fight to defend himself and his merchandise, but is not ready to die for it. If combat is clearly going against him, he flees into an ancient and unused mag-rail tunnel, abandoning his men and his goods. Pursuing Holthane through the tunnels of Three Stakes' Rest should be a harrowing and tense experience; there is little or no light other than what the Acolytes' gear provides, with pitfalls, cave-ins, and prowling gangers all potential hazards. His intended destination is Port Gyre, as he intends to cut his losses and get off-planet as quickly as possible. Even if he escapes, the Acolytes should be able to track him there with successful Survival or other appropriate skill tests. Whether Holthane is still at the voidport when the Acolytes arrive depends on what sort of delays they encounter along the way.

Should the Acolytes succeed in capturing Holthane alive, he is not at all forthcoming with answers to their questions; treat his Disposition now as Submissive and 15. He realises full well that the penalty for his crimes is death, or worse, and hence sees no reason to cooperate. Successful **Ordinary (+10) Intimidate tests** can still coerce some answers out of him, though, and the Acolytes can learn the following:

- That he receives his contraband goods through deliveries to Gyre Voidport.
- His next scheduled delivery is very soon, and is one of his most important. The GM should adjust this time as to best fit with the desired flow of the adventure, but it should clearly indicate the Acolytes must make haste to intercept it.

If the Acolytes garner four or more degrees of success on a relevant test, the GM can reveal that Holthane has arrangements with a member of the Port Gyre Auctoriate who modifies documents to conceal the origin and nature of Holthane's shipments (see page 429). However, GMs should be aware that revealing the name at this time could make Part II of the adventure considerably quicker and easier for the Acolytes.

Holthane is reluctant to reveal information about his suppliers, but successful interrogation or use of psychic powers can pry ou these secrets. Identifying and dealing with Holthane's suppliers and contacts is beyond the scope of this adventure, but including names or other information here is a good way to plant the seeds for future games. See **Conclusion and Rewards** on page 435 for suggestions on follow-up adventures.

In addition to his weapons and gear, Holthane is carrying an access-cog that grants entry to the loading tunnels of Port Gyre. The cog appears authentic, and is stamped with the seal of the Port Gyre Auctoriate Porteus.

Holthane's Office

Holthane has set aside one small hab-lodge as his office and archive, where he keeps records pertaining to his dealings and trades. A combat servitor (see page 396) resides in the room, ready to attack anyone who does not speak the proper pacification word. Within the office, papers and a few dataslates sit atop an old and well-worn desk, next to a tarnished filing chest. Old cargo manifests, scribbled names and addresses, and lists hand-written in obtuse ciphers are scattered amongst ancient, brittle parchments that predate Holthane's arrival. In the top drawer of the desk is a pack of lho-sticks, a loaded stub automatic, and three loose shotgun cartridges.

The documents include records of at least half a dozen shuttle landings at different Port Gyre landing pads, as well as names of several nobles and merchants, including Lans Guljian. This is a good opportunity for GMs to plant seeds for their own follow-up adventures (see **Follow-Up Adventures** on page 436). If Holthane was not taken alive, the GM can also insert dataslates, notes, and papers here to duplicate the information he would have provided during interrogation.

Part II: Beneath the Sky

"Sure, we can slice some off for you. Boat's landing tomorrow and the crew is connected. How many tonnes you wanting?"

–Wella Lio, Dockmaster Pad 47-Gamma

The clues that the Acolytes collected in Part I eventually lead them to Port Gyre, one of the massive voidports servicing Hive Desoleum and other hives. All is not well in at the port. Like the crumbling warehouses and blackened, cracked plasteel blast shields that demonstrate the neglect of the port's facilities, the ranks of scribes and accountors that oversee the operation of the port are riven with moral decay. There are no shortage of bribes and backroom deals to ensure that business runs "smoothly." In this part of the adventure, the Acolytes follow the trail of clues to a member of the port staff, Prefect Gaius Anteshern, who has taken bribes from Zax Holthane to manipulate records of shuttle landings. Upon further investigation, the Acolytes discover that another, unknown party (Somnius Halbrel) has also bribed Anteshern to doctor records of the same shuttle—a shuttle that is imminently due. At this point, their investigation becomes a race to halt or intercept the inbound shipment of a cargo that, while doubtless illegal, is in fact worse than the Acolytes can imagine.

Exploring the Port

Port Gyre is a hub of activity every hour of every day. When Desoleum's sun leaves the sky, massive floodlamps affixed to the towers illuminate the port, while a constant barrage of warning flashes, running lights, and engine flares sporadically light the area and cast flickering, stark shadows. Beneath the highest landing platforms, though, corners and half-concealed walkways are stuck in perpetual darkness, and the further down one descends into the sublevels, the darker it gets, as ancient lumen-globes and inconstant power supplies provide intermittent, unreliable lighting and leave entire corridors in pitch blackness.

Getting to the Port

The Acolytes have a few options for getting to the port, each with its own advantages and hazards. The most direct is to take a mag-train or private vehicle to one of the main access points, and pass through a checkpoint (see **Checkpoints** later on this page). Passing through a checkpoint under their actual identities decreases their Subtlety by 1d5–1.

Another option is to sneak in through one of the many loading tunnels that run between the lower levels of the port and the hive. This is a risky proposition, for using one of the active tunnels runs the risk of encountering guards or Sanctionaries, and using an abandoned tunnel could lead to encounters with even worse things (see **The Deep Tunnels** on page 434).

Primary Locations

Port Gyre is huge, and the Acolytes could spend days canvassing it. The following are some of the most notable areas Acolytes are likely to explore.

Checkpoints

Sanctionaries garrison a checkpoint at each port entrance accessible from the Main Hive. They stop and question any wishing to enter, screening for those attempting to escape their oaths. For hive citizens, this means furnishing their oath-cogs to either prove their debt has been fulfilled—an extraordinarily rare occurrence—or to show that their oath requires travel on behalf of their master. Visitors to Hive Desoleum must register themselves before exiting the port, otherwise Sanctionaries might suspect bond-violation upon attempting to re-enter. At best, this means an inconvenient and unpleasant delay; at worst, incarceration or execution.

If desired, the GM can add details of others passing through a checkpoint as the Acolytes venture into the port, using NPCs from **Chapter XII: NPCs and Adversaries**. Somnius Halbrel, who should appear as yet another Tech-Priest with his retinue, can also pass though to slowly introduce him into the adventure.

The Landing Platforms

Landing pads of different sizes dominate the majority of Gyre's surface, arrayed at varying elevations. Many of the platforms are the private property of Consortium members; these are in fairly good repair. They are frequently adorned with statues and ornate archways; even the loading cranes are decorated with mythical creatures, lions, and other symbols of strength. Other platforms are purely functional, covered with decades of grime and scorched by centuries of constant exposure to the flames of orbital jets. Situated between the landing platforms—some at floor level, others suspended by reinforced struts—small officios house representatives of the Consortium, as well as various merchant houses and trade concerns, and no small number of taverns and gambling halls at which the port labourers and visiting ships' crew spend their free time. Many of these establishments feature back rooms where "misplaced" or "surplus" cargo can be had for a pittance.

The landing platforms are typically accessible by wide stairs, with ladders providing secondary access, and high-volume cargo lifts that lower directly to the tunnels beneath. Some of the largest offer direct entry to the mag-rails and vacuum transit tubes that lead to Hive Desoleum or across the wastes.

The Loading Tunnels

Many kilometres of loading tunnels wind and intersect beneath the port's surface. In fact, these descend much further than most know, down through the ancient construction that supports the landing platforms above, and perhaps even beneath the planet's crust. Only the labour-clans and stavardorns who load and unload cargo are qualified to navigate even the shallowest tunnels, and still they dare not tread too deep (see **The Deep Tunnels** on page 434).

