



IMPERIUM MALEDICTUM



INQUISITION GM'S GUIDE

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'I, Inquisitor Lord Hieronymo Drake, authorise, order and declare Exterminatus upon the fourth planet of Belnshudha. The planet is lost to an immeasurable foe and is irredeemably corrupted. We must ensure no one can tread upon its surface again. I cannot make it to my extraction vessel, so these are my final words: despite the necessity of atrocity that is about to occur, know you have served the God-Emperor's will this day. Canis Vator Avit Abominus.'

— Final order of Inquisitor Lord Hieronymo Drake to Battle Group Fortis

THE INQUISITION

The Inquisition is the Imperium's most terrifying and secretive organisation. They exist beneath the surface of ordinary Imperial society, subtly influencing the everyday lives of citizens in the public consciousness, and yet they wield the ultimate authority across all walks of life.

Inquisitors across the galaxy protect the Imperium from terrible and insidious foes. They consider themselves justified in taking any necessary measure to fulfil this sacred charge, including sacrificing the lives of those they seek to protect.

By an Inquisitor's word alone, thousands have perished in a moment, High Lords have been brought low, noble lines extinguished, and entire worlds have burned. Were it not for the magnitude of the threats they guard against and the dire necessity of their actions, the Inquisition would indeed be counted among the most terrible scourges to befall the Imperium.

The threats they face are myriad and complex, insidious and brutal, enigmatic and overwhelming. The heretic, the daemon, the xenos — each gnaws at the underbelly of the Imperium, robbing it of strength never to be recovered. Inquisitors know that their task is one pitted against inevitability. Though the Imperium continues to claim new worlds, it cannot stem the tide of losses — with every Astra Cartographica survey, former strongholds are erased, snuffed out by the growing darkness.

Most believe Inquisitors stand united against these enemies of the Imperium; few know that the Inquisition wars within itself. Inquisitors are divided by their philosophies and methodologies — their limitless authority means most grow accustomed to their orders going unquestioned. Only another Inquisitor has the right to judge one of their kind, and so they often find themselves at odds. Branding one another as puritans, radicals, or heretics, they fight an endless shadow war beneath the auspices of the Adeptus Terra, each warring for what they think is the best way to protect the Imperium.





The Inquisition is ultimately necessary for Humanity's survival, its every excess, its ever hidden crime a tithe of blood and suffering that will one day come due. Without the Inquisition, the Imperium would have long ago been devoured by its enemies within, without, and beyond. This knowledge is a harrowing burden to bear, and few have the force of will, the strength of soul, or perhaps even the arrogance needed to become one of the Emperor's Inquisitors.

Players lacking sufficient clearance should beware of this sanctioned tome; it is intended for the GM's eyes only! However, players and GMs alike will be interested in the **Inquisition Player's Guide**, a companion book containing rules for Inquisition character creation, new options for existing Patrons and characters, and many new Skills, Talents, Psychic Powers and iconic Inquisitorial Equipment to outfit and reward players. It contains a host of new rules — most importantly the new Subtlety mechanic which is also used throughout this book.

THE HOLY ORDERS

Three Ordos Majoris serve as the backbone of the Inquisition: Hereticus, Malleus, and Xenos. The Ordo Hereticus prevents psykers, mutants, and heretics from tearing the Imperium apart from within, battling against the burgeoning malevolence in any Human soul. The Ordo Malleus battles the foul Warp entities and executes those vile or foolish enough to help them. The Ordo Xenos are sworn to eradicate the taint of xenos from the galaxy and assure Humanity's domination beyond the Imperium's borders. Sometimes, Ordos Minoris are formed to deal with a localised, specific, or short-lived concern, at least by the standards of the Imperium; the work of the three Ordos Majoris is already an unrelenting toil against impossible odds. The fight for Humanity's survival is a ferocious battle that will only end if the Imperium is lost, something Inquisitors will do anything to prevent — sacrificing armies, worlds, or even damning their own souls.

An Inquisitor's Ordo reflects their focus and the threats they actively seek out. Many Inquisitors are single-minded in their pursuit of their enemy and, once committed to rooting out a particular foe, are unlikely to waver for decades or even centuries. Each Ordo functions as a loose organisation of individuals, by necessity united under a common cause, but each guarding their secrets closely. Ostensibly this restricts the spread of dangerous information, though the motivation for doing so can be competitive, or even political. Knowledge is power, and projection of power is an Inquisitor's stock in trade.

An Inquisitor's place in the hierarchy of their Ordo is a shifting estimation of their current power, prestige, and the resources they can reliably call upon. Even the title of Inquisitor Lord is claimed or bestowed rather than by measured rank and ascension. These Inquisitors are universally acclaimed by their peers or otherwise begrudgingly acknowledged for wielding the most power and respect amongst a sector's Inquisition. In the Macharian Sector, this title belonged to Inquisitor Lord Hieronymo Drake — a dauntless man who brought Inquisitors within the sector together to cooperate and share resources to combat the sector's heresies.

That said, Inquisitors famously answer to none but the God-Emperor Himself; in truth, they are always answerable to each other. Constant scrutiny for signs of heresy or corruption further erodes trust between secretive and strong-willed individuals, honing their paranoia to a fine edge.



ORDO HERETICUS

Across the Imperium, the stoic agents of the Ordo Hereticus fight heresy in all its forms: rogue psykers, Chaos cultists, dangerous mutants, and heretical preachers. These insidious enemies root themselves within Human society, so Inquisitors of this Ordo are expert investigators first and foremost. They must be able to detect and identify a myriad of taints and corruptions and know how to subdue or destroy their foes while protecting themselves from hideous mutants and the nightmarish powers of psykers, at least long enough to complete their mission. While the mass of Humanity is weak and corruptible, these Inquisitors are resolute, resisting temptation while mercilessly purging heresy in all its grotesque manifestations.

There are more Ordo Hereticus Inquisitors throughout the Imperium than any other Ordo. Where the reputation of these Inquisitors precedes them, they inspire fear and awe more than any other. Citizens call them 'witch hunters', and the stories whispered about them have created a fearsome reputation. Some Inquisitors play into this reputation to ensure honesty and compliance with those they encounter.

Other Inquisitors might question the reliability of testimony from terrified locals and attempt to allay their fears. Of course, stories of ruthless Inquisitors are indeed true. The nature of an Inquisitor's dangerous hunt demands that they are unforgiving, and often, an Inquisitor decides to destroy a suspected heretic or psyker without confirming their ultimate guilt since wasting time to consider the truth could be otherwise disastrous.

GOALS

Where the Adeptus Ministorum shepherds their innumerate flock, the Ordo Hereticus hunts among the herd for those that turn from the Emperor's light, seeking to eradicate heretical cults before they can begin to challenge the Imperium's rule. The uncompromising brutality of daily life in the Imperium leads to many desperate citizens turning to the Ruinous Powers for answers, relief, and succour. Inquisitors of the Ordo Hereticus know these weak-willed and apostate individuals are the kindling that can strike a wildfire. They must uncover and destroy these cults before they threaten to burn down the Imperium.

Hunting psykers, mutants, and all forms of heresy across the Imperium of Man is a gargantuan but necessary task. A powerful psyker might walk unnoticed among innocent citizens, ignorant of their own perilous powers, and even the smallest mutation might be evidence of greater corruption within that could spread like a fungal rot. If left unpunished, minor heresies, such as carrying traditional talismans, can lead to more serious ones. Heretical preachers might quickly turn an otherwise compliant workforce into a dangerous mob in a surprisingly short space of time.

For the Imperium to survive on such a titanic scale, it must employ the dangerous powers of the psyker, captured and controlled by the Adeptus Astra Telepathica. Rogue psykers capable of twisting reality leave themselves vulnerable to the predation of vile daemons that bolster their maleficent might. Yet the Black Ships cannot be everywhere at once. When a psyker eludes capture, the witch hunters of the Ordo Hereticus must hunt them down.

PHILOSOPHIES

Puritan Inquisitors of the Ordo Hereticus consider any psychic tendency, slight mutation, or ill-advised comment on the Emperor's rule a form of heresy and punish accordingly. They believe any taint must be cleansed, as even the slightest corruption begins small but, left unchecked, grows and spreads like a contagion across a world and may even spread to others. Some, like Monodominant Inquisitors (page 20), are even uncomfortable with the use of sanctioned psykers despite knowing they are essential to the Imperium. They are constantly alert for evidence that any psyker needs to be destroyed rather than used as a tool.

Radical Inquisitors of the Ordo, such as those who follow the Polypsykana philosophy (page 25), instead use sanctioned psykers to aid their work or might even be one themselves. They are not more forgiving than their Puritan counterparts but are more willing to see heretics and their methods as tools to be adequately exploited towards their mission's goals. In that sense, they might prefer to capture a rogue psyker rather than outright purge them — but that psyker's life now hangs in the balance; stepping out of line for even a moment will cost them dearly.

TECHNIQUES

Inquisitors of the Ordo Hereticus are specialists who have each developed their own ways to expose and neutralise unsanctioned psykers and other heretics. They must be shrewd to protect themselves from the dangers they might encounter, using espionage, military tactics, or even psychic powers to survive. They organise planet-wide witch hunts, coordinating operations so swift and brutal that all rogue psykers are contained before they can unleash unholy powers. Cults are infiltrated or stalked from the shadows and raided once their corrupt leaders are exposed. Mutants are sought and identified at all levels of society, then tracked to their dwellings, leading Inquisitors to whatever spire, ramshackle town, or derelict voidship is the source of mutation.

Many Inquisitors carry tools to identify psykers, such as arcane psyocculums, specialist weapons like blessed stake launchers to fight them, and protective tools such as blessed incense to protect themselves. Capturing a psyker is arduous, and if the means for nullifying a psyker's power is not available, the Inquisitor must keep them otherwise incapacitated. Captured psykers might be put on a Black Ship if one is available nearby, or an Inquisitor may transport them to a null-prison for containment until one arrives. Psykers deemed too dangerous to capture must be otherwise purged — a public display will remind any locals of the dangers in harbouring such individuals and the threat of their unsanctioned powers.





ORDO MALLEUS

Few truly know of the daemon hunters' existence, the most mysterious of the Ordos Majoris. The Ordo Malleus have hidden their work and redacted their charge from public view since their inception. Their grim duty is to battle horrors that defy mortal comprehension, and their primary goal is to detect and prevent daemonic incursions from even occurring in the first place. Inquisitors of the Ordo Malleus are forever on the watch for a rogue psyker with inexplicable powers, a daemonic cult on the rise, or a void anomaly that defies understanding — any might create a rift to the Warp, allowing daemons to swarm into reality via the Warp.

These Inquisitors are understandably wary of psykers and often find themselves working alongside, or occasionally at odds with, Inquisitors from the Ordo Hereticus. Their agents are regularly exposed to potent sources of corruption and frequently become overwhelmed and fall victim to daemonic influence or even outright possession. Even within their tight-knit Ordo, Malleus agents spend significant time policing and purging their own — they must drive back daemons ideally before they breach realspace, or otherwise destroy them, even if it means taking their comrades' life.

GOALS

The main goal of the Ordo Malleus is to protect Humanity from the influence and presence of Warp entities. They prevent daemons from entering realspace wherever possible by hunting down and destroying any daemonic artefacts, cults, or rogue psykers whose powers risk the integrity of realspace. Their armies of savants scrutinise proscribed texts under the watchful gaze of hexagrammically warded enforcers while sanctioned psykers and prognosticators scry arcane portents, attempting to predict where these potential breaches in the Immaterium will take place long before they occur.

As if this task was not challenging enough, the Ordo's secondary goal is to protect all citizens from learning about daemons. Knowledge of their very existence is enough to drive some citizens mad with fear. Yet that dread, spread by malefic whispers and temptation, is the root of damnable curiosity, driving some to heretical practices to grasp daemonic power for themselves. Daemons are by nature terrifying and manipulating, and anyone who makes contact with them, even for an instant, risks corruption. Methods for suppressing such knowledge can range from mind cleansing to outright eradicating the persons or groups involved. In extreme cases, whole worlds have been quarantined or destroyed to keep these terrible secrets safe.

PHILOSOPHIES

The most Puritan members of the Ordo Malleus destroy anything related to daemonic activity they encounter on sight, burning tomes of forbidden knowledge, killing anyone who has seen or even heard of a daemon, and eradicating every last physical trace of any daemons they defeat.

By contrast, their more Radical colleagues wish to learn from daemonic tomes, interrogate anyone who has encountered these vile monsters, and dissect anything left after a fight. Most Inquisitors of the Ordo fall somewhere between the two extremes, and each must rely on their own judgement to know what is right.

Even some Puritans, such as Thorians (page 28), believe the study of Chaos necessary, but Radical Inquisitors tempt themselves to go too far, at least in the eyes of their brethren. Those who summon daemons to interrogate or to bind and use as a daemonhost (page 79) may find other Inquisitors investigating them for heretical practices, if not confronting them directly. Horusians (page 17) might allow a daemon to possess their flesh, supposedly to build an immunity. Use of such methods are only discovered if the process goes demonstrably wrong, since Inquisitors and acolytes are forced to work in the shadows to avoid condemnation from their brethren.

TECHNIQUES

Some Inquisitors of the Ordo Malleus wear suits of sanctified armour or carry weapons blessed by the Adeptus Ministorum. They seek to use anything that might give them an advantage against the daemons they face, including everything from flamers and bolters to fleets of voidships. While preventing a daemon incursion can mean leaving the armour behind to infiltrate a daemonic cult or catch an unwary psyker, their missions often require firepower sooner or later. Even an undercover Inquisitor of the Ordo Malleus is likely to always keep weapons on them. Daemons come in a variety of foul forms. Many can be harmed by flame, lasfire, or humble frag grenades — an Inquisitor should always be prepared and ensure they have access to a varied arsenal that can destroy every foe they find.

Battling daemons is a demanding duty, and some are so large and powerful that even the best weapons of the Imperium seem inadequate. Some Ordo Malleus Inquisitors turn to less orthodox means to take them down. They may attempt to turn the daemon's weapons against them or use xenos-made armaments to make victory more likely. Some study daemonic tomes to learn effective ways of countering or controlling daemons, while others go so far as to bind a daemon to a host, and force a daemon to join the fight against their own kind.





ORDO XENOS

The alien hunters of the Ordo Xenos work to protect the Imperium of Man from any and all xenos threats. Whether this means annihilating a xenos species so far as to scour their presence from the galaxy or merely preventing or delaying their ingress into Imperial sectors depends on the Inquisitor and their chosen target. Some Inquisitors consider anything of xenos origin to be inherently impure, so eradicate xenos artefacts and ruins as well as the xenos themselves on sight. Other Inquisitors willingly overlook such things, focusing solely on the threat of invasion and ways to use a species' strength against itself. There are still fringe locales in the Macharian Sector where xenos trade with or even live among Humans, and such is repellant to Puritan Inquisitors. At the same time, the more Radical differentiate between hostile and relatively benign xenos and reserve their hostility for species they believe pose a significant threat.

While daemons and psykers appear in varied nightmarish forms and capabilities, respectively, xenos are the most diverse foes the Inquisition faces. Xenos species range from the brutal Orks to the technologically advanced T'au, from the flesh-eating Tyranids to the mysterious Aeldari, and many more species barely understood or undiscovered across the galaxy. On the one hand, this means that the Inquisitors of the Ordo Xenos aim to be ready for anything. On the other hand, it means that most Inquisitors specialise in one xenos species for most of their accursed career.

GOALS

The primary goal of the Ordo Xenos is to protect the Imperium of Man from the threat of xenos, following the God-Emperor's ancient will that Humanity rules the stars and all other species expunged.

Inquisitors might hunt xenos who infiltrate Imperial worlds, find and prevent the smuggling of xenos artefacts and technologies, or visit xenos ruins to learn about their foes or remove any trace of them. Even the most Puritan Inquisitors acknowledge that learning about the innumerate xenos species is essential since understanding the alien enables Inquisitors to better hunt and kill them and might even make it possible to anticipate their attacks.

Inquisitors must be alert for signs of incoming invasion and more subtle infiltration of Imperial worlds. Not all xenos rely on brute force tactics; some take advantage of the desperation of the Imperium's poor and oppressed citizenry. Xenos cults, particularly Genestealer Cults, are incredibly dangerous and a prime example of the insidious, corrupting nature of xenos — if a Genestealer Cult is not discovered and destroyed in time, it can overrun the world and make it a foothold for spreading influence to other worlds, damning them all to the fate of Tyranid invasion.

PHILOSOPHIES

Most Ordo Xenos Inquisitors learn what they can about the enemy's biology, technology, and society to better understand and combat them. However, where Puritan Inquisitors might examine xenos tech before quickly destroying it, Radical Inquisitors study these artefacts far more closely, often adding them to their arsenal. Both study xenos societies and lore, but the Radical might do so with first-hand experience, or even seek out potential alien collaborators. Puritan Inquisitors are aware that some xenos species are less dangerous than others, but see it as no excuse to risk corruption.

Radical Inquisitors of the Ordo Xenos believe in using the enemy's weapons against them, or even against other xenos. The infamous Fidus Kryptman once orchestrated a protracted war between the Orks and a Tyranid Hive Fleet to stave off their invasion of the Imperium, a move considered a master stroke by some, despite the vast collateral damage. Conversely, the most dogmatic Inquisitors typically keep their distance, using the likes of servitors to examine alien technology and disposing of them afterwards. A Monodominant (page 20) might consider even this too dangerous and simply destroy any xenos artefact on sight. An Istvanist (page 18) might use xenos tech to conduct false flag operations, provoking a wider war. Within an Ordo that has so many varied fields of study, disagreements are frequent, and often lead to Inquisitors clashing with one another.

TECHNIQUES

The techniques of an Ordo Xenos Inquisitor vary depending on the nature of their foe, as most specialise in countering one particular alien threat. However, any Inquisitor might encounter an unexpected xenos on their travels; their duty is to destroy them and record such encounters for future study.

When opportunities arise, xenos are captured and dissected to learn about their biology and any weaknesses. This is especially true of newly discovered species. The Ordo Xenos maintain vast archiviums of information on xenos threats. Many Inquisitors also rely on networks of contacts and informants among Rogue Traders to stay abreast of xenos activity across the sector. Some have contacts within the Adeptus Mechanicus, who are often key in identifying and understanding alien technologies.

Part of the Ordo's remit is to control the spread of information about xenos species within the Imperium. This involves everything from propaganda techniques to mind erasure and servitorisation. Citizens are better protected if they are not aware of the threats faced by the Imperium, and better submit to the God-Emperor's will if they believe the dominance of Mankind is inevitable. The Ordo's Inquisitors spend considerable time cleaning up the aftermath of xenos incursions, as it is crucial to ensure the Imperium's borders appear essentially impenetrable.



FORCES OF THE IMPERIUM

One Inquisitor, their retinue, and, by extension, their acolyte cells are rarely enough to investigate a potential threat thoroughly. They are undoubtedly insufficient to march against their enemies on a broader scale, let alone wage an emergent war. Inquisitors need to rely upon the local forces of the Imperium to do so, wielding their limitless authority to order them into battle.

Beyond forces drawn from the leading institutions of the Adeptus Terra, the Inquisition has ties with unique specialist forces across the Imperium and within the Macharian Sector that can bring nigh-apocalyptic might to bear if they are justified in being called upon.

THE DEATHWATCH

Known as the Shield that Slays, these Space Marines are stationed across the galaxy, watching for and fighting back xenos invasions wherever they find them — deployed in precision-action kill teams, they cut to the heart of a xenos threat and purge it from within. The positions and quantity of their Watch Fortress bases in the Macharian Sector is a secret shared between the Deathwatch and the sector's Inquisitors.

The Deathwatch works closely with Ordo Xenos Inquisitors, particularly when evaluating or developing strategies to purge their shared enemies and build upon each other's battlefield intelligence. However, one organisation is not subservient to the other; like an Inquisitor's limitless authority, the Deathwatch has autonomy and sacred oaths that are not to be trifled with.

THE ADEPTA SORORITAS

Members of the Adepta Sororitas share the fundamental aims of the Ordo Hereticus, so they are natural allies. Any Sister encountered is duty-bound to aid in the fight against heresy, and though they might lack subtlety, they can be a great boon to any acolyte cell. As a whole, they are a formidable fighting force, a spearhead that draws with it the militant might of the Ministorum.

Their power armour-clad Orders Militant lead the charge on the battlefield, followed by scores of Ecclesiarchical crusaders, death cult assassins, and legions of faithful Frateris Militia. Together, they are a force that epitomises the might of faith in the God-Emperor and his Imperium. As such, Radical acolytes should watch their behaviour around these excessively devout and puritanical warriors, lest they become placed on the wrong side of the Sisters' crusade, in among the heretics.



The Order Famulous of the Hallowed Glass, based on Macharia (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 274), works closely with the sector's Inquisitors. Since the aftermath of the Macharian Crusade, their task has been to effectively police noble houses across the sector, which might require discreet investigation and the threat of force, to prevent another Macharian Heresy from taking root.

Based on Saint Isidore's Rest (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 303), the Order Militant of the Charred Veil operates primarily within the Gallosque Nebula and has a fortress cathedral on Macharia. They support missionary expeditions sent to worlds wrought with heresy or not yet fully converted to the God-Emperor's service. These sisters have vast experience fighting Orks, having defended their shrine world countless times from xenos invasions.

THE GREY KNIGHTS

The Grey Knights are the most secretive, deadly, and most specialised of all Space Marine Chapters. They are based on Saturn's moon of Titan, a closely guarded secret even among Inquisitors of the Ordo Malleus.

Furthermore, they maintain clandestine patrols and other secret bases across all sectors of the Imperium from where they can rapidly deploy. Their Prognosticators — specialist psykers within their order — burn their minds to ruin in desperate efforts to detect fluctuations in the Warp from great distances. This allows the Knights to set off towards incursions long before their daemonic scheming begins. It is not unheard of for Inquisitors who request their aid to find one of their Strike Cruisers already inbound to their location.

These mysterious Space Marines are the God-Emperor's finest daemon hunters, each an accomplished and dominating psyker. Their knowledge of hunting daemons is second to none and closely guarded; even the most long-lived Ordo Malleus Inquisitors would only scratch the surface of their knowledge and capabilities. Yet each organisation has its role in safeguarding the Imperium from the horrors of the Warp. The Grey Knights are the God-Emperor's holy hammer — a blunt-edged vengeful manifestation made to enact total obliteration — while the Ordo Malleus is His deft eyes, ears, and exacting judgement, able to work within the Imperium without raising suspicion.



ESCALATION

The information outlined in the *Inquisition Player's Guide* (pages 22–23) covers the breadth of options available and their potential ramifications, from local Vigilite squads to ceramite-clad Space Marines. Players and GMs should understand what bringing these forces to bear means for their current investigation, the local populace, and the locales in which they operate.

As GM, your players and their characters must understand why they cannot solve a problem simply by crash-landing a drop pod of Space Marines on it. The forces of the Imperium are vast and powerful, but most lack subtlety in their approach and cause collateral damage. Espionage and intelligence are the true tools of the Inquisition; employing the God-Emperor's mightiest warriors should only be viewed as a last resort when circumstances are far beyond reproach.



THE MACHARIAN SECTOR

Centuries ago, after Lord Solar Macharius' death, the seventy bloody years of the Macharian Heresy began. It brought uprisings and mass heresy across hundreds of worlds in the sector, and many took the opportunity to throw off Imperial rule. In this turbulent period, Adeptus Astartes and Adepta Sororitas were dispatched in vast numbers to restore order. Several Inquisitors arrived to help crush dissent, including the infamous Fidus Kryptman of the Ordo Xenos.

His bold and brutal tactics crushed insurgence on multiple worlds and brought whole systems back into the God-Emperor's domain using merciless methods. Kryptman set the bar for Inquisitors operating in the sector, demanding discretion, ruthlessness, and utmost ingenuity. By the end of the era, he was named Hero of the Macharian Heresy.

Even after the worst of the fighting and the epoch brought to a close, some worlds continued to resist when General Sejanus's armies tried to wrest back control. In contrast, others submitted reluctantly, only to cause trouble later. Despite greater heresies left in the past, shadow wars constantly threaten to ravage the sector, wrought by ongoing rebellions and underhanded power grabs. Since the Noctis Aeterna, only a handful of Inquisitors remain in operation, yet they are needed now more than ever.

Rogue psykers are a growing concern across the sector. Due to the Noctis Aeterna, many Black Ships were lost to the Warp, and others were considerably delayed in fulfilling their duties. Some planets are sitting upon a surplus of captive psykers with little space left to put any more. Others have taken to executing the excess but fear failing to fulfil their tithe. Either way, more rogue psykers have slipped through the cracks of Lex and bureaucracy and are free to plot and garner their terrible powers.

The Adeptus Ministorum struggles to stamp out or re-educate wayward Imperial cults on many worlds. Divergence from the Imperial Creed in any way is outright heresy. The masses stand divided between wild interpretations and false prophecies. This gap has left room for apocryphal preachers and pretenders to step in and sway countless souls towards heresy under the influence of vile xenos or the Ruinous Powers.