The Warehouses

Only the Consortium and the most wealthy and influential of merchants have storage space set aside at the port; others must move their goods into the hive with all haste. Combat servitors and private security forces guard many warehouses. Sanctionaries additionally monitor the Consortium warehouses, passing frequently during their patrols. While some warehouses are more-or-less freestanding structures, many are incorporated into the landing platforms, with the landing pads stationed atop the reinforced structure of the warehouse. Inside, workers must contend with violent shuddering whenever a shuttle lands, leading to frequent accidents.

Field Precinct 686-Delta

The Adeptus Arbites maintains a small field office situated at the outer edge of the port, along with a small fleet of orbital craft for conducting searches and raids on voidships in orbit. Under the leadership of Marshall Seiglan, they are to the man a righteous and loyal group. However, the massive amount of traffic is far too much for their number to fully police, with the understanding that the Auctoriates Porteus and Sanctionaries also monitor the port activity. In practice, therefore, the moral turpitude that permeates the Auctoriates and Adeptus Administratum also limits the Adeptus Arbites' ability to enforce the law. For each recidivist or unscrupulous ship's captain brought in, a dozen smugglers and unsanctioned travellers slip by right under their visors.

The Officio Auctoriate Porteus

Centrally located, the main holding of the Auctoriate Porteus is, theoretically, a storehouse of complete and accurate records for all traffic through the port, from humble pilgrims to grandiose Rogue Traders. The Officio can be easily spotted from a distance, as it is one of the tallest structures on the port. This imposing building of dark rockrete and plasteel hosts numerous divisios and thousands of scribes, accountors, and other officials tasked with seeing to various aspects of port operations.



Optional Encounter: Pilgrims

This optional encounter can be used at any point as the Acolytes explore the port, but a good place to insert it is on first arrival. As they first enter the port or make their way through its winding canyons of steel, they find a great herd of pilgrims (see page 388) barring their path, recently arrived to visit one of the many holy sites to be found on Desoleum. The jubilant throngs are oblivious to the obstruction they are creating, as they marvel at their surroundings, read aloud from holy texts, and corporally mortify their scarred flesh. They are mostly clad in worn sackcloth robes, barefoot or wearing leather strips wound around their feet. For most, getting this far has taken every bit of their savings, while others have purposefully given up their belongings in the holy passage. Many proudly bear the scars of flagellation, or sheets of prayer parchment pinned to their flesh.

If any of the Acolytes are easily identifiable as members of the Ecclesiarchy (or even wear large aquilas or other signs of the Emperor), passing pilgrims drop to their knees and beg for the character's blessing, grabbing at the hems of his robe and potentially delaying them. This could be either a minor annoyance or a serious problem, depending on the Acolytes' current goal and the needs of the story. If the GM wishes to increase the importance of this encounter, he could choose to have the pilgrims block the Acolytes as they make their way to intercept the smugglers' shuttle. Depending on how they respond to the pilgrims, this encounter could have lasting consequences. Should they acquiesce and offer their blessing, for example, the group's Subtlety decreases by 1d5.

Questioning Authority

Whether from interrogating Zax Holthane or their investigations around the port, the Acolytes should be aware of crooked dealings amongst the Auctoriates Porteus. The Auctoriates includes representatives of planetary government, private employees of the Consortium, and a relatively smaller representation by the Adeptus Administratum. The Adeptus Administratum concerns itself primarily with the reports filed by the other agencies, doing little, if anything, to verify the content. As such, the Administratum Adepts have, at best, an incomplete and largely inaccurate understanding of the business of the port. Some Lexmechanics and other Adepts hard-wired to their work stations have never even seen outside the walls of the Basilica Administratum, located a short distance from the Officio Auctoriates Porteus.

Prefect Gaius Anteshern

Some of the staff are genuinely ignorant of the corruption in their midst, while many others simply accept it as the status quo. The criminal oversights and activities of the Auctoriates are innumerable, but the Acolytes' concerns centre on Prefect Gaius Anteshern. Both Zax Holthane and Somnius Halbrel have bribed him to manipulate records pertaining to shuttle landings, obscuring the true point of origin of an Arvus Lighter designated 341 Beta-Sky, and falsely tying it to various cargo vessels. Were anyone to ever examine and cross-reference the records, they would

easily see something amiss, but with the sheer number of landings at Gyre, Anteshern is likely to be long-dead before this occurs. He is hopelessly addicted to obscura, which Holthane supplies in a rare strain the Prefect especially favours. If the Acolytes are acting undercover, offering the drug to Anteshern gives a +10 bonus on Charm or Deceive tests, although he is willing to accept thick wads of Desoleum scrip as well, if the price is right. He begins with a Disposition of 30 and the Submissive Personality; for his characteristics, use the Scribe profile on page 439.

If the Acolytes were extremely successful in dealing with Zax Holthane, they could already know Anteshern's name. It is more likely, though, that when the reach the Auctoriate they simply know—or suspect—perfidy by one or more of the scribes. Many of the Auctoriate's staff have something to hide, whether accepting small bribes or diverting minor tariffs into their own pockets. Even those who are not personally guilty have long been aware of the corruption around them, and fear being accused of complicity. As such, all staff begin with a Disposition of 30, and are extremely hesitant to discuss bribery or doctored records. Such questions impose a –10 penalty on interaction skill tests. Acolytes might pick up on these deceptions, which could even lead them to suspect staff who are not actively involved in the crime at hand. Two effective approaches to reaching Anteshern are to instil the fear of the Inquisition and the Emperor in whomever they interview, or to pose as important merchants, ships' officers, or even a Rogue Trader's crew, hoping to grease the palms of some amenable scribe. The warband could possibly continue their cover further, perhaps even infiltrating Halbrel's group when they encounter the arch-heretek, if they keep their Subtlety very high.

Holthane last made use of the shuttle over five months ago, but a hooded stranger with the red robes and tell-tale bionics of a Tech-Priest recently contacted Anteshern, offering payment in exchange for obscuring the shuttle's origin. The shuttle's next arrival is expected this very day, but exactly how long the Acolytes have until then should depend on how quickly the Acolytes have progressed thus far, and what the GM thinks can make for an exciting story. Probably, they should just barely have enough time to act, but the GM might wish to grant additional time if the warband has made good speed in the investigation to this point. Anteshern has no idea what the cargo is, though he realises it must be illegal, controlled, or—at best—a high-tariff good. Knowing that Imperial justice will not deal kindly with him, Anteshern responds with his fight-or-flight instincts if backed into a corner. Ultimately, all he can offer the Acolytes is the time of the shuttle's anticipated landing, and the fact that the shuttle's point of origin is actually somewhere within the system, with records he doctored to indicate that it arrives with a different Warp-capable voidship each time. As a result, he has no clue as to how the goods—whatever they may be—are actually brought into the system.

If Anteshern suspects that his secrets are revealed, he attempts to flee, preferably before the Acolytes enter his officium. When the Acolytes first arrive at the Officio Auctoriate Porteus, the GM should make a Subtlety test; on a failure, Anteshern realises they are inquiring about him, and is anxiously watching for their arrival. Exiting through a soot-stained window, his intended escape route is to make his way about ten metres along the narrow ledge so as to reach a maintenance ladder by which he can descend to the loading area adjacent to the Auctoriate and escape into the tunnels.