Many heresies stem from the sector's noble houses, some still originating from the power grab that punctuated the beginning of the Macharian Heresy.

The sector's nobility engages in underhanded plots and quiet betrayals, allowing them to slither into positions of power or keep what they believe is their rightful place. The worst of them are backed by xenos or daemonic influence. Here, the Inquisition must tread carefully not to upset the balance of power.

Several xenos species are known to have an interest in the sector, some having occupied worlds prior to Lord Solar Macharius's conquest. Rumours say there are planets where they surreptitiously maintain control and expanses of the void where they quietly hide and watch the Imperium like a predator preparing to strike. Too many inexplicably slip past the sector's borders; the Inquisition must prevent these incursions.

Worse still, there is growing evidence of daemonic interference across the sector, particularly in the Yix and Andosk Subsectors and the fringes of the mysterious Ayzinith Abyss. The Ruinous Powers are manipulating heretical cults across the sector, urging them to conduct profane rituals with the ultimate goal of opening Warp rifts, allowing daemons to slip into reality and lay waste or claim to the Imperium.

Inquisitor Lord Hieronymo Drake's death during the Noctis Aeterna left a power vacuum in the Macharian Inquisition — respected by all Inquisitors of the sector; he was crucial in ensuring Inquisitors had the support they needed to fight the Imperium's enemies. In the wake of the Days of Blinding, his former apprentice, Sylvestrine Horst, calls the Macharian Inquisition to Conclave. She hopes to strengthen unity among the Inquisitors of the sector in the halls of Mare Cinis — the Inquisition's holding on Suluk, a moon of Persepolis. It will soon host some of the most influential and powerful Humans in the Imperium. Together, united or divided, they will determine the fate of the Macharian Sector.

This is the current state of the Macharian Sector and setup to **Chapter V: The Heresies Macharia** (page 84). There you can begin the decades-long campaign to save the Sector. The Macharian Inquisition's most prominent Inquisitors are described in **Chapter III: Roleplaying Inquisitors** (page 53); each plays a part in the Heresies to come and can act as Patron to your players, tentative ally, or secret enemy.

PHILOSOPHIES

Inquisitors are a diverse group of individuals, each with their own beliefs and goals that drive their methods. Their philosophical views land somewhere between the scale of Puritan and Radical, and it is common for an Inquisitor's philosophy to shift towards one of these extremes given time and the ever more terrible decisions they face.

An Inquisitor's philosophy may be a private matter, a set of beliefs that privately influence their actions, or it might prompt them to join a group or faction of like-minded individuals. Depending on how Radical a philosophy is, its followers may have to keep it a secret, especially from their peers within the Holy Orders. So while on the surface an Inquisitor shares the goals of their Ordo, they likely have their own furtive agenda they are working on beneath the surface.

Always remember that an Inquisitor believes they are doing the right thing for the Imperium through the lens of their Puritan or Radical philosophy; this is a core ideal and driving force for any Inquisitor. Their philosophy should not drive them to act selfishly or for characteristically malevolent reasons.

During Inquisitor Patron creation (*Inquisition Player's Guide*, page 29), discuss with your players what Philosophy their Patron should follow and whether they lean more Puritan or Radical. Options presented in the *Inquisition Player's Guide* and their accompanying summaries are good starting points, but this section fleshes out the existing and more esoteric options.

If players are unsure or undecided, feel free to introduce their Patron's Philosophy further down the line once they have had a chance to explore the setting and run a few missions, or feel free to roll on the **Inquisition Philosophies** Table to determine it randomly. A Patron's Philosophy can be a significant part of their general mystique. Discuss with your players if they want to know their Philosophy upfront. They may grant you carte blanche to choose one on their behalf to better suit the stories you want to tell. Remember, it is not uncommon for Radical Inquisitors to present themselves in a more Puritan light to survive, then dramatically reveal their true Philosophy later. On the other hand, Puritan Inquisitors can appear just as unhinged as some Radical counterparts, the purity they strive for taking a toll upon them, or imbued with sheer fervor for the tenets they follow.

All to say, an Inquisitor of one stance can easily be mistaken for the other, which is another tool you can use to build their Patron's character.

A Patron's Philosophy guides what variety of stories your players wish to explore. In terms of Inquisitor Patron creation, Philosophy replaces Motivation but fulfills the same drive. While characters investigate the Inquisition's threats, aspects of their Patron's Philosophy quietly bubble away in the background. Their Philosophy can act as the setup for entire missions or buildup to your campaign's grand finale, where their Patron might achieve their Philosophy's goals or see their hopes dashed — by their enemies or even by the players' hands.

From a character's perspective, often more concerned with their survival, a Patron's Philosophy primarily represents ways they could get into trouble. Consider how you react to a player character's decisions from their Patron's point of view. Whether a character's beliefs align with their Patron's is up to the player at hand — but do they even have the power to oppose or work around what their Inquisitor demands of them? How would their Patron punish them for disobeying the tenets of their Philosophy? You will need to figure out these aspects, but staying consistent in these manners will undoubtedly enrich their Patron's character.

INQUISITION PHILOSOPHIES

d100	PHILOSOPHY
01–07	Amalathian (page 16) <i>Puritan</i>
08–14	Horusian (page 17) <i>Radical</i>
15–21	Isstvanism (page 18) <i>Radical</i>
22–28	Libricar (page 19) <i>Radical</i>
29–36	Monodominant (page 20) <i>Puritan</i>
37–43	Oblationist (page 21) <i>Radical</i>
44–50	Ocularian (page 22) <i>Radical</i>
51–57	Phaenonites (page 23) <i>Radical</i>
58–64	Plutonian (page 24) <i>Radical</i>
65–71	Polypsykana (page 25) <i>Radical</i>
72–78	Recongregationism (page 26) <i>Radical</i>
79–85	Seculos Attendous (page 27) <i>Radical</i>
86–93	Thorian (page 28) <i>Puritan</i>
94–00	Xanthism (page 29) <i>Radical</i>



AMALATHIAN

“ This is HIS IMPERIUM, and shall continue AS HE MANDATED! For a mere mortal to deign to change even the most minute cog of its workings is blasphemous arrogance. This sector is a testament to His divine will, and I am an arbiter of His merciless judgement. ”

Amalathian Tenets:

- ☛ The God-Emperor's divine plan is unfolding as it should.
- ☛ The status quo within the Imperium must be maintained at all costs.
- ☛ Strength is achieved through unity.

Modus Operandi:

Strike down emergent heresy within the Adeptus Terra, especially Radical Inquisitors. Cooperate and promote unity with all factions of the Adeptus Terra, sharing information with them wherever necessary. Quell any interfactional infighting that threatens to destabilise the Imperium.

For millennia, the Emperor has led His Imperium through the darkness of a hostile galaxy, miraculously conducting a plan beyond mortal comprehension to ensure the domination of Mankind. This is the core belief of the Amalathian philosophy, swearing absolute fealty to the Emperor and believing with unquestioning absolutism that every machination of His bellicose realm is operating strictly as intended.

The monolithic Amalath, the largest mountain of the world Gathalamor in Segmentum Solar, can be considered the spiritual genesis of this Puritan philosophy and the Macharian Crusade. The Conclave held there at the dawn of the 41st millennium saw mighty exemplars of the Imperium redouble their oathbound dedication to the Master of Mankind, fervent in believing that all past obstacles were merely perperations for what was to come.

For Amalathians, change heralds disaster, and any misguided attempt to 'improve' the labyrinthine workings of the Imperium must be prevented. Any action outside of His will could have dire, unforeseen consequences. Radical philosophies of any kind are akin to heresy to the Puritan Amalathians, but their hard line nature can appear Radical to their peers.

Amalathians in the Macharian Sector often operate secretly and in isolation, allowing other Imperial factions to perform their crucial work and prioritising any threats that might destabilise existing power structures. Forbidden knowledge must remain proscribed, and the Inquisition must remain an unseen force, protecting the Imperium from infestations by xenos beyond His realm and daemons beyond reality, preserving all institutions from the heresy of change.

Roleplaying an Amalathian:

- ☛ They wield a holier-than-thou attitude, holding their moral superiority over the heads of heretics like a guillotine. Yet for those who put the needs of the Imperium before their lives, Amalathians hold a quiet admiration and respect.
- ☛ To protect the status quo, they must be experts in it; they should know the internal machinations and bureaucracies of the Imperium inside out.
- ☛ They should be critical of any purported change or deviation from the Lex Imperialis or Imperial Creed and readily punish those who strive to alter the Imperium's laws or institutions.

HOUSE ALENCAR

The party's Patron is investigating House Alencar on planet Paleo. The noble house has introduced changes to improve living conditions for their workforce at the cost of their economic output; some of these unsanctioned reforms are already gaining headway within other local houses. The party must uncover what heresy has caused this shift in the noble house's ideals.

STALEMATE OF TITHE

Osmodia Beta's planetary tithe has come to a standstill. The local Adeptus Mechanicus believe their forge world should be re-tooled to produce Imperial Titans, but the Administratum has outright blocked their proposal, knowing that the billions of las packs the planet typically produces are crucial to defending the sector. The stalemate is causing the planet's workers to suffer; riots are sure to occur if left unresolved.



HORUSIAN



“ We all serve the God-Emperor and work with what tools we can...
Why, then, must we all be at odds? ”

Horusian Tenets:

- ☠ One day, the God-Emperor will return, requiring an appropriate vessel to embody.
- ☠ The power of the Warp can be harnessed to create a Divine Avatar or facilitate the process of transferring the God-Emperor's soul from its current form into the body of a living god.

Modus Operandi:

Maintain strength and status as an upstanding Inquisitor of the Holy Orders. Find ways to pursue necessary research in secret and gather trusted acolytes to your actual cause. Pursue daemoniac activity as a means to gather knowledge and test theories.

Horusians follow an offshoot of Xanthism (page 29) and are experts in the nature of daemons and the power of the Warp. For this reason, many are members of the Ordo Malleus, though their views are certainly considered Radical by the rest of their Ordo. Horusians hope for the resurrection of the Emperor but believe that a simple Human form is not enough to house Him. Therefore, they seek ways to create vessels suitable for the God-Emperor's soul and search for ways to harness the power of the Warp. Most controversially, they hope to one day create a being like the Primarch Horus, a Warp-infused warrior raised as a new — and less destructive — leader of Mankind.

The Horusian philosophy originates in Xanthism (page 29) and is therefore ancient enough to be tolerated within the Inquisition, even though some of its beliefs alarm Puritan Inquisitors. Horusians search the Macharian Sector to find any Humans with above-average capabilities, psykers, mutants, or even Space Marines, anyone who might be able to contain and control the power of the Warp.

The Horusians' unnatural interest in daemons and the Warp concerns other Inquisitors, especially when this leads to dangerous experimentation. Therefore, Horusians conduct their activities in secret. Some Horusians in the Macharian Sector have been known to summon daemons into their own bodies and then banish them with the help of devoted acolytes.

They do this not because they consider themselves capable of becoming Divine Avatars, but because they believe that once a daemon has inhabited a body and been expelled, that body is immune to daemoniac corruption. As yet, Horusians have been unable to prove the truth of this theory to the rest of the Inquisition — but if they could create such an avatar, it would significantly further their goal towards finding a vessel to safely host the God-Emperor's soul.

Roleplaying a Horusian:

- ☠ Horusians are extremists for their cause but refrain from openly displaying their fanaticism unless pushed to the edge. Long-lived Horusians are masters of self-control.
- ☠ They know their beliefs are heretical in the eyes of the Imperium. To survive, they must maintain levels of subterfuge that can rebuff the Inquisition itself. They would not suffer a breach in their security from anyone, especially their acolytes.
- ☠ Horusians constantly test the loyalties of their acolytes, putting them into situations to show their trustworthiness. They are only brought into the Inquisitor's retinue when they prove utterly loyal or enthusiastically believe in the Horusian philosophy.
- ☠ The powers of the Warp should never be viewed as a fast route to success, but this is precisely what Horusians are doing. They are constantly battling with temptation.

A NEW HOST

The party's Patron has discovered a heretical cult on Leonova, who appear close to creating a daemonhost. The party has been tasked with infiltrating the cult and ensuring their plans come to fruition but do not spill out of control. Afterwards, purge the cult, retrieve the daemonhost, and work with a local smuggling cartel to deliver it to a secure location.

WATCHFUL EYES

The party's Patron believes another Inquisitor's agents are watching them for signs of heresy. The party must uncover these spies and find a suitable way to dispose of them — either prove to the spies that the Inquisitor is above board or find a way to dispose of them that will not raise further suspicions from their Inquisitor.