Sights and Sounds of the Port

Port Gyre is always busy, and the constant inter-orbital traffic results in an ever-present bank of exhaust and smog that hangs low over the port, casting it into perpetual gloom. The deafening roar of engines drowns out the shouts of labourers and even the augmented voices of overseers, and bionic auditory implants can be seen amongst many of the workers and residents. Many workers sport respirator units, and those who do not frequently cough up gobs of black tar. The stench of burning promethium is everywhere. The port's facilities are home to a bewildering array of servitor designs, from permanently emplaced crane-operators to maintenance drones that scale the vertical sides of the landing platforms on spider-like limbs. Tech-Priests swinging braziers of sacred incense lead processions of adepts through the avenues, while gangs and voidsmen on shore leave accost passers-by in the hopes of a good scuffle. Dregs and stranded crewmen beg for alms, and stern Sanctionaries patrol the most populous areas, ever-vigilant for interference in Consortium business.

Should the Acolytes allow Anteshern to escape, they could end up wandering lost through the tunnels or between the landing platforms above. In such a case, the GM can choose to have them happen upon Arvus 341 Beta-Sky as it descends or in the aftermath of the Daemonhost's escape (see **Delivery** below or **Hellish Cargo** on page 432).

Delivery

The smugglers' plan is for 341 Beta-Sky to make its descent to platform Tertius-9, and from there offload the cargo into the tunnels, leaving it as a dead-drop. Whether or not the Acolytes interfere, things do not go quite according to plan. Without the Acolytes' intervention, the crew completes its part of the deal, leaving the cargo along with four rogue psykers trained to psychically enforce the Daemonhost's bindings. Before the heretek Somnius Halbrel can retrieve his delivery, however, the Daemonhost escapes its bindings, slaughtering the psykers and escaping into the tunnels. The map shows the layout of this platform and can be used as a handout if desired, but should only be given to players after the shuttle either lands or crashes.

Betrayal!

Halbrel has no desire to risk Inquisitorial discovery or capture, and is willing to destroy the shipment if needed. If he suspects that the Acolytes are on his trail, he remotely triggers the lighter's destruction, with the crew still aboard. Halbrel is observing the scene as the lighter arrives, and if the Acolytes approach immediately after it sets down, he detonates it, intending to destroy the cargo, crew, and Acolytes all in one fiery instant. Otherwise, make a test against the Acolytes' Subtlety, with a –20 penalty if the Acolytes revealed themselves earlier or were involved in any firefights at the port. If the test fails, he detonates the lighter before the crew has a chance to unload. If the Subtlety test succeeds,



Halbrel allows the crew to proceed as expected, though he triggers the explosion should the Acolytes show themselves before the lighter departs. Should Halbrel destroy the shuttle, the explosion slaughters the crew and the psykers and allows the Daemonhost to escape its damaged pod. Each Acolyte within six metres of the shuttle's detonation suffers a single hit for 2d10 Explosive damage with the Concussive (3) quality.

Bring it Down!

The Acolytes may decide to shoot down the lighter in order to destroy the cargo, kill the smugglers, make an example of them, or for some other reason. If they have heavy weapons they could attempt this on their own. They might instead use their authority to take command of one of the port's defence guns, and turn it against the inbound lighter. Shooting down an unarmed shuttle over a busy port is, of course, highly irregular, and the Acolytes must succeed on a **Difficult (–10) Command test** to have it done. The Arvus Lighter is completely defenceless against the port's powerful Icarus lascannons and quad-autocannons, and the flaming wreckage of the shuttle crashes to the landing platforms, possibly causing a great deal of collateral damage. This also decreases the warband's Subtlety by 1d10+2.

When the Acolytes arrive at the scene of the crash, they find the dead smugglers and psykers, as well as the stasis pod. The impact kills or knocks unconscious anyone else nearby. It appears that the well-armoured pod survived the initial crash mostly intact, but the damage allowed something to subsequently burst free. The crash gouged into the ancient rockcrete and plasteel surface of the station, but it is clear that something tore a hole in the damaged surface, granting it access to the loading tunnels beneath.

341 Beta-Sky

Examining the Arvus Lighter reveals important clues, some of which can lead to future adventures. The Acolytes are likely to get a chance to search the shuttle only after it has been severely damaged, either from being shot down or sabotaged by Somnius Halbrel. A handful of xenos relics survived the crash relatively intact, including small talismans of Eldar make, easily identifiable to an Acolyte with the Forbidden Lore (Xenos-Eldar) skill. Cargo also includes three stone tablets engraved with xenos writing—these are shattered into pieces if the shuttle crashes or explodes.

If the Arvus was shot down, its cogitator systems are damaged but not completely inoperable. A **Difficult (–10) Tech-Use test** is required to commune with the shuttle's machine spirit and convince it to reveal its secrets. If successful, the Acolytes can examine the navigation cogitator's records to determine that the Beta-Sky's point of origin was the Kappex Orbital Station. The Acolytes might be able to (correctly) surmise from this that whatever ship brought the cargo into the sector first transferred it to the station in order to confound any attempts to trace it.

If they examine the craft after Halbrel activated its self-destruct mechanism, the systems are in even worse shape. They must first splice an external power source to the ship's systems before accessing the craft's cogitators, and so they must make a **Very Hard (–30) Tech-Use test** instead.

Assuming the Acolytes or Halbrel shoot down or destroy the lighter, the corpses left behind are in poor shape, badly burned and lacerated by shrapnel, if the blast does not dismember them outright. Amongst the remains of the crew are four pale, gaunt figures, their flesh branded with runic sigils. A psyker can easily detect the stink of the Warp about the scene, and a successful **Routine (+20) Psyniscience test** identifies the dead psykers as such. Additionally, an appropriately skilled Acolyte can attempt a **Challenging (+0) Forbidden Lore (Daemonology) test** to ascertain that the purpose of the brands was to ward the subject against unholy beings. Similar runes engraved in the surface of the stasis pod serve to bind or trap such entities. Silver chains that once bound the stasis pod are shattered, and on close inspection, minuscule runes of binding can be seen etched onto each link.

Hellish Cargo

If the Acolytes arrive at the scene of the cargo drop too late, the Daemonhost Suvfaeras has broken free of its stasis prison and slaughtered the psykers left behind to keep it contained (see **341 Beta-Sky** on page 431). If the Acolytes engage the smugglers in combat while they are en route to the drop site, the criminals fight back ferociously, realising full well the fate that awaits them should they be captured with such cargo. To represent the smugglers, use the Hired Lasgun Profile on page 439, and the Warp-caller profile on page 409 for the psykers. The psykers must keep all their focus on the Daemonhost's stasis pod, lest it escape, and so do not fight unless attacked directly. If any of the psykers are killed or injured, the Daemonhost takes advantage of the lapse to break free and quickly slaughter the remaining psykers before escaping into the tunnels. After a few rounds, should it become clear that the Acolytes will defeat them, the psykers become distracted, with the same result. Witnessing the Daemonhost's release is indescribably horrific, calling for a test against **Fear (3)**. Even if the Acolytes keep their wits long enough to attack Suvfaeras, it ignores them and flees into the tunnels, though it might take a moment to vent its rage or use a psychic power to slow any pursuers.

The Daemonhost

Unutterably profane and terrible, a Daemonhost is created when a Daemon is bound into the body of a human being, resulting in an unholy and devastatingly powerful abomination. Daemonhosts can only be created through complex rites and ceremony. The host for the Daemon must be a living human, ritually prepared; this is distinct from possession, and exorcism is not possible. When the Daemonhost is created, the host body's soul is consigned to eternal torment, and the Daemon is permanently bound within its flesh. The host body alters to reflect the unholy entity within, with these changes becoming more and more apparent the longer the Daemon inhabits this form. Though incredibly rare, there are numerous reasons for the creation of a Daemonhost. Malefic cults sometimes bind Daemonhosts, but despite providing a means to more permanently inhabit the material universe, for most Daemons to be bound in such a way is a hateful imprisonment from which they long to escape. The binding rituals, when performed correctly, ensure obedience to the Daemonhost's creator, though this does not stop the Daemon from plotting its revenge. Radical Inquisitors sometimes create them, to allow for the interrogation of the Warp entity, or in the most extreme cases, to be used as a weapon against the Inquisitor's enemies. In the eyes of Inquisitors of a puritan, or even moderate, bent, the creation of a Daemonhost crosses a line from which there is no return, irreversibly damning the creator.

Daemonhosts are not only terrifying for their profane nature—they are appallingly powerful. Most exhibit a number of devastating Warp-spawned powers, which they manifest with an ease no human psyker can match. Suvfaeras is as dangerous as any Daemonhost, a tall, pale mockery of a man that twists and bends in unnatural manners as it floats above the ground. Its fingers have become long talons that seem to rip into reality with each grasp, and its eyes are terrible pools of Warp-light. Fortunately for the Acolytes, however, its confinement and the lingering effects of the psychic suppression have left it in a weakened state. Truthfully, this is the only reason the Acolytes can hope to defeat it. Suvfaeras realises this, and so flees into the under-tunnels to hide and recover its strength. Even in its diminished capacity, however, the Daemonhost is a powerful and deadly opponent. If confronted, it fights viciously, calling on its baleful powers.

The manner of its creation makes Suvfaeras unique. In addition to the occult rituals and Warpcraft involved in the binding of a Daemonhost, whoever created Suvfaeras incorporated charms and tools of xenos origin. These adorn the monster's flesh, along with long swaths of ritual cloth and chains. Acolytes with the skill can identify these objects as being out of place by succeeding on an **Ordinary (+10) Forbidden Lore (Daemonology) test**. It is these xenos items that make this Daemonhost unique, and the object of the heretek's desire.

True Names

A Daemon might be known by hundreds of names and titles on thousands of worlds, but it can have only one True Name. These originate within the madness of the Warp, not from any human language. As such, they are extraordinarily difficult to speak, both for the odd sound and structure of the syllables, and for the otherworldly power contained therein. Daemons jealously guard them, for to know a Daemon's True Name is to have power over it. The discovery of even a minor Daemon's True Name is a monumental feat for a practitioner of the dark arts, one that he may work many lifetimes to achieve. In the creation and control of a Daemonhost, knowing the Daemon's True Name is a great advantage, and the knowledge of its True Name is often what marks a Daemon out for binding. Certain dark tomes, heavy with the evil they contain, record rituals and rites specific to a single Daemon, including its True Name. As these tainted manuals pass through the hands of different occultists through the centuries, a Daemonhost might be bound again and again. Though it inhabits a different host body each time, it contains the same malefic intellect, and the same dark changes mark its appearance.

Part III: Hunting Damnation

"My merchandise was not delivered as contracted. This is unacceptable."

–Somnius Halbrel, personal vox-log

It should be clear to the Acolytes that the Daemonhost represents a terrible threat to the port and to Hive Desoleum. However, they may not realise just what it actually is. A successful **Routine (+20) Psyniscience** or **Forbidden Lore (Daemonology) test** allows a character to sense the strong presence of the Warp around the entity, and lingering in the area around its former prison. If either of these tests are passed with three degrees of success, he also realises that the creature has fled but is weakened from the efforts of the psykers using their powers to keep it subdued and the shuttle's destruction. Its power is even now returning, though they cannot know at what rate or how long until it returns to full strength. Clearly, they must destroy or capture the Daemonhost before this happens. Examining the circumstances, an Acolyte can also reach this conclusion with a **Very Hard (–30) Logic test**.

Part III finds the Acolytes in a race against time and, whether they know it or not, against the heretek Somnius Halbrel, who even now pursues the Daemonhost with the intention of capturing it for his own vile purposes. Perhaps even worse than Halbrel succeeding is if the Daemonhost should escape. The Daemonhost poses a moral threat dire enough to damn countless citizens of Hive Desoleum, for mere exposure to such an entity is enough to mark an average citizen for death, rather than risk their corruption. Mere knowledge of such a creature, regardless of any degree of understanding, is impermissible for any outside the highest echelons of Imperial power—save for Acolytes in service of an Inquisitor.

Pursuing the Daemonhost

Regardless of exactly how previous events played out, the Daemonhost escapes into the tunnels, and the Acolytes must give chase if they hope to prevent the damnable thing from causing untold destruction. Fortunately, the Daemonhost is still weakened, giving them a chance to stop it before it becomes too powerful.

There are numerous methods by which the Acolytes can attempt to track or locate it, and the GM should give them a reasonable chance to succeed with whatever clever plan they devise. If the group includes a psyker, that character can use his otherworldly senses to track the creature's unnatural spoor. A psyker who passes a **Challenging (+0) Psyniscience test** can ascertain whether the Daemonhost was recently present in a given area, sensing the lingering Warp-taint it leaves behind. The closer they come to it, the stronger this sense becomes. An Acolyte without psychic ability can still attempt to track the Daemonhost through a **Difficult (–10) Awareness test**, for its aura of unnaturalness lingers in its wake, and reality rebels at its passing. Hoarfrost on the tunnel walls, the smell of burnt flesh, and the faint echo of inhuman screams are a few of the effects even an Acolyte without the psyker's gift might notice. If the character possesses the Forbidden Lore (Daemonology) skill, he gains a +10 bonus on the test.

Another possibility is to follow the trail of destruction the enraged Daemonhost leaves in its wake. They are far from the only people present in the tunnels, and as they follow the Daemonhost they discover the recent corpses of labourers, the smouldering remains of merchant caravans, and even the disembowelled and scorched remains of armed gangers. In addition to providing a trail to follow, these encounters can be used to reinforce how dangerous the Daemonhost is, even in its weakened condition.

The GM can include a few survivors scattered amongst these scenes of devastation. These wounded souls, scarred mentally and spiritually as well as physically, offer a first-hand account of the Daemonhost's power and fury, and can also point the Acolytes in the right direction if needed. This also leaves the warband to decide whether to offer aid to these survivors, leave them to their fate, or deliver the Emperor's mercy. To come face to face with a Daemonhost is to invite spiritual corruption and madness, and executing survivors might be both a kindness and a necessity to preserve the safety of others.



The Deep Tunnels

The deep tunnels, sometimes known as the Underport, consist of vast warrens of interconnecting passages, chambers, lifts, and storage depots. While they once fulfilled functions similar to the loading tunnels directly beneath the port, the deep tunnels are long-since abandoned and fallen into disrepair. Many corridors are completely without power, while flickering lumen-globes or torches set in place by unknown hands dimly illuminate others. While traversing the undertunnels, the dripping of unknown liquids or a distant animalistic scream occasionally breaks the silence. Millennia of rust and corrosion seal some chambers. The Acolytes could pass desiccated corpses, collapsed tunnels, and even shanty towns populated by the descendants of stranded voidsmen, mistrusting of outsiders.

Goods that have been lost or stolen over the centuries are scattered everywhere, and the dwellers pick over the scraps. Many legends tell of particularly worthwhile finds, which draw groups of treasure hunters from the hive.

The GM can use the deep tunnels to deliver clues for future adventures. One possibility could include an unclaimed dead-drop of illicit Trade Sable merchandise, or a weapons cache if the warband is clearly in need of more ammunition or better armaments. The Acolytes could find clues to other illegal trading, or they could investigate the identity of the intended recipients, perhaps finding their remains if they never escaped the deep tunnels. See page 436 for more on follow-up investigations.