ISSTVANISM

“ The greatest heroes are forged by war and tempered by suffering. ”



Isstvanian Tenets:

- ☠ Conflict is vital to the survival of the Imperium.
- ☠ Strengthen Mankind through ongoing adversity.
- ☠ Humanity's greatest achievements are results of war and conflict.

Modus Operandi:

Promote warmongering across the Imperium by instilling superstition, suspicion, and the need for violence within the citizenry. Seek out anyone with a base of power and work their phobias and prejudices until they march to war, believing it was their idea to begin with.

Isstvanians believe in the evolutionary power of war and incite conflict to strengthen Humanity across the Imperium. Others think them Radical, but they see evidence to confirm their beliefs throughout the Imperium's history, where great generals proved the strength and ingenuity of men on the battlefield and in the void. And they see it in the current Imperium, where the wealthy have grown soft and the masses weak. They believe war drives invention and pushes Humanity to improve. At the same time, the destruction it wreaks clears the way for new and better societies across the Imperium, something sure to please the Emperor.

Isstvanians see the Macharian Crusade as the sector's golden age but will not stand aside and let it slip into a decadent peace now. With the high military presence and turbulent politics here, Isstvanians can work subtly, nudging local governors into resisting Imperial rule. Such work, if exposed, would damage the relations between the Inquisition and local Imperial forces. Of course, such machinations are not easy to identify or prove.

While Isstvanians rarely declare their philosophy, many are sympathetic to their cause in the Inquisition and the Astra Militarum.

Many rely upon the Imperium's war machine to give purpose to their lives or as a means to wield certain powers, just as the Imperium relies upon warfare to survive. However, due to the chaos it can wreak, the Isstvanian tendency to provoke violence wherever they go does not sit well with Amalathians (page 16) or the Imperium's bureaucrats.

Roleplaying an Isstvanian:

- ☠ Isstvanians are agitators wherever they go. They will attempt to stir characters up, leading them towards violent solutions or get them to march their forces to war. They will not shy away from stirring up both sides of a conflict to see who comes out on top.
- ☠ To them, every agent, asset, or enemy is little more than a regicide piece in a greater game. They need their 'pieces' to always be in top form. They will not suffer from their agent's pointless minutiae, especially personal issues.
- ☠ Isstvanians are highly calculated individuals. Though they seek to promote warfare, they only act when they know their chosen side can win. Often, their choices and orders appear bizarre or off-target, but everything is in favour of building up to their next coup de grace.

STAND AND FIGHT

An Ork Waaagh! fleet has been detected moving towards the remote shrine world of Iota Primaris. The Imperial Fleet will be unable to deploy there on time, and the weary planetary leaders seek ways to evacuate the world. But the Isstvanian Patron sees an opportunity. Characters must travel to Iota Primaris, find what heresy weakens the leadership, oust them, and rally the populace to fight the xenos threat.

TWO HIVES, TWO HERESIES

Heresy has taken hold over two hive cities on Opulus Major — Korja and Vinov each have deeply embedded Chaos cults manipulating the leadership. The Isstvanian Patron knows they can save one hive, but only by sacrificing the other. Characters must infiltrate each hive's leadership and push them to war against the other. One of the two hives will come out on top, rooting out these cults and ultimately becoming stronger to withstand future heresies.



LIBRICAR

“ The foulest rot is corruption that seeps down from on high. ”



Libricar Tenets:

- ☠ Maintain the status quo within the Imperium at any cost.
- ☠ No one is beyond reproach, be it planetary governors or the lowliest hab rat.
- ☠ Death to the Infractionist, the revolutionary, and the heretic.

Modus Operandi:

Seek out heresies within the Imperium's factions and ruling classes. Corruption from within is the greatest threat to the status quo, so purge extensively when it is found. Maintaining the Imperium's long-term stability is worth any cost, so sacrifices should be made across all levels of society and rule.

Libricaranism is a relatively new philosophy borne in the Calixis Sector. Its adherents believe maintaining the Imperium and the smooth running of its various factions is of supreme importance, and the key to this is ensuring good leadership. If the rulers of planets and organisations across the Imperium were freed from corruption, then the Imperium would be both pure and efficient.

A Radical offshoot of the Amalathians (page 16), Libricars also believe in the perfection of the God-Emperor's plan but fear it has already been corrupted by the greed and corruption of those in power. Since Lord Solar Macharius's death, the rule of the sector has degraded to the point that some Libricars claim a complete overhaul of the local powers is required. Such claims infuriate Amalathians, and Inquisitors of these two philosophies continually clash.

Libricars seek out the slightest taint or indiscretion in the ruling classes and purge the Imperium of any corrupt individuals. They blame rulers for evidence of corruption within the planet or organisation they rule, so not only do they destroy a cult when they find it, but they execute the rulers who let the cult take root.

Their extreme methods of purification make them unpopular. Like Monodominants (page 20), Libricars are known for being overzealous and are quick to resort to drastic measures, such as *Exterminatus*.

Roleplaying a Libricar:

- ☠ The Libricar philosophy demands that adherents be unyielding and ruthless. Inquisitors expect the same from their acolytes — when wielding extreme measures, they do not expect their authority to be questioned.
- ☠ Knowing, and likely experiencing in the past, that heresy can take root even within the ruling classes of Imperial society, Libricars have little patience or respect for people in positions of power.
- ☠ Libricars know that the greatest threat to their plans is the oversight of other Inquisitors. They are always wary of being spied on, and so typically distance themselves from the rest of the Inquisition or their Ordo. They will not tolerate dissent or any hint of betrayal from those within their retinue.

SUITABLE REPLACEMENT

The Inquisitor's Interrogator, Naevea Green, was sent to usurp the Planetary Governor of Calicot and install less corrupt, more malleable leadership. But the Interrogator deemed herself the only suitable candidate, installing herself and enacting martial law. Clean up Green's mess and extract her before the populace rises against her and the Inquisition loses its hold on the planet.

HIVE FORLAN

The Governor of Hive Forlan on Desperion has been assassinated. The nobility is pointing to rampant infractionism supposedly led by heretical cults. But intel reports that the Forlan Goods & Services criminal cartel is based there and may be involved. Stability on Desperion must be reasserted — assess the local powers, ensure the most beneficial ruler is put in place, and purge the rest.



MONODOMINANT

“Supremacy is both the right and duty of Mankind.
In the God-Emperor's name, all else must fall.”

Monodominant Tenets:

- ☠ The Imperium should be the most dominant force in the galaxy.
- ☠ The Imperium can only survive if all opposing forces are eradicated.
- ☠ All impurities within the Imperium must be exterminated.

Modus Operandi:

Seek to purge any xenos or non-human entities that Humanity encounters without compromise. Promote the message of a dominant Humanity within the citizenry. Strive for purity within the Imperium by purging those guilty of witchcraft, heresy, and mutation.

Monodominants are ruthless Puritans who seek to perfect the Imperium and ensure the survival and dominance of Mankind by obliterating non-humans of all kinds, including daemons, mutants, and xenos in all their horrifying forms. Theirs is a militant stance, and they are notorious for ordering *Exterminatus* in situations where other Inquisitors might seek another solution. They also keenly watch their Inquisitor brethren, searching for even the slightest signs of heresy. They do not hesitate to condemn their peers as heretics and take on the role of their executioner if necessary.

They proudly trace the origins of their philosophy back to Inquisitor Goldo's *Monodomination*, inscribed in the third century of the 33rd millennium. However, Inquisitor Jeriminus established the philosophy hundreds of years later when he swore to turn Goldo's idealist vision into a reality. For the Monodominants, the Macharian Crusades stopped too soon. They would have preferred the fleets press on into the dark, annihilating all that is inhuman in their path, but Lord Macharius decided otherwise. Now, they work across the sector to purge any trace of heresy or taint.

Monodominants are seldom as secretive as other Inquisitors, using their reputation and the fear it inspires to encourage citizens to reveal mutants, xenos, and psykers wherever they go. While their cause is in line with the Inquisition's, their methods are often more destructive than their brethren's, and their tendency to turn on their own at the slightest suspicion of heresy makes them dangerous to work with.

Roleplaying a Monodominant:

- ☠ Monodominants must be uncompromising in their views and actions. They will never consider allying with xenos, daemonic, or heretical forces. They will prescribe death to anyone in their presence who falters from their stance.
- ☠ Many revere Humanity and its accomplishments, citing Humanity's victories and most outstanding achievements as reasoning for their beliefs, as much as removing opposition as a necessity for survival.
- ☠ They are less interested in subterfuge than their brethren in the Holy Orders. Monodominants often work out in the open, lean on their authority, act as militant leaders, and wield their terrifying presence openly as a weapon.

UNSANCTIONED TRADE

Informants report that the leaders of several voidports around Kharmin have been trading with xenos entities for additional supplies. Investigate these claims, purge those responsible and install new leadership at the voidports. But act with care; you must use the opportunity to set a trap for the xenos and destroy them.

MARK OF THE EMPEROR

Local cults on Pathway have mistaken a new mutation spreading throughout the populace as the God-Emperor's blessing — improving people's strength and overall size; some claim to be 'angels'. Travel to Pathway, seek the source of this mutation, and purge all those affected. Reaffirm the people's beliefs and get them to turn on these foul mutants.



OBLATIONIST

“ That you would give your life for the God-Emperor, I have no doubt.
But would you damn your soul to protect His Imperium? ”

Oblationist Tenets:

- ☠ Taking up the arms of the enemy is a necessary measure of victory.
- ☠ But in doing so, personal damnation and determined sacrifice are inevitable.
- ☠ All Radicals are impure, lacking devotion to sacrifice, and thus must be purged.

Modus Operandi:

Take the Oath of Oblation and a new name with it. Seek out the weapons of the enemy and use them to achieve victory — bind daemons, hoard forbidden knowledge, and employ damnable psykers if required. Wade into the worst heresies and sacrifice yourself to protect the Imperium.

Oblationists are damned, body and soul. They dare to use heretical weapons and powers but do not suffer others to do the same. They believe it is necessary to use the enemy's weapons, but most mortals cannot be trusted with such power. Oblationists know they are not immune to the taint of the foul weapons and methods they employ and know they are damned for doing so, yet they make the ultimate sacrifice; it is a price worth paying to defend the Imperium with such improved strength.

The Oblationist philosophy hails from the Calixis Sector, where Inquisitor Lord Godella Morn took up daemoniac weapons of the enemy to fight against the infernal forces of Chaos during the War of Brass. After her execution, some Inquisitors saw her actions as selfless rather than traitorous. Morn had damned herself to serve the Imperium, and since then, other Oblationists have done the same, not least in the Macharian Sector, wherever daemons and xenos are a constant threat.

As Radical as they come, Oblationists keep their beliefs to themselves. Many Inquisitors, especially of Puritan leanings, would execute them as tainted traitors if they knew the truth.

Yet, with their methods hidden, Oblationists can appear model Inquisitors, whether hunting xenos, battling daemons, or burning out all traces of heresy they find. While they use damned tools in their work, they are ruthless and suffer no such taint in others. They are a danger to all but the most Puritan and careful Inquisitorial agents, anyone who dares to use heretical weapons or xenotech, as well as unfortunate souls who exhibit psychic abilities or bear visible mutation.

Roleplaying an Oblationist:

- ☠ These Inquisitors are utterly bitter characters. It is the root of Oblationism, a white-hot anger fuelled by having lost what others merely throw away, their own sacred purity.
- ☠ They wield their self-corruption as if it were purity in and of itself, which they believe to be an effective justification for action against their Radical peers.
- ☠ While they accept their own self-radicalism, they would never suffer the presence of another 'lesser' Radical; they know the Inquisition is loathfully corrupt because of them.

RESCUE THE RADICAL

A Radical Inquisitor and their retinue have gone missing hunting daemon-worshipping cults near the Azynith Abyss. Investigate their disappearance as dutiful acolytes should — but if they appear weakened, seize the opportunity to execute them for their heresies and purge their allies; make any necessary sacrifices to ensure the job is done. Taking over their networks and resources would be a great boon to the Oblationist Patron.

TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE

The characters' Oblationist Patron has discovered heretek activity on Hexas Panan. The forge world is already lost; the Patron is organising an assault on the planet to cleanse it — but they need a team of acolytes to secretly raid the hereteks and retrieve any useful xenotech experiments and equipment before the orbital bombardments begin.



OCULARIAN

“ To read the future, one must have the capacity to understand it, the will to shape it, and the strength to keep it safe. ”

Ocularian Tenets:

- ☠ Perfect knowledge of future events is the greatest power in the universe.
- ☠ Protect the future by combatting those who seek to alter fate's outcome.
- ☠ Knowledge of the future must be treated like forbidden knowledge, kept secret and protected at all costs.

Modus Operandi:

Seek out proven methods of divination. Collate and cross-reference their results to determine the most likely outcome of destiny. Guard these secrets closely; they must not fall into the wrong hands but use them to stay one step ahead of the enemy. Determine the best way to use this knowledge; careful nudges to affect critical moments.

Ocularians do not concern themselves with the present petty concerns of the Inquisition but are obsessed with the desire to foresee the future. Whatever divinatory methods an Ocularian chooses to use, they not only read the future but aim to manipulate it, ensuring that what comes to pass benefits the Imperium.

Ocularian Inquisitors are rare and long considered to operate only in the Calixis Sector of Segmentum Obscurus. In part because when Ocularians travel across the galaxy for a rumoured divinatory tool or source of information, they do so secretly. The Macharian Sector contains numerous anomalies and sites of interest for Ocularian researchers, who study divinatory forms wherever possible, even if their sources are xenos.

While Ocularians are considered Radical, and their prophetic rituals borderline heretical, they are mostly tolerated. Ocularians keep the details of their practices a closely guarded secret, making their actions seem unpredictable to other Inquisitors. Only with their own do they discuss divinatory tools and methods, informing others only when they have warnings to impart.

Being accepted into the Ocularians involves much more than merely professing to share their beliefs, and many of those who are admitted into their ranks subsequently consider themselves superior to others within the Inquisition.

Roleplaying an Ocularian:

- ☠ Ocularians are obsessive characters — they may appear easily detached from things happening around them, instead focused on their work and its outcomes.
- ☠ Most Ocularians see themselves as protectors of the Imperium's future, more important than the here and now. A calculated loss today that ensures a better future later is a loss graciously accepted.
- ☠ Despite those points, Ocularians remain loyal to the Inquisition; the knowledge they glean is, after all, for their favour and the defence of the Imperium — even if they may appear aloof at times or the strangest of Radicals in the eyes of their peers.

THE SAINT TO-BE

The Ocularian Inquisitor's compiled divinations speak of an Imperial saint coming to light on Goros Pok, one the people desperately need. But evidence of Tzeentchian cults on the planet suggests a likely opposition to this fate. Defeat the cult without causing any commotion, and heed the Inquisitor's prophecies: 'protect the severed hand', 'hide from the wings of the watcher', and 'three boats shall herald their arrival'.

FOREWARNED

The Ocularian Inquisitor has uncovered a ring of heretics producing and selling blasphemous daemon-influenced Tarot. The characters must halt this corruption before it spreads further through the sector's black markets. The trouble is, the blasphemous Tarot appears reliably divinatory, so the cult always appears to be a step ahead.

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PHAENONITE

“ Without faith to blind us or laws to constrain us, without the limits of morality or sluggishness of bureaucracy, we are free to become the best of Mankind. No one can ever hope to stop us, not the Inquisition or the Militarum, not the daemons who stalk the Warp or xenos who cower in the void. ”

Phaenonite Tenets:

- ☠ Both the Imperium and the Ruinous Powers must be destroyed.
- ☠ The Imperium should be reborn under Phaenonite leadership.
- ☠ Humanity's future is a fusion of man and machine, made immortal by the powers of the Warp.

Modus Operandi:

Seek out technologies to understand and control the Warp and its daemons. Gather allies in heretek and other Radicals, and stockpile powerful weaponry. Subvert the power structures of the Imperium to bring its collapse and free Humanity from its slow death.

The Phaenonites are among the most Radical Inquisitors and have long been declared *Excommunicate Traitoris*. They no longer serve the God-Emperor and claim they could do a better job of ruling the Imperium than the current regime, an unforgivable heresy in the eye of their former peers. They believe that the survival of Mankind requires mastery of the Warp and all its powers, and they are willing to sacrifice anything to achieve their goal.

The Phaenonites began as a cabal of Xanthites (page 29) who surreptitiously conducted blasphemous experiments on daemon-tainted technology during the Angevin Crusade. They were soon exposed and declared *Excommunicate Traitoris*. Universally loathed, the Inquisition and Adeptus Mechanicus have attempted to eradicate the Phaenonites, but when quashed in one sector, their adherents only spread to another.

There are signs that the Phaenonites' pursuit of forgotten and forbidden technologies has drawn them to the Macharian Sector, including rumours of strange automatons and whole settlements forced to undergo horrific experiments. The Adeptus Mechanicus is concerned about tech-heresy, and the sector's Inquisitors are keen to deal with this potential problem quickly, lest it damage the reputation of the Inquisition as a whole.

Since they are *Excommunicate Traitoris*, it is the duty of any Inquisitorial agent who encounters a Phaenonite to execute them. This may be extremely difficult since they use forbidden weaponry and employ Chaos cultists as minions. Phaenonites have no moral constraints, are bound only to their own twisted rules, and are experts at subterfuge. They may have brethren working openly within the sector, professing to be of some other philosophy, their true agenda carefully concealed.

Roleplaying a Phaenonite:

- ☠ Phaenonites, having been declared *Excommunicate Traitoris*, must operate in the dark. Around other Inquisitors, Interrogators, or their agents, they are more likely to present themselves as believers in less Radical philosophies.
- ☠ Phaenonites believe they should be leading the Imperium — their characters are power-hungry and believe themselves to be superior, especially against leadership within the Imperium.
- ☠ Despite how their goals appear, like other Inquisitors, they still believe they are doing the right thing for Humanity. They will still act to defend Humanity from xenos, daemon, and heretics, though they might have a difference of opinion on the latter.

DEPLOY THE STALKER

The forge world of Dannock III is ripe for a subtle takeover, but its leadership must first be purged before it is replaced. The Phaenonite Inquisitor asks the characters to aid the heretek Malavont-9-Zeta in deploying their Malatek Stalker to the world — a death cultist augmented with machinery and daemonic power, a veritable assassination engine that can get the job done.

A HERETEK'S BOUNTY

A Puritan Inquisitor has slain a heretek and gathered the contents of their workshop for analysis and logging before purging it all. The Phaenonite Inquisitor tasks the characters to find the hidden cell of acolytes and recover the heretek's artefacts before they are all destroyed. Leave no trace behind.



PLUTONIAN

“ In the fight against Chaos, we use whatever we must to win — because failure is not an option. ”

Plutonian Tenets:

- ☠ Controlled use of daemonic possession creates warriors resilient to daemonic powers.
- ☠ Through possession, knowledge can be plied from daemons that can ultimately be used against daemonkind or to aid the Imperium.
- ☠ Protect the secrets of the Exorcists Space Marine Chapter.

Modus Operandi:

Investigate daemonic activity across the Imperium and facilitate ongoing experimentations with the Exorcists Chapter. Capture daemons worth studying and return them to the fortress monastery Basilica Malefex on the Exorcist Chapter's Homeworld of Banish.

The secretive Plutonians are Radicals who seek to harness daemonic possession in order to create formidable daemon hunters. They do not undergo possession themselves but work closely with the Exorcists, an Adeptus Astartes Chapter who specialise in fighting daemons, implanting and removing these daemons to strengthen themselves, and harnessing any forbidden knowledge they may leave behind in the formerly possessed's mind.

The first Plutonians were Ordo Malleus Inquisitors tasked with investigating the Exorcists, given they display an unusual spiritual resistance. These Inquisitors formed the radical theory that the source of this resilience was their close contact with daemons. Working with the Exorcists, Plutonians usually keep close to their homeworld of Banish in the Narasima Straits, but a task force is currently in the Macharian Sector. Rather than joining the fight for the sector's boundaries, however, they travel from system to system as though searching, or hunting, for something. Rumour has it that a Plutonian Inquisitor travels with them, a Radical member of the Ordo Malleus who occludes the Exorcists' activities in the sector and whose acolytes aid in the Chapter's scouting efforts and investigations.

The Plutonians' experimentation with daemonic possession and exorcism, which they claim leaves subjects more resistant to daemonic influence, would be enough for other Inquisitors to execute them for heresy. They harbour a particular interest in the Chapter's Broken Ones, daemonhosts with the rare capability to hold indefinite numbers of daemons within them.

Roleplaying a Plutonian:

- ☠ Plutonian Inquisitors must operate with the utmost secrecy — in the presence of other Inquisitors or acolytes, they would never reveal their true identity, philosophy or intentions.
- ☠ Their philosophy leans on the idea that great knowledge can be obtained from unconventional means — though characteristically radical behaviour, Plutonian Inquisitors are rare open-minded characters.
- ☠ Plutonian Inquisitors are used to dealing with daemons and possessed individuals, so it would take much to shatter their composure when facing such foes.

WHISPERS OF THE ABYSS

A Broken One on the Exorcists' prison-craft known as the Purgatomb has whispered omens concerning the Azynith Abyss, speaking of a planet-devouring daemonic threat. A Librarian has been dispatched with the Broken One and Plutonian Inquisitor in tow to investigate these dire omens — characters are required to complete more discreet aspects of the investigation, chasing down local cults, Warp phenomena, and aspects of these omens.

THE SWORDS OF EPIPHANY

A warband of failed Exorcist Aspirants turned to the influence of Chaos are loose in the Macharian Sector — known as the Swords of Epiphany. The Plutonian Inquisitor has been tasked with quietly recapturing them and ensuring any daemons contained within them are thoroughly exorcised. The characters must act quickly before their corruption can spread and Exorcist secrets are revealed. Their movements were last spotted on the war world of Kallastin.



POLYPSYKANA

“ Mankind will evolve, and all those who resist this great transformation will fall behind. ”

Polypsykana Tenets:

- ☠ Humankind is destined to evolve into a psychic species.
- ☠ This transformation must be shepherded and defended from those who oppose it.
- ☠ Psykers, especially fledgling psykers, must be protected and trained.

Modus Operandi:

Seek out psykers across the sector to contain or protect them. Train psykers and experiment with psychic powers and phenomena. Be wary of anti-psyker elements across the Imperium, especially those within the Inquisition.

Polypsykana Inquisitors, many of whom are psykers, believe that Humanity will, and should, eventually ascend to becoming a psychic species. They say the growing number of psykers verifies their beliefs, and the number of Inquisitors following their creed has increased in recent years. They make it their mission to prevent the unnecessary burning of psykers and spend their time monitoring the actions of Inquisitors who might kill rather than capture psykers so they can prevent them from doing so.

The origins of the Polypsykana are lost to history, as this philosophy may be one of the oldest. Its adherents appear wherever there is a surplus of psykers or tales of psykers of unusual power — and since the Noctis Aeterna, there has been an excess of psykers in the Macharian Sector.

There are rumours that a Polypsykana Inquisitor in the Macharian Sector is hunting those who carry the Pariah Gene and executing them on charges of heresy. Other rumours speak of Inquisitors interfering directly with the Black Ships and their damnable cargo. If it proves true, such interference would not be tolerated — and could permanently damage relations between the Inquisition and the Adeptus Astra Telepathica.

Some Polypsykana experiment with ways of awakening and enhancing psychic abilities to facilitate Mankind's inevitable evolution. They may study the Warp itself, daemonic lore, xenos, or the anatomy of Humans with and without the Pariah Gene. Their activities are generally conducted secretly, at the far edges of civilisation — with test subjects no one will miss. No Puritan Inquisitor would condone their beliefs, but while the God-Emperor requires psykers, few can dismiss their claims that psykers are, at the least, sometimes useful.

Roleplaying a Polypsykanan:

- ☠ Polypsykana Inquisitors are utterly fascinated by psykers and hold reverence for their powers and phenomena, so much it might distract them in the moment from whatever task is at hand.
- ☠ A psyker Polypsykana Inquisitor may be sympathetic to the plights weighted upon the shoulders of emergent psykers in the Imperium.
- ☠ Polypsykana Inquisitors are resolute in their beliefs; when opposed, they cite the Imperium's reliance on psykers to function, the advances the Imperium has made utilising them, and that, ultimately, the God-Emperor Himself is a psyker.

INQUISITORIAL INTERFERENCE

One of the Polypsykana Inquisitor's research stations has been attacked and ransacked by another Inquisitor. The characters must investigate the base to discover who opposes their Patron. Some of the psykers there were taken into custody — track them down before they reveal any more of the Patron's plans and ideally before they are handed over to the League of Black Ships; rescue or silence them.

CRASH LANDING

A Black Ship has crashed on the small feudal world of Octavian Secundus. Sabotage is suspected, but the immediate concern is to round up all the psykers who escaped the wreckage. The Polypsykana Inquisitor requests the characters aid in the clean-up but has given them a list of names to investigate — psykers who were aboard — to check if they survived and secretly bring them into custody.