Optional Encounter: Ambush!

This is an optional encounter the GM can include at any time once the Acolytes have descended into the deep tunnels. The corridor along which they are travelling opens up into a wider chamber piled with ancient crates and machine parts. Once the Acolytes are partway across the room, a bloodthirsty cry goes up as filthy and misshapen men in ragged crew uniforms and work coveralls leap out of cover, brandishing wicked blades and a few ill-kept firearms. These insane wretches are the remains of stranded voidsmen crews, or oathless outcasts from the labour-clans. There should be a minor combat encounter, 1 level below the group's average spent xp value and using the Dreg profile on page 394 for these debased attackers; this can be adjusted based on the desired encounter challenge and length.

The Buyer

Whether the Acolytes realise it or not, Somnius Halbrel is also hunting the Daemonhost. He is equipped with an aetheroscope, an arcane scanner capable of detecting the presence of the Warp. Using this device, the arch-heretek is able to follow the trail of the Daemonhost in much the same way as a psyker, substituting Tech-Use tests for Psyniscience tests. His overriding goal at this point is to capture the Daemonhost, the most valuable commodity involved, and salvage what he can of the deal. As knowledgeable as he is in forbidden lore, Halbrel is no master daemonologist, and binding the Daemonhost is an unexpected challenge for him.

His plan for doing so is to have his men attack the Daemonhost and keep it distracted while he recites from the *Ex Perditio*, a proscribed text. This tome contains the creature's True Name, as well as the particular rites to bind and control it. Halbrel intends to bind the Daemonhost to his will, thus removing the need for precautions such as the stasis pod and psychic warders.

Halbrel's party includes three combat servitors (see page 396), plus five hired lasguns and a pair of apprenticed Desoleum Cult Mechanicus Adepts (see page 439 for their profiles). This group's threat threshold should be adjusted accordingly for experienced or particularly combat-capable groups.

The knowledge that they are racing against another group is a great way to add tension to this part of the adventure. If the Acolytes are not already aware of Halbrel's involvement, the GM can have the two groups encounter each other during the search for the Daemonhost, perhaps both groups simultaneously coming upon the monster's latest victims. The GM could also make a Subtlety test for the group and, on a failure, have Halbrel leave some of his men in a position to ambush the Acolytes. He has no desire to waste time and let his "property" slip further from his grasp, and so is unwilling to be drawn into a protracted fight. If the Acolytes attack or attempt to detain him, the impatient heretek orders a few of his retainers to kill the bothersome Acolytes while he continues the pursuit with his remaining men.



Reckoning

Eventually, the warband confronts the Daemonhost, engaging in a three-way battle with it and Halbrel and his men. How long it takes for the Acolytes to catch up to the Daemonhost depends on their success in tracking it, but also comes down to the GM's judgement. If the players are enjoying the explorations of the deep tunnels, this portion of the adventure could go on for some time. On the other hand, if the Acolytes are already injured, weary, or running low on supplies and ammunition, it might be preferable for them to reach the final encounter sooner, rather than later.

Suvfaeras is as intelligent as it is evil, and once the Daemonhost realises the Acolytes are gaining on it, is likely to circle back or lie in wait for them, attacking and retreating before they have a chance to regroup and counter-attack. If the GM wishes, the Acolytes could have several run-ins with the Daemonhost before the final encounter. Even if they do not, the GM can speak of screams far in the distance, the sounds of tearing metal, sudden drops in temperature, vague shadows, unearthly whispers, and other effects to heighten the unease during the hunt. This should be used to reinforce the tension and horror of the final part of the adventure, with the Daemonhost appearing suddenly to inflict some damage on the Acolytes before disappearing deeper into the tunnels. The Acolytes could find themselves hunted, and struggling to merely survive against a powerful foe. The Daemonhost might burst unexpectedly through the floor or ceiling, or use its powers to harry the warband, weakening them mentally as well as physically. The Acolytes should make a Fear test each time they encounter Suvfaeras, especially as his form can twist into new, even more unpleasant shapes between sightings.

Running the Battle

The final battle involves the Acolytes, Suvfaeras, and Halbrel and his remaining force. There are two general possibilities for how this battle could occur: either the Acolytes come across Halbrel and Suvfaeras already in combat, or the Acolytes corner the Daemonhost first, with Halbrel and his men arriving and joining the battle after a few rounds. It could be to the Acolytes' advantage to be the last party to enter the fight, as this allows them to pick their targets carefully and use the on-going events to their advantage. This does run the risk of side-lining the Acolytes and turning them into spectators. Therefore, unless the Acolytes are already injured or otherwise disadvantaged, it is recommended that they are the first to engage in battle with Suvfaeras. Suvfaeras can turn and confront them once it is clear they are too tenacious in their pursuit, trusting in its powers to destroy them so that it can make good its escape. Suvfaeras attempts to surprise the Acolytes, either lying in wait or attacking from an unexpected quarter, such as bursting through a tunnel wall. Alternatively, if the Acolytes are successful in their skill tests to track Suvfaeras and they have a cunning plan, they might be able to catch up to the Daemonhost and force it to defend itself.

After 4–5 rounds, Somnius Halbrel and his surviving force arrive; the Game Master should adjust this as needed depending on how the combat is going. It is likely that even in its weakened state, the Daemonhost outmatches the Acolytes, and Halbrel's intervention could actually work in their favour. Halbrel prefers no witnesses though, and has half of his party attack the warband while the rest attack Suvfaeras. While the Daemonhost weakened and distracted, Halbrel can perform the rites to bind it to his will. Halbrel greatly desires the Daemohost's unique melding of Warp-infused flesh and xenos relics, and calls out warnings to his people not to damage the artefacts.

This anarchic battle might at first seem quite daunting to run. The GM should remember that, as always, the focus should be on the Acolytes. Rather than spending time rolling for the attacks and other actions of all NPCs, the GM can only roll for attacks directed at the Acolytes, describing the rest narratively. With this in mind, the battle should be quite manageable.

The GM should ensure Halbrel escapes the battle, as the arch-heretek has a role to play in future Dark Heresy adventures. Once it becomes obvious that things are going against him or he is severely injured, Halbrel flees, leaving his men behind to die. This could be leaping into a crumbling hatchway that he collapses behind him, stepping into a bottomless crack in the flooring, or even seeming to vaporise from an energy blast. Suvfaeras itself should be fully capable of occupying the Acolytes' attention, so Halbrel can likely escape without too much difficulty and disappear into the blackness when no one is watching. If they make it a high priority to kill Halbrel, his Touched by the Fates trait allows him to burn Fate threshold in the same manner as an Acolyte in order to survive certain death.

Conclusions and Rewards

"They dared interfere with my work. Should this continue and it impact my other deliveries, a more definitive response will become necessary."

–Somnius Halbrel, personal vox-log

Suvfaeras is a powerful and cunning opponent, and in the anarchy of the final battle, it is very possible that neither the Acolytes nor Halbrel are able to subdue it. If its foes are all incapacitated, Suvfaeras once again escapes into the depths of the hive. While they can take small solace in the fact that they foiled the arch-heretek's plans, a loose Daemonhost in the vicinity of Hive Desoleum is a grave concern that requires prompt action on their parts. It is likely, and reasonable, that the Acolytes decide the time for discretion is past; in dealing with the threat of the Daemonhost, they could enlist the aid of other Imperial servants, perhaps requesting that the Adeptus Arbites or Sanctionaries establish a cordon around the port. It is even possible that they decide to take drastic action to contain the Daemonhost, even going so far as to invoke the authority of their Inquisitor in order to destroy Port Gyre through orbital bombardment. Such an action is possible, though extremely dangerous, and is certain to earn the Acolytes a number of new enemies, including the Consortium. Even if Halbrel is denied his prize and the Daemonhost destroyed, the Acolytes have little time to rest; their work is never done.