RECONGREGATIONISM



“When corruption takes hold of a limb, we amputate.
Why should we treat the head differently?”

Recongregationism Tenets:

- ☠ The Imperium has reached a level of stagnation that threatens its survival.
- ☠ The Imperium must be audited throughout and rebuilt from the ground up.
- ☠ Existing traditions and authority only serve to hold the Imperium back.

Modus Operandi:

Investigate the ruling noble houses and factions of the Imperium for corruption, gross inequality, and ineffectuality — any given failure is heresy. Bring balance to bear by whatever means necessary; surgically remove corrupt members of noble houses or arm the downtrodden to incite revolution.

Recongregators ardently believe that the Imperium has become decadent and corrupt, and it is their duty to right this great wrong. They see evidence of this truth in every noble house and ruling council across the sector. Every growing slum, plague outbreak, and xenos incursion is proof of the ruling class's inadequacy.

Macharian Recongregators believe the sector's corruption stems from the time of the Macharian Heresy when power was distributed to Lord Macharius's generals following his death. Then, the power-grabbing and greed of those strong enough to seize power closed their eyes to the Emperor's will. Now, their descendants exercise power and wealth they have no right to wield.

Some Recongregators work subtly, undermining the authority of those in power and replacing them with worthier candidates. Many rulers and noble houses have secrets that might be exposed to destroy their popularity, while some might fall victim to their own decadence or have unfortunate accidents. Other Macharian Recongregators use more destructive methods, such as arming a dissenting group, planting explosives on a day of mass worship, or sabotaging a planet's economy and inciting chaos.

When Macharian Recongregators encounter other Inquisitors or work with other Imperial agents, they often conceal their true purpose. This is especially true when they encounter Amalathians (page 16), whose goals oppose the fundamentals of Recongregationism.

Roleplaying a Recongregator:

- ☠ A Recongregator will keep their actual goals close to their chest, presenting solid excuses for their investigations — suspected heresy or xenos collusion within a noble house is a way in to shake the house down from top to bottom.
- ☠ They are wary of leadership within the ruling factions and houses of the sector; though they recognise their authority, they do not necessarily respect it. They know these people are often the root of the Imperium's internal problems.
- ☠ They know the price of altering the structure of the Imperium will be terrible but ultimately necessary. Therefore, they are prepared to make extreme sacrifices to achieve their goals.

THE LONG PLAY

House Hysperion (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 256), rulers of hive world Dominus Gamma, have reported Drukhari activity encroaching upon their planet from the nearby Osterum Shoals. Known as a defiant house by the Imperium, this is an opportunity to sway them and their assets to the Recongregators' cause. Aid them in their plight, embed Inquisition agents in their house, and garner favours for the future.

FALSE TALLIES

In gathering information about noble lineages in the sector, the Recongregator Patron has discovered inaccuracies in the archiviums of the cemetery world Eternan — bolstering the dead of one noble house and reducing the count from others. Travel to Eternan, cut deep into the local leadership, and punish those behind these inaccuracies. Replace the culprits with the Inquisition's own agents.



SECULOS ATTENDOUS



“ There is nothing so dangerous as misplaced faith.
Save your prayers for the God-Emperor! ”

Seculos Attendous Tenets:

- ☠ The Adeptus Ministorum is slowly corrupting and hampering the growth of the Imperium.
- ☠ The God-Emperor does not need the Ministorum to reach those who embrace His Power.
- ☠ For Mankind to be free, the Imperial Cult must be removed from power.

Modus Operandi:

The Ministorum is such a hulking organisation that it must be infiltrated and dismantled from within. Monitor and subvert its activities throughout the sector, particularly on shrine worlds. Manage the Imperial Cult's contact with frontier and reclaimed worlds, where its influence can be easily undermined.

These Radical Inquisitors believe that the Adeptus Ministorum is failing in its role to lead the masses in their worship of the God-Emperor. Only their devotion to the God-Emperor prevents them from being branded heretics, even as they deny the Ministorum's power and campaign to abolish the Ministorum.

As the Macharian Sector is a major pilgrimage destination for Imperial citizens, the Seculos Attendous have made their presence here known. These Inquisitors do not approve of the worship of Lord Solar Macharius over the God-Emperor, and their agents have made loud announcements on days of mass worship, reminding attendees of His supremacy. Others send their agents to shrine worlds to quietly undermine the influence of the Adeptus Ministorum. There are even rumours of a secret cult growing among the Imperial worlds of the Macharian Sector that worship under the guidance of Inquisitors, and this is likely the work of the Seculos Attendous.

The Seculos Attendous disapprove of Thorians (page 28), Horusians (page 17), and those of similar philosophies, but seek to convert rather than destroy them. In turn, they are unpopular with the Adeptus Ministorum, and Amalathians (page 16) object strongly to their operations.

Many Inquisitors consider their attentions misplaced when there are greater enemies at work. Still, the Seculos Attendous quickly remind their colleagues that nothing can be as important as worship of the God-Emperor, and few would dare to argue with that.

Roleplaying a a Seculos Attendous:

- ☠ A Seculos Attendous Inquisitor is often wholly focused on their secret war with the Adeptus Ministorum — they might care little for more ‘regular’ heresies that arise that do not involve the Ministorum in any way.
- ☠ The Ministorum is an organisation that ultimately dwarfs the Inquisitors' powers. They must maintain a meticulous cover, perhaps presenting themselves as a follower of another philosophy. They know that retribution from their peers within the Inquisition and the Ministorum would be swift if they were to be discovered.
- ☠ A Seculos Attendous Inquisitor will keep their friends close, and their enemies closer — whatever they can do to ingrain themselves with the Ministorum will help further their goals.

BREAKING COVER

An undercover agent on Lux Eternus has contacted the Seculos Attendous Patron, requesting immediate extraction. Their attempt to foster a rebellious cult on the hive world has come to light. The Patron may have left them to die if they were not the Planetary Governor's liaison with the Ministorum, Cardinal Mirrad Vorn — people might believe them if they invoked the Inquisitor's name.

GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY

The Ministorum is attempting to re-indoctrinate wayward cults on the reclaimed world of Olympia. A mix of false and conflicting doctrine is causing conflict between the cults, and the Ministorum is failing to wrest control. Now is the perfect opportunity to infiltrate both the cults and the Ministorum, solve the crisis and install some deep cover agents for future use.



THORIAN

“ One glorious day, the God-Emperor
Himself will lead us into a new age. ”



Thorian Tenets:

- ☠ The God-Emperor's spirit wanders the Warp, occasionally manifesting when His people truly need Him, in chosen vessels that can only contain a sliver of his power.
- ☠ One day, He will return and require a Divine Avatar or vessel to inhabit.
- ☠ Seeking out these vessels or means to implement them will hasten His return.

Modus Operandi:

Seek out pure vessels for the God-Emperor's eventual return or the means to create one. Investigate signs of the Emperor's divinity throughout the sector, and seek for ways to guide or transfer His soul from the Warp to realspace.

For Thorians, the Emperor travels in spirit through the void and the Warp. He has already moved among the populace, granting an element of his divinity to various saints over the years. Still, Thorians believe that one day, He will inhabit a vessel that can contain Him in His entirety. Thorians, therefore, seek a suitable Divine Avatar to contain His spirit. This avatar must be exceptionally pure since a corrupt vessel might merely use the Emperor's power for diabolical ends.

The Thorians' philosophy is named for Sebastian Thor, who overthrew a High Lord of Terra's tyrannous rule and ended the Age of Apostasy. Thorians believe that the Emperor worked through Thor Himself and has lent his power to other great mortals since, including Lord Solar Macharius. Some believe this means the next avatar will be found in the Macharian Sector.

Thorians investigate potential avatars and destroy those deemed unworthy. There are plenty of psykers, fortune-tellers, and supposed 'saints' in the Macharian Sector, and an Inquisitor could spend a lifetime searching in just one hive. However, some might instead devote their time to their secondary task, learning to transfer consciousness to and from the Warp so that they might guide the God-Emperor to a new vessel.

Some Inquisitors think the Thorians misguided, but the Amalathians (page 16) consider them dangerous, as putting faith in some powerful mortal would threaten the rule of the real God-Emperor on His Golden Throne. Polypsykana Inquisitors (page 25) object to Thorians' tendency to destroy the many psykers they find unworthy, while Oblationists (page 21) call their experiments heretical.

Roleplaying a Thorian:

- ☠ Despite its wild claims about the God-Emperor's divinity, the Thorian philosophy is still considered Puritan. Its Inquisitors strive for purity and truth in the vessels they chase and are more willing to admit they have found yet another failure than trick themselves into ill-gotten beliefs — their standards are impossibly high and exacting.
- ☠ Yet Thorians are often headstrong and singular in vision; many ignore the idea that if the God-Emperor returned as they envision, it would cause a civil war across the Imperium that could rival the Horus Heresy.
- ☠ Regardless of their keen interest in the Warp and psychic abilities, Thorian Inquisitors will not suffer the influence of any daemon nor any psyker who exhibits corruptive behaviour.

THE BATTLE OF CAPISTAJ

A recent skirmish near the Ayzinith Abyss has left a voidship graveyard in its wake, wreckage from both Aeldari and Imperial vessels floating in the void. Investigate the Aeldari wreckage under the guise of an Inquisitorial cleanup — their technology is said to have the power to manipulate psychic energies and capture souls; it could prove fruitful in the Patron's research.

FENTESSA OF PALEON

The Thorian Inquisitor is concerned about a missing noble, Fentessa, daughter of Barius Perrore, governor of Paleon. Rumours say Fentessa has an uncanny way of knowing people's secrets, and local officials are relieved she has disappeared. Her absence has caused unrest among Paleon's lowborn, with whom she was inexplicably popular — even revered.



XANTHISM

“ The power of the Warp is a weapon. We can put this infernal power to righteous use in the right hands. ”



Xanthism Tenets:

- ☠ The monsters of the Warp and the powers of Chaos should be bent to Humanity's will.
- ☠ Chaos cannot be defeated, but it can be understood and tamed.
- ☠ Wield that which is forbidden in order to better combat it.

Modus Operandi:

Investigate Warp breaches, phenomena, and Chaos activity throughout the sector. Safely capture Warp-twisted artefacts and daemons where possible in order to study and understand them. Apply what is learned to fight back against the Ruinous Powers and save the Imperium.

Few Inquisitors would openly advocate using Chaotic power in their work, but Xanthism promotes such an approach. This extremely Radical group of Inquisitors believe that just as the Imperium harnesses the power of the Warp for interstellar travel, so too can Warp power be utilised in the fight against the Imperium's enemies. Such Inquisitors learn forbidden lore from tomes that most would consider dangerous and heretical, attempt to capture and control daemoniac entities, and hunt out Chaos artefacts. Even the most ardent follower of Xanthism would admit there are risks to such ventures. Still, given the foes the Imperium of Man faces, they often consider extreme methods a necessity to ensure its survival.

The ancient philosophy of Xanthism began with Zaranchek Xanthus, executed for heresy in the early 32nd millennium. He believed that Chaos could — and should — be utilised for the benefit of Mankind. Despite his execution, many Inquisitors have adopted his views over the millennia, and Xanthites are surprisingly common, especially among the Ordo Malleus. Xanthist Inquisitors might come to the Macharian Sector hoping to uncover new sources of Warp-based power, some searching among the strange discoveries already logged in the Yix Subsector.

Most Puritans outright oppose the methods used by Xanthist Inquisitors. When most Inquisitors find Warp-charged items, they destroy or lock them away under stasis fields. But Xanthists believe they should be wielded against the enemy instead. With a threat as great as the daemons of the Warp a constant concern, any such advantage is invaluable.

Roleplaying a Xanthite:

- ☠ A Xanthite would exude understanding and superiority, perhaps even arrogance when pitted against the powers of Chaos or the Warp.
- ☠ As followers of a highly radical Inquisitorial philosophy, they fear interference from other Inquisitors. They are uncomfortable with or act reserved toward their peers or their peers' agents and would likely shy away or outright ignore the chance to collaborate.
- ☠ Many Xanthites are unaware they are being used as pawns by the Ruinous Powers until it is too late — they might not know themselves as well as they think.

EXPUNGED KNOWLEDGE

The Xanthite Inquisitor has learned that one of his peers in the Ordo Malleus has discovered a Chaos cult harbouring a collection of nine rare forbidden tomes: the 'Enneadex of Naxos'. Retrieve these books for study to ensure the rival Inquisitor cannot destroy them. Make sure you leave no trace.