Follow-up Adventures

Though the Acolytes may have banished the Daemonhost Suvfaeras and halted Halbrel's plans, no heresy is ever truly eradicated. In the aftermath of every investigation are threads that lead to other plots, foes, and dangers. This adventure is no exception, and there are several possibilities for follow-up investigations. The Acolytes could take the initiative in continuing the investigation, and GMs should generally reward players for their efforts to encourage them to keep digging, such as with new clues or commendations from the Inquisitor (or condemnations for failing). Players often take their investigations in unexpected directions, and GMs should remain flexible and prepared to adapt to the Acolytes' actions. Their pursuit of the xenos artefact trade in this adventure is only the first step towards uncovering even greater threats, and their investigations into the areas below can all prove fruitful towards that end. Future adventures will also lead the Acolytes deeper into these dark waters as they deal with other artefacts unleashed upon humanity, and the dead race that spawned them.

The Daemonhost

If Suvfaeras escapes, it is likely to hunt down those who bound it in order to take revenge. This presents the Acolytes with an opportunity, for if they can follow the Daemonhost, it might lead them back to a major source of Faceless Trade smuggling into Hive Desoleum. If the Acolytes are able to destroy the Daemonhost, they achieve a great victory in the battle against the enemies of Mankind. There is little time to revel, though, for numerous unanswered questions remain. Most troubling is the origin of the Daemonhost. They may take it upon themselves to trace its source before the trail goes cold; if not, the Inquisitor can give the order after they have reported on the events of the adventure. The logical place to start is Kappex Orbital, where the shuttle 341 Beta-Sky originated. The warband must search for clues to the shuttle's true masters, and discover how the forbidden artefacts are brought to the orbital in the first place. The smugglers of the Sable Trade are ruthless individuals, willing to do whatever it takes to put a stop to the Acolytes' inquiries, and the PCs could face hired killers, sabotaged life-support, and other potentially fatal hindrances.

The Heretek

Whether he is able to abscond with the Daemonhost or not, it is important that Somnius Halbrel survives the adventure and escapes from the Acolytes. The GM can have him give a suitably irritated farewell to them as he disappears into the darkness, off to plot his next actions. If the Daemonhost is destroyed, it leaves the Acolytes in a difficult position, deciding whether to pursue the heretek or trace the origin of the Daemonhost, beginning with 341 Beta-Sky. If Halbrel achieves his goal of binding Suvfaeras, pursuing him and stopping his plans, whatever they may be, should be the Acolytes' priority. Halbrel is a highly resourceful opponent, and tracking him is not easy. The Acolytes should encounter numerous challenges, but the search for Halbrel can lead to future published Dark Heresy adventures. On the other hand, if Halbrel burned Fate threshold in order to survive, the Acolytes might believe him dead, making his appearance in future adventures an unexpected twist. He might even try to sway them to his side, having found them to be worthy individuals.

Idle Hands

Though Guljian is dead, he was far from the only noble involved in the heresies of the Trade Sable. The Acolytes could return to the Apex to investigate further nobles. Searching his records or interrogating him, the Acolytes can obtain names or other information related to Holthane's other buyers. Confronting them directly can make for a very different sort of investigation, as the nobles could feign cooperation while hiding evidence, misdirecting the Acolytes, and even arranging for their "disappearance." Alternatively, they could confront the Babyfaces to find information. Taking on a large hive gang is a risky proposition, even for skilled Acolytes. Rather than relying on force, savvy Acolytes could attempt to infiltrate the gang and possibly learn of their other sins. This could become the start of a series of adventures across all levels of Hive Desoleum, from the uppermost Apex to the depths of the underhive. It could also make for an excellent opportunity to recruit agents within the gang, or those who the Babyfaces encounter in their vicious dealings. New Player Characters could even come from within the gang, to join the ranks of the Acolytes.

Artefacts

At the end of the adventure, the Acolytes are likely to be in possession of two xenos relics, the black orb recovered from Guljian's study and the mummified alien hand found amongst Holthane's merchandise. Holthane and Somnius Halbrel have various and different sources; searching for the source of these objects could lead the Acolytes in an entirely different direction than searching for the source of the Daemonhost. Holthane had many suppliers and contacts within the Sable Trade, and these objects could have come from different sources. Once the Acolytes arrive at Kappex Orbital, they find that 341 Beta-Sky provided transport for goods from many traders, opening up a vast web of smuggling and heresy. Learning more of this Faceless Trade conspiracy and the nature of these ancient, inhuman items can become the basis for many future adventures.

Rewards

Acolytes should earn between 300 and 450 experience points for each session of play, depending on their actions. Each Acolyte involved in destroying the Daemonhost Suvfaeras gains 3 Influence.

Any Acolyte involved in the destruction of Port Gyre gains the Enemy (Consortium) talent. Acolytes who approach the encounter with Lans Guljian in a violent manner can, at the GM's discretion, gain Enemy (House Guljian), or even Enemy (Apex Nobility) if their actions are especially destructive. Conversely if they are especially discreet and helpful, the GM could grant Peer for either. Acolytes who spend extensive time investigating Port Gyre should gain the Scholastic Lore (Port Gyre) talent. Finally, any Acolyte who inflicts a wound on a Babyface's head gains Enemy (Cloudboys).

The GM should also assess the warband's actions to determine any additional Subtlety changes from the ones called for earlier. Maintaining their cover throughout the adventure should increase it by at least 1d10. Should it drop below 20 as the result of their overt actions, attempts to operate secretly when they return to the hive could become very difficult.

NPCs Appendix

This appendix includes game profiles and additional background information for the NPCs in **Dark Pursuits**. If needed, additional NPCs can be found in **Chapter XII: NPCs and Adversaries**.

The Daemonhost Suvfaeras

Like all Daemonhosts, Suvfaeras is a foul and unholy thing, the very existence of which defies nature. Suvfaeras is unique in that, added to the silver chains and occult brands that bind its host body, charms and talismans of xenos origin adorn its blasphemous form. It is impossible to say if these objects were intended for such use or the heretics that bound Suvfaeras repurposed them.

While a Daemon may on rare occasion deign to inhabit the flesh of a moral indefinitely, such a state is akin to imprisonment for most denizens of the Warp. Indeed, Suvfaeras was unwittingly created in its current form by parties unknown who clearly possessed powerful and damnable knowledge. Upon escaping its stasis prison, Suvfaeras is initially weakened, perhaps an after-effect of the psychic choir that kept him subdued. Ever spiteful and bloodthirsty, its first act was to slaughter its wardens. Now, it prowls the undertunnels, slowly regaining its strength and plotting against its captors. Even if this body is destroyed, the Daemon remembers every slight, and surely will return to revisit its vengeance.

The Daemonhost Suvfaeras (Master) 33

H	AR	AL	B	LR	LL
01-10	11-20	21-30	31-70	71-85	86-00
7 / 14	7 / 14	7 / 14	7 / 14	7 / 14	7 / 14

WS	BS	S 8	T 7	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Ifl
52	35	55	45	18	53	45	55	15	31

Half 2	Full 4	Charge 6	Run 12	Threat 40

Claws — Class Melee

Rng —	RoF —		Dmg 1d10+10^2+SB (I)	
Pen 2	Clip —	Rld —	Wt —	Avl —

Special: Crippling (3)

Skills: Psyniscience (Per) +30
Talents: Furious Assault, Thunder Charge, Warp Sense
Traits: Baneful Presence (20), Daemonic (3), Dark-sight, Fear (2), From Beyond, Hover†, Size (5), Psyker (PR 4), Unnatural Strength (3)
†*Suvfaeras is a being of unnatural power, unconcerned with certain laws of physics. It does not need to use any Movement actions in order to remain hovering.*
Psychic Powers: Haemorrhage, Smite, Spontaneous Combustion, Telekine Shield, Warp Speed
Gear: Rune-inscribed flesh armour, chains, and xenos talismans
Newly Born: The profile given for Suvfaeras represents the weakened state in which the Acolytes encounter it. If desired, the GM can increase Suvfaeras's characteristics by at least +10, increase his Daemonic trait to 4, and add +1 to his psy rating.

Arch-Heretek Somnius Halbrel

Somnius Halbrel is a heretek of the worst kind. Expelled from the Mechanicum for his unsanctioned research into xenos anatomy, his experiments have become even more terrible in the years since. His obsession is the hybridisation of human and xenos, which he believes offers a path to perfection that surpasses even the promise of the machine. Though he is able to pass as an ordained Tech-Priest due to his knowledge of the Cult Mechanicus and his obvious cybernetics, closer inspection reveals the horrible truth. Halbrel is his own most promising test subject, having replaced much of his own remaining flesh with transplants from xenos or vat-grown genetic hybrids. He eagerly awaits the arrival of the Daemonhost to examine the xenos-relics used in binding its Warp-infused flesh.

Sommnius Halbrel (Master) 22

H	AR	AL	B	LR	LL
01-10	11-20	21-30	31-70	71-85	86-00
– 1 / 6	4 1 / 10	4 1 / 10	4 1 / 10	4 1 / 10	4 1 / 10

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Ifl
40	45	45	55	35	60	40	55	20	43

Half 3	Full 6	Charge 9	Run 18	Threat 35

Plasma Pistol — Class Pistol

Rng 30m	RoF S/2/–		Dmg 1d10+8 (E)	
Pen 6	Clip 10	Rld 3 Full	Wt 4 Kg	Avl VR

Special: Maximal, Overheats

Power Maul — Class Melee

Rng —	RoF —		Dmg 1d10+8^4+SB (E)	
Pen 4	Clip —	Rld —	Wt 3.5 Kg	Avl VR

Special: Power Field, Shocking

Skills: Awareness (Per), Logic (Int) +10, Medicae (Int) +20, Forbidden Lore (Adeptus Mechanicus, Daemonology) (Int) +20, Tech-Use (Int) +20
Talents: Die Hard, Luminen Shock, Technical Knock, True Grit
Traits: Dark-Sight, Machine (1), Regeneration (1), Touched by the Fates (3)
Gear: Mesh-lined robes, aetheroscope, combi-tool, various malefic tomes, portable vox, respirator
Cybernetics: Bionic right arm, luminen capacitors implant, Mechanicus implants, medicae mechadendrite, utility mechadendrite
Heretek Extremis: When attacking a character with extensive cybernetic parts (such as a servitor or Tech-Priest) or making a Called Shot to a bionic limb, Somnius Halbrel makes a Tech-Use (WS *or* BS) test in place of the standard Weapon Skill or Ballistic Skill test.

Zax Holthane, Sable Trader

Ruthless and ambitious, Zax Holthane has polluted a dozen worlds with the unholy contraband of the Trade Sable. His business in Hive Desoleum has thus far been quite lucrative, and with the Babyfaces acting as intermediaries, he has sold to numerous wealthy nobles. Although Holthane deals in a variety of goods, as do most traders of his ilk, his specialty is weaponry of xenos origin. Curiously, Holthane never uses xenos weapons himself.

Zax Holthane (Elite) 18

H	AR	AL	B	LR	LL
– 01-10 4	3 11-20 7	3 21-30 7	3 31-70 7	3 71-85 7	3 86-00 7

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	Wp	Fel	Ifl
41	50	37	43	40	38	41	40	37	—

Half 4	Full 8	Charge 12	Run 24	Threat 20

Bolt Pistol — Class Pistol

Rng 30m	RoF S/2/–	Dmg 1d10+6 (X)	
Pen 5	Clip 8	Rld 1 Full	Wt 3.5 Kg	Avl VR

Special: *Tearing*

Autopistol — Class Pistol

Rng 30m	RoF S/–/6	Dmg 1d10+2 (I)	
Pen 0	Clip 18	Rld 1 Full	Wt 1.5 Kg	Avl AV

Special: –

Skills: Awareness (Per), Dodge (Ag) +10
Talents: Independent Targeting, Quick Draw, Rapid Reload, Two-Weapon Wielder
Gear: Flak armour under leather tunic, 2 extra clips for bolt pistol, 2 extra clips of expander shells (already included in the autopistol profile above), injector and 3 doses of stimm, multi-key, photo-contacts, portable vox, red-dot sight (attached to the bolt pistol)
Expert Pistolier: When attacking with two pistols, Holthane may swap the results of the Ballistic Skill tests before applying the attack results.

Skinner (Eldric Havofast), Babyface Gang Leader

The youngest son of the ancient and respected House Havofast, Eldric resented his siblings from a young age. After fatally stabbing his elder brother in a duel, he fled to the lower hive, where he joined up with the Babyfaces. Now, going by the name "Skinner," Eldric freely indulges his violent and sadistic impulses. Even amongst the cruel Babyfaces, Skinner has a reputation for viciousness.

Eldric "Skinner" Havofast (Elite) 15

H	AR	AL	B	LR	LL
– 01-10 3	4 11-20 7	4 21-30 7	4 31-70 7	4 71-85 7	4 86-00 7

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	Wp	Fel	Ifl
42	41	34	36	41	37	38	35	41	—

Half 4	Full 8	Charge 12	Run 24	Threat 10

Autopistol — Class Pistol

Rng 30m	RoF S/–/6	Dmg 1d10+2 (I)	
Pen 3	Clip 18	Rld 1 Full	Wt 1.5 Kg	Avl AV

Special: –

Power Blade — Class Melee

Rng —	RoF —	Dmg 1d10+5^{2+SB} (R)	
Pen 4	Clip —	Rld —	Wt 1 Kg	Avl VR

Special: *Power Field*

Skills: Charm (Fel) +10, Dodge (Ag) +10
Talents: Blademaster, Jaded, Quick Draw
Gear: Concealed mesh armour, expensive and stylish clothing, 2 extra clips of man-stopper bullets (already included in the autopistol profile above)
Sadist: Once per turn, when Skinner inflicts Critical damage, he gains an additional Half Action which must be used before his turn ends.

Babyfaces Ganger

Unlike other gangers and mid-hive workers, Cloudboys have actually seen the sky, and of course think themselves superior to the masses of hive rabble. The Babyfaces take this sense of superiority to extremes, becoming predatory in their behaviour as they hunt and torture commoners for their amusement. They take extreme pride in their appearance, as do all Cloudboys, but in particular they value their unblemished, youthful faces. To attack a Babyface's visage is to invite the full wrath he and his compatriots can muster, for anyone who scars a Babyface has an enemy for life.