A DOUBLE-EDGED BLADE

One of the Xanthite Inquisitor's cells was recently destroyed. They were on the hunt for a daemon, and provided a Daemonblade to aid them in the task — but it was not recovered from the scene. Before returning to the hunt, fearful the blade has fallen into dangerous hands, this weapon must be found and retrieved — or destroyed — at all costs.

LIBRARY OF THE IMPERIAL INQUISITION



THE INQUISITION & THE IMPERIUM

The following sections discuss the Inquisition's place in the Imperium: the truth of an Inquisitor's limitless authority, what laws they must adhere to, and how they deal with the multitudinous factions of the Adeptus Terra and beyond. Some of these aspects have been outlined in **Chapter I: The Holy Orders** of the *Inquisition Player's Guide* to instil knowledge required by players and their acolyte characters. Rather, the following information is for the benefit of GMs to understand better the Inquisitors they roleplay and the limits of these powerful and enigmatic characters.

POWER SCALE

While their means and methods vary wildly, all Inquisitors have a limitless authority. In theory, this is absolute; they can commandeer any resources they might need and command everyone from the heads of noble houses to decorated generals of the Astra Militarum to work on their behalf.

In practice, however, Inquisitors must constantly fight for their authority to count as such. The galaxy is vast and far from Terra, and an Inquisitor may find himself at the edge of the God-Emperor's influence. Even on worlds that pay their tithes to the God-Emperor, the governors may claim the Inquisition is no better than a myth or recognise their authority without significant backup. Often, Inquisitors can rely only on themselves.

The work of an Inquisitor sometimes requires making enemies as well as friends, and the nature of their foes often means that the longer an Inquisitor pursues their prey, the more they are tempted, tested, and possibly even tainted. So the more power and resources an Inquisitor accumulates, the more Liabilities they have. Working out an Inquisitorial Patron's history leads to adding certain Boons and Liabilities, or, if preferred, selecting Boons and Liabilities might naturally inspire a particular backstory.

ACOLYTE TO INQUISITOR

For characters who play Inquisitorial agents, the route from lowly acolyte to Inquisitor or beyond is a long and dangerous road that might take several lifetimes to achieve. To preserve knowledge and skills in an organisation as secretive and dispersed as the Inquisition, rejuvenat extends the life of the most esteemed members. Anyone who has lasted long enough to reach a position of supreme power and influence in the Inquisition is unlikely to be superseded soon. Some Inquisitors train acolytes to join their fight as fully-fledged Interrogators, but few take more than one or two at a time, and success is never guaranteed. For these characters, having an Inquisitor as a Patron might be the next best thing to a personal mentor, and impressing their Patron might even improve their standing with the Inquisition.

RESOURCES

Members of Ordos Majoris might have access to the data and resources of their Ordo when preparing for a mission, but less so once a mission is underway. Inquisitors are powerful, but they are still individual mortals standing against a hostile galaxy of nightmarish foes. Theoretically, any Inquisitor can ask for help from another in those rare cases when they meet, but even Inquisitors of the same Ordo cannot afford to trust unquestioningly.

It is often safer for an Inquisitor to commandeer staff as necessary in their work, individuals whose ignorance makes them easier to control. Some of these are used and discarded, while those proven loyal and useful become acolytes. Acolytes face the same horrors as their superiors but operate without the benefit of experience and only second-hand authority from their Inquisitor while in the field.

In the Macharian Sector, the most successful Inquisitors tend to learn all they can about the sector and its significant players and then set themselves on gaining personal power and influence within. Inquisitors who have been in the sector longest have had time to develop networks, make contacts, and earn favours. Some work alone with nothing but their personal weapon to rely on or recruit a small, select team, while others may have Inquisitorial training facilities or a null-prison available, a large staff and military force, sanctioned psykers, vast databanks, voidships, and a seemingly endless fortune of solars.

If the characters' Patron is an Inquisitor, then their Boons make clear the resources they can make available. Since an Inquisitor who works alone and undercover is less likely to become a Patron than one with means and influence, they likely have something to offer the characters, and the more solars they have at their disposal, the more likely they are to pay the characters well.



EYES AND EARS

Many acts of Inquisitors and their agents are never revealed to the masses, but the Inquisition is said to have eyes everywhere. Whenever a character prevents a catastrophe, destroys a shipment of xenos weapons, or exposes a cult, there is a surprisingly good chance that the Inquisition will eventually become aware of it.

Many Patrons monitor their agents closely, but even if a particular Patron does not communicate with an Ordo, there are other ways the Inquisition might find out. Either another Inquisitor will have been conducting a similar investigation and share the report with their Ordo, or an Inquisitor's contacts in the Arbites or local police force might inform them after the fact.

Messages and reports take significant time to cross the Imperium, but most Inquisitors keep meticulous records and are always interested in promising agents or contacts. Many Inquisitorial agents can make reputations for themselves without even realising it.

INTERFACTIONAL INTERACTIONS

In theory, Inquisitors, with their limitless authority, can command armies and order planetary governors to do their bidding. In practice, plenty of planetary governors and military commanders might make things difficult if an Inquisitor makes unreasonable demands, especially if they work alone and might be considered a problem easily removed. Most Inquisitors would soon correct such attitudes, but none let such petty obstacles compromise a mission.

Imperial agents across the sector fear the Inquisition, but there are systems in the Macharian Sector where Imperial presence is minimal or completely absent. An Inquisitor might have to bring Imperial forces with them rather than rely on the compliance of the locals or simply work alone. While working alone presents challenges, it appeals to those Inquisitors who are reluctant to trust anyone during the ongoing shadow war. A solitary operation can also be an advantage for undercover work. Infractionists often actively resist Imperial rule and Imperial agents of all kinds, including Inquisitors. Inquisitorial agents might have to conceal their true identities and even stoop to making dangerous deals with criminals to gain information — especially those tracking aspects of the Silent Trade.

There are several wealthy, powerful, and well-travelled Rogue Trader Dynasties in the Macharian Sector (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 261). They travel across the sector and beyond Imperial space, especially from the borders of the Cytheris Subsector. Many captains claim noble lineage, and their ancient warrants grant them freedoms most citizens can only imagine. They are still obliged to bow to the authority of the Inquisition of course, but some might overlook this when encountering a single Inquisitorial agent, alone in the void. Far from civilisation, authority means little in the face of a gun.

Given the turbulent nature of the Macharian Sector, the Adeptus Administratum and Astra Militarum work closely together. Inquisitorial authority is greater than either, but an Inquisitor might require the cooperation of both in their work. Between them, the Administratum are responsible for the smooth running of the sector. While the Administratum's influence in the Macharian Sector is not as universal as it once was, the Astra Militarum's power seems to have grown since the Noctis Aeterna, with its close ties to the Imperial Navy and Adeptus Ministorum. The Astra Militarum may be the most powerful organisation in this sector, and they are generally on good terms with the Inquisition. Inquisitors would do well to nurture contacts within this organisation. But some may believe that the Militarum has grown too influential here and would refuse to bow to Inquisitorial authority if there was a disagreement. However, this has not yet been a problem, as their goals typically align.

Inquisitors, especially of the Ordo Hereticus, work closely with the Adeptus Astra Telepathica since both work to identify psykers and contain them. In the Macharian Sector, the work of the Adeptus Astra Telepathica has been made more difficult by problems with communications, transport routes, and the growing number of psykers. Inquisitors are actively trying to ease the growing burden on the Black Ships, and ties are particularly close between the Inquisition and Adeptus Astra Telepathica.

Inquisitors may well encounter the Sisters of Silence in the Macharian Sector since their work on the Black Ships carries them all across the Imperium. Elite psyker hunters, their mission is to collect and transport unsanctioned psykers for the Astra Telepathica. This task often causes them to work alongside Inquisitorial agents of the Ordo Hereticus. They are useful allies, immune to psychic and daemonic power, as long as an Inquisitor's purpose remains aligned with theirs.

The Adeptus Mechanicus is afforded greater freedom under the ancient Treaty of Mars than most factions within the Imperium are premitted. This has often been a point of contention between the Inquisition and the Cult Mechanicus, in the Macharian Sector as elsewhere. Several of the sector's forge worlds are under surveillance, and many Tech-Priests are aware of these intrusions, further souring relations.

The Adeptus Ministorum is generally grateful for the work of the Inquisition since both organisations are united in their devotion to the God-Emperor above all else. The Ministorum is quite powerful in the Macharian Sector, at least among those worlds that the Astra Militarum has successfully repacified since the Noctis Aeterna. Nevertheless, some Inquisitors see the obsession with the Saint Solar Macharius as dangerous. On some worlds, the saint seems to receive more devotion than the God-Emperor. More than one member of the Adeptus Ministorum is currently under suspicion of encouraging such behaviour, and the local Adeptus Ministorum bristles at the implication that it requires such scrutiny.

LEX IMPERIALIS

Every sector, subsector, and world of the Imperium has its own set of laws, but the Lex Imperialis sits above these laws, consisting of the God-Emperor's own word and must take precedence. It is a vast, complicated, and ever-growing collection of decrees and mandates, so numerous that most citizens of the Imperium could never hope to learn them all.

Theoretically, Inquisitors function above local laws, remaining bound only by the Lex Imperialis. However, by respecting local laws, Inquisitors are more likely to find planetary governors and local rulers more cooperative and avoid trouble with local enforcement. After all, most enforcers, such as the ubiquitous Macharian Vigilites, answer directly to their planetary governor. Adhering to the letter of the Lex also makes challenges from other Inquisitors less likely.

It is the Inquisitor's duty to enforce Imperial Law wherever they can. If a world resists the Imperium for no reason other than its leaders' greed, then an Inquisitor is likely to inform the Arbites and leave them to their work. Sometimes, a world resists for more nefarious reasons: the workings of a daemonic cult, the foul promises of a Chaos God, or the influence of a powerful, unsanctioned psyker. In these cases, an Inquisitor's presence and authority are necessary, drawing together the Imperium's forces and applying their knowledge in combatting such a threat.

The enforcement of the Lex Imperialis is necessary for the continued existence of the Imperium through its bearing on the Imperial Tithe. Imperial worlds must all pay a tithe to the Emperor, whether in crops, troops, materiel, or captured psykers for the League of Black Ships. Obedience in this matter is non-negotiable, as from the perspective of the Inquisition, all should understand that the God-Emperor's tithe benefits all. Yet, in the Macharian Sector, there are still worlds that resist the Emperor's rule and are lax with what they provide.

Given that the Imperium is stretched so far across the galaxy, it is easy for a planet's indiscretions to be overlooked for a considerable time as long as they pay their tithe. Many worlds, particularly after a period of turbulence, might forget the Lex Imperialis's importance. The arrival of Imperial agents, such as an Inquisitor, should be enough to remind them. In these cases, local governance may attempt to conceal evidence of their infringements, and it is up to the Inquisitor to determine whether these are petty crimes that can be ignored, dangerous violations that must be forcefully dealt with, or instead used as leverage to further their goals.

Most worlds are likely to deal with some element of criminality in their society. Some citizens live outside the law, using secrecy to avoid detection or bribes to avoid punishment. Others might even use knowledge of the Lex Imperialis to their advantage, especially if it can override local laws they might otherwise fall foul of. An Inquisitor who needs to circumvent the law may use similar tactics as necessary, especially if they are attempting to conceal their identity as an Inquisitor or those of their acolytes.

In **Imperium Maledictum**, it is up to the GM to decide how much of an obstacle local enforcers will be to the characters' mission. On one world, a citizen's activities might be severely limited by arbitrary local laws, while on another, chaotic lawlessness might make the characters' activities dangerous. Inquisitorial agents are likely to find their authority respected on some worlds, whereas on others, they would be wise to keep their associations to themselves. The prevalence of Imperial Law on all these worlds means that Chaos or xenos cults, unsanctioned psykers, and criminal enterprises are all likely to work in secret and outside of the law. However, there may be worlds where the local law enforcers, the government, or noble houses are corrupt, and the characters must actively break local laws to obey Imperial ones.

SHADOW WARS

As they serve only the Emperor, answering to no other authority, Inquisitors must watch each other for signs of corruption. A traitorous Inquisitor is a hazardous thing, and it is the duty of all Inquisitors to police each other. Unfortunately, since Inquisitors vary so much in their philosophies and methods, what is considered heresy by one is considered necessary by another. After enemies of the Imperium, the greatest threat to an Inquisitor is another Inquisitor.

An Inquisitor who suspects another of corruption or treason may deal with the matter personally if they can. If they are not certain or not confident in their ability to capture or kill the Inquisitor in question, they may call upon other Inquisitors to form a Conclave and discuss the matter. Depending on the power and influence of the Inquisitors involved, this may be a small group whose existence will remain a secret or a grander assemblage, including Inquisitor Lords.