Babyfaces Ganger (Troop) 10

H	AR	AL	B	LR	LL
3	6	6	6	6	6

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	Wp	Fel	Ifl
35	35	30	35	30	32	37	32	38	—

Half 3 | Full 6 | Charge 9 | Run 18 | Threat 5

Autopistol — Class Pistol

Rng 30m | RoF S/–/6 | Dmg 1d10+2 (I)
Pen 0 | Clip 18 | Rld 1 Full | Wt 1.5 Kg | Avl Av

Special: –

Sword — Class Melee

Rng — | RoF — | Dmg 1d10+3SB (R)
Pen 0 | Clip — | Rld — | Wt 3 Kg | Avl Cm

Special: Balanced

Skills: Charm (Fel)
Talents: Jaded
Gear: Concealed mesh armour, expensive and stylish clothing,

Hired Lasgun

Violence is a constant in the 41st Millennium, and there is no shortage of mercenaries and sell-swords to fight for another's cause, so long as the pay is right. Though a hired lasgun typically has no stake in the cause for which he is hired, accepting a heretic's pay damns him just as surely.

Hired Lasgun (Troop) 10

H	AR	AL	B	LR	LL
8	8	8	8	8	8

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	Wp	Fel	Ifl
35	37	35	41	32	28	35	32	25	—

Half 3 | Full 6 | Charge 9 | Run 18 | Threat 4

Lasgun — Class Basic

Rng 100m | RoF S/3/– | Dmg 1d10+3 (E)
Pen 0 | Clip 60 | Rld 1 Full | Wt 4 Kg | Avl Cm

Special: Reliable

Skills: Athletics (S), Dodge (Ag)
Talents: Nowhere to Hide
Gear: 2 extra lasgun charge packs, flak armour

Scribe

In Port Gyre, scribes hunch over slab-desks made of reclaimed deck plating in the flickering arc-candle light, recording the traffic and business of Port Gyre in exacting detail.

Scribe (Troop) 8

H	AR	AL	B	LR	LL
2	3	3	3	3	3

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	Wp	Fel	Ifl
20	20	25	25	20	35	30	30	25	—

Half 2 | Full 4 | Charge 6 | Run 12 | Threat 2

Knife — Class Melee

Rng — | RoF — | Dmg 1d5+2SB (I)
Pen 0 | Clip — | Rld — | Wt 1 Kg | Avl Pl

Special: –

Skills: Scholastic Lore (any one)
Gear: Ink-stained heavy robes, autoquill, writing kit, dataslates

Desoleum Cult Mechanicus Adept

With promises of secret knowledge and arcane lore, Halbrel corrupts these young adepts away from the Martian Priesthood.

Cult Mechanicus Adept (Troop) 9

H	AR	AL	B	LR	LL
4	4	4	4	4	4

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	Wp	Fel	Ifl
30	30	30	35	25	35	30	35	20	—

Half 2 | Full 4 | Charge 6 | Run 12 | Threat 3

Lasgun — Class Basic

Rng 100m | RoF S/3/– | Dmg 1d10+3 (E)
Pen 0 | Clip 60 | Rld 1 Full | Wt 4 Kg | Avl Cm

Special: Reliable

Great Weapon — Class Melee

Rng — | RoF — | Dmg 2d10+3SB (R)
Pen 0 | Clip — | Rld — | Wt 7 Kg | Avl Sc

Special: Unbalanced

Skills: Tech-Use (Int)
Talents: Technical Knock
Gear: Technoweave robes, combi-tool
Cybernetics: Mechanicus implants

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Character Name _____
Home World _____
Background _____
Role _____
Elite Advances _____
Divination _____
Notes _____

Dark Heresy™

Player Name _____
Gender _____ Age _____ Build _____
Complexion _____ Hair _____
Quirks _____
Superstitions _____
Momentos _____
Allies _____
Enemies _____

Characteristics

Weapon Skill (WS)	Intelligence (Int)
Ballistic Skill (BS)	Perception (Per)
Strength (S)	Willpower (WP)
Toughness (T)	Fellowship (Fel)
Agility (Ag)	Influence (Ifl)

Experience	Fate Points:
XP to Spend	Threshold
Total XP Spent	Current

Insanity (Is) ☐☐

Corruption (C) ☐☐

Mental Disorders

Malignances

Mutations

WS ○ BS ○ S ○ T ○ Ag ○ Int ○ Per ○ WP ○ Fel ○ Ifl ○

Aptitudes

Skills

	Known	+10	+20	+30
Acrobatics (Ag)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Athletics (S)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Awareness (Per)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Charm (Fel)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Command (Fel)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Commerce (Int)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Common Lore (Int)				
•	☐	☐	☐	☐
•	☐	☐	☐	☐
•	☐	☐	☐	☐
•	☐	☐	☐	☐
Deceive (Fel)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Dodge (Ag)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Forbidden Lore (Int)				
•	☐	☐	☐	☐
•	☐	☐	☐	☐
•	☐	☐	☐	☐
•	☐	☐	☐	☐
Inquiry (Fel)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Interrogation (WP)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Intimidate (S)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Linguistics (Int)				
•	☐	☐	☐	☐
•	☐	☐	☐	☐
Logic (Int)	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Known	+10	+20	+30
Medicae (Int)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Navigate (Surface) (Int)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Navigate (Stellar) (Int)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Navigate (Warp) (Int)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Operate (Aeronautica) (Ag)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Operate (Surface) (Ag)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Operate (Voidship) (Ag)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Parry (WS)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Psyniscience (Per)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Scholastic Lore (Int)				
•	☐	☐	☐	☐
•	☐	☐	☐	☐
•	☐	☐	☐	☐
•	☐	☐	☐	☐
•	☐	☐	☐	☐
Scrutiny (Per)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Security (Int)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sleight of Hand (Ag)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Stealth (Ag)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Survival (Per)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Tech-Use (Int)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Trade (Int)				
•	☐	☐	☐	☐
•	☐	☐	☐	☐
•	☐	☐	☐	☐

Talents & Traits

Page #

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Weapons

Name:			Cls:	
Rng:	Rof:		Dmg:	
Pen:	Clip:	Rld:	Wt:	Avl:
Special:				

Name:			Cls:	
Rng:	Rof:		Dmg:	
Pen:	Clip:	Rld:	Wt:	Avl:
Special:				

Name:			Cls:	
Rng:	Rof:		Dmg:	
Pen:	Clip:	Rld:	Wt:	Avl:
Special:				

Name:			Cls:	
Rng:	Rof:		Dmg:	
Pen:	Clip:	Rld:	Wt:	Avl:
Special:				

Name:			Cls:	
Rng:	Rof:		Dmg:	
Pen:	Clip:	Rld:	Wt:	Avl:
Special:				

Name:			Cls:	
Rng:	Rof:		Dmg:	
Pen:	Clip:	Rld:	Wt:	Avl:
Special:				

Gear

	Wt	Page #

Max Carry WT (SB+TB): _____

Current Carry WT: _____

Armour and Defence



Wounds

Total :

Current :

Critical Damage

Current :

Conditions

Movement

Half		Charge	
Full		Run	

Fatigue Threshold: (TB+WPB) Current:

Psychic Powers

Psy Rating:

	Page #

Special Abilities:

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Inquisitor Name:

Home World

Background

Role

Influence

Ordo:

Origin

Player name
Character name
Home World
Background
Role
Elite Advances
Notes
(Per) (Wp) (Ifl)

Player name
Character name
Home World
Background
Role
Elite Advances
Notes
(Per) (Wp) (Ifl)

Player name
Character name
Home World
Background
Role
Elite Advances
Notes
(Per) (Wp) (Ifl)



Subtlety Track

Player name
Character name
Home World
Background
Role
Elite Advances
Notes
(Per) (Wp) (Ifl)

Player name
Character name
Home World
Background
Role
Elite Advances
Notes
(Per) (Wp) (Ifl)

Player name
Character name
Home World
Background
Role
Elite Advances
Notes
(Per) (Wp) (Ifl)

Warband Notes:

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