The Conclave investigates the suspect and then debates the best way to proceed. The Inquisitor may be called upon to defend themselves personally or be kept unaware of the Conclave's existence. There is no set procedure to follow since every case, and the threats involved, will differ. If in doubt, the Conclave often decides that in the best interests of the Imperium, the Inquisitor must be eliminated since a corrupt Inquisitor is an incredibly dangerous threat.

These wars must be fought in the shadows of the Imperium. The factions of the Adeptus Terra learning of an Inquisitor's betrayals or shifts towards heresy undermines the limitless authority they need to protect the Imperium. An Inquisition that appears in any way divided is therefore ineffective. The same goes for the citizenry; though fear aids in asserting their authority, Inquisitors should never be seen as outright enemies of Lex-abiding people.





RUNNING INQUISITION ADVENTURES

Every Imperial institution exudes fear as a measure of control and authority, some more underhanded than others. The Imperial Fleet, Astra Militarum, and Adeptus Astartes wield the fear of raw military might. The Adeptus Administratum brandishes regulations, procedures, and weaponised bureaucracy to oppress those outside their inner circles. The Adeptus Ministorum and Adeptus Mechanicus preach fears of countless unknowns and depravities, offering a lonely beacon of purity or righteousness as succour. In their grim ways, the Imperium itself is a bastion built upon terror.

Yet all of them pale compared to the visceral fear exuded by the Inquisition — its agents are everywhere and nowhere, all-seeing and all-knowing, implacably ruthless and utterly remorseless. It is this pervasive, insidious construct of lurking dread that you, the GM, have the pleasure and challenge of bringing to life in all its dark and sinister glory.

In running an Inquisition-focused adventure, a GM is freed from many of the usual constraints wrought by the other institutions of the Imperium. While other organisations hold a stiff bureaucratic chain of command with policies and procedures to go with it, these are quickly subordinated to the immediate needs of Inquisitors.

There are simply too many threats across too much space which must be dealt with immediately — and if bureaucracy must be set aside to do so, so be it. Inquisitors have almost unlimited authority for good reason: they are fighting an unending war to save Humanity's soul.

Inquisitors and their acolytes are essentially free to go anywhere, to compel testimony from anyone, to bring any person under scrutiny for potentially consorting with dangerous xenos or vile forces of Chaos. This gives you far more freedom to develop adventures that will take the characters into places they would not usually get to go: the heart of an Adeptus Militarum bastion or an Imperial Fleet voidship, the innermost sanctum of an Ecclesiarchy cathedrum, the fume-filled depths of an Adeptus Mechanicus forge world, or the gleaming spires housing the nobility atop a hive.

Moreover, since the role of Inquisitors is to find and destroy the lurking threats chewing at the inner stability of the Imperium, you are free to confront the characters with nearly any manner of enemy, from a vicious Drukhari raid erupting from a Webway portal to a sanity-blasting incursion of vile daemons from the Warp. Inquisition adventures allow you and the players to explore the Imperium from its most glistening heights to its foulest depths — and confront the myriad wonders and terrors they will find there.



INQUISITION MALEDICTUM

By its nature, the Inquisition is a profoundly secretive institution. Though perceived to operate under a hierarchy and by sets of policies or rules, the Inquisition does so loosely. It is, in fact, more of a ‘purpose’ than an organisation. It is an eclectic collection of disparate individuals and their retinues, all generally acting towards what, in theory, is a common goal — seeking and eliminating overt and covert threats to the Imperium.

Just how Inquisitors operate is very much up to the individual. Some are dour figures of menace, while others are effusively charming. Some are scrupulously honest and believe in conforming rigidly to the codified laws of the Imperium. In contrast, others believe the means are irrelevant as long as their ends are achieved. Some are pure and noble, righteously sending thousands to their deaths to preserve the sanctity of the Emperor’s realm. Others are corrupt and desperate, selling their very souls to embrace the unhallowed powers of their enemies, telling themselves they are only doing so to strike down the nightmares that plague them and the Imperium.

Inquisition games in **Imperium Maledictum** can span various themes and atmospheric settings. And since Inquisitors are empowered to go anywhere and compel testimony from anyone, they can be set in nearly any part of the Imperium, from the murky depths of a hive’s sump to the decayed glory of a planetary governor’s palace. That said, there are common threads that will wind through all Inquisition games.

Foremost among these is an investigative focus. While Inquisitors often confront obvious and overt threats, they most commonly hunt things that do not wish to be found. A surreptitious incursion of Drukhari seeks to harvest souls and feast on their suffering unseen. A blasphemous cult insists on sinister secrecy until their fiendish ends are achieved. Inquisition games, therefore, tend to focus on finding clues and using them to piece together a picture of who the enemy is and what they are doing — often a difficult task in itself due to the widespread repression of information in the Imperium (see *Forbidden Knowledge*, page 74).

SUBTLETY

The advice presented in this chapter goes hand-in-hand with using the Subtlety Mechanic presented in **Chapter VII** of the *Inquisition Player’s Guide* (page 116). Further details and advice for implementing this mechanic are presented later in this chapter (page 47).

Only when a threat is fully identified will an Inquisitor mobilise the resources needed to stop whatever malfeasance is underway. However, not all Inquisitors have equal access to the resources they are ostensibly pledged, and many demand that their investigating acolytes put their souls even further at risk to combat their unspeakable foes. Investigation-focused games require forethought and planning. It is essential that the clues the characters uncover are relevant and will lead them towards a greater truth. Even red herring clues must fit logically into the story, but they should not distract the players for too long or too far from the truth.

Because Inquisitors tend to work in the shadows, paranoia is another theme common to Inquisition games. Until an enemy is identified, they could be anyone. And even then, they could have agents and allies willing to act on their behalf nearly anywhere, at varying levels of culpability. Threats are often layered, where solving one mystery merely reveals another beneath it. Deception and obfuscation wielded like weapons can throw the Inquisitor off the trail. Even those considered trustworthy can be suspect — bribery, blackmail, and extortion can turn even the most reliable ally, and differences in philosophy occasionally lead to Inquisitors hunting one another. At its heart, the Inquisitor’s unspoken creed is quite simple: trust no one.

The result is a game that often shifts through shades of grey. While some things — heretical cults, xenos conspiracies and the like — are starkly harmful and wrong, many others will be more nuanced. A planetary governor withholding tithes to ensure their people do not starve violates Imperial law, but a starving world may soon produce no tithe. The best Inquisition games force the players to confront difficult choices and often choose between the lesser of numerous evils. That said, you should not deny your players the periodic satisfaction of finally confronting and overcoming a clear and present threat. Endlessly ambiguous games will, eventually just become frustrating!

HOW TO MAKE IT FEEL LIKE WARHAMMER

The **Warhammer 40,000** universe is a unique and diverse gothic-inspired science fiction setting. Beyond the intricate histories and characterisations, new players and even GMs can often forget aspects of what makes this setting what it is. The following points represent constants in the world, all interlinked, that permeates everything in the setting. Take them to heart when crafting stories and running game sessions, and pass on the themes and tones to your players.



PHYSICAL SCALE

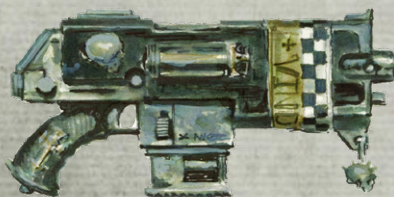
Everything is massive all the time. Humanity has grown into a population of quadrillions spread across a million worlds, most of whom live in thousand-layer hive cities. Even when it comes to structures and utilities, most buildings, even the doorways and windows built within, seem needlessly massive. People travel between the stars on cathedral-like voidships larger than any skyscraper. Press upon your players how small they are in the grand scheme.

TIMESCALE

In the Imperium, things rarely happen in an instant. Characters might spend years mired in an investigation, travelling between planets or systems, or stuck in the glacial tide of the Administratum's bureaucracy. As GM, your ability to skip ahead in time is vital, but do not forget to press upon your players the time spent — you can punctuate this by filling up their years with extended downtime activities (see *Inquisition Long-term Endeavours* in the *Inquisition Player's Guide*, page 132).

THE IMPERIAL CREED

Its unique history and religious grasp affect everyone in the setting, whether they adhere to it, reject it, or are *rejected by it*. Most citizens have grown up in lifestyles where they visit temples and grand cathedrums every week to pay respects to the God-Emperor of Mankind and receive sermons to bolster their piety. Yet the scale at which the Imperial Creed reaches and the divisions of the void in between leave room for dangerous interpretation by both zealots and quiet detractors.



CONFLICT

Like the Imperial Creed, the God-Emperor's war machine touches every soul in the Imperium in one way or another. Every citizen knows someone who has been shipped off to fight on some far-flung war-torn planet. Entire forge worlds and their populations are devoted to manufacturing arms to feed the front lines. This eternal war can never stop; if it did, the status quo would crumble, and Humanity would fall to its innumerable enemies.

FEAR

On some level, everyone is terrified. Forces within and without the Imperium press the dire need for compliance and duty to every citizen; where faith falters, fear must take its place. Everyone has someone breathing down their neck. This fear starts at the top of the Adeptus Terra. It trickles down through the controlling factions of the Adeptus Terra and the ruling nobilities to the labouring citizens at the bottom. No citizen has any natural choice in the matter — who in their right mind would trade their everyday plight for the uncountable and unknowable enemies clawing at the Imperium's borders?

TECHNOLOGY

Despite the fears and restrictions imposed upon technology in the Imperium's laws and strictures, it is rare for a character to be without some kind of technology on their person or as part of their daily lives. Humanity is reliant upon technology to survive. Machines to recycle breathable air, generate food, fight for survival, or replace a lost limb. Yet despite advances, not everyone has access to everything they need. Technological inequality is so vast and staunchly defended that aspects known and studied by some are myth and magic to others.

HOW TO MAKE IT FEEL LIKE IMPERIUM MALEDICTUM

Imperium Maledictum operates within a unique area in the **Warhammer 40,000** setting — one close to the ground among the citizenry of the Imperium, dealing with the plights that fall upon them from forces internal and external to their lives. It often centres around Machiavellian patrons caught between the demands of duty and ambitions for power who use people as pawns to further their goals. The following points represent what playing **Imperium Maledictum** should evoke in your players and what makes it a unique experience. Keep these points in mind when running games and building your own stories.



NOIR THEMES

Stories in **Imperium Maledictum** are often set in the dirt, far from the Imperium's frontlines. Characters have a dark and nihilistic outlook on life, doing their best just to get by. Prominent themes in the setting are corruption, criminality, and inequality, which in this setting can manifest as heresy or even the heavy hand of purity. Nothing is ever black or white; the narrative hinges on moral quandaries and ambiguity, choosing the lesser of malefic evils.

GOTHIC THEMES

The world's atmosphere leans on gloom and decay, coupled with constant oppression, unknowns, or impending threats. Most characters have some kind of tragic backstory, even if it is just their station in the Imperium — yet they are forced to be barbaric, superstitious, or unenlightened. Turning points come from supernatural events that are often challenging to explain and accept — horror and suspense surround these mysteries, and it is up to the players to explore them.

DEADLY ENCOUNTERS

It is easy for player characters to be harmed and just as likely to die, especially when diving into combat unprepared. As GM, using the *threat* of violence is often more important than enacting it. Perpetuate this threat throughout the world — the Imperium is an unforgiving and violent place, no matter where you look — and it will keep the tensions high and create many more dramatic moments for your players to enjoy.

BRAINS AND BRAWN

Characters should be able to solve situations as they best see fit. Violence should not be the go-to answer. Characters can pick apart their problems intelligently. Investigate, politick, and make dubious alliances and deals. Sometimes a challenge can even be overcome by filing the correct paperwork. The GM's job is to facilitate the wealth of options available to their players and drive home the consequences of their actions.

PATRONS AND AGENTS

The player characters have a unique partnership with their Patron and an unequal one at that. What does the Patron want from them, and what can they get in return? The Patron may provide them with rare comfort and safety but is often within their power to ask for unreasonable sacrifices in return. The GM's job is to perpetuate the Patron's involvement in the narrative — they should constantly pressure the player characters and be an unignorable part of their lives, for better or worse.

FIND LEVERAGE

Players should be challenged to leverage every advantage they can find. Players need to think critically. Investigate their surroundings and the factions and alliances they have access to, and scrape together what they can. The GM should place obstacles in their way, evoke the labyrinthine nature of the Imperium, and remind them that nothing is ever free. This aspect can manifest mechanically through the game's Influence and Superiority systems and new contacts and clues that appear along the way.



SETTING UP YOUR GAME

Just as an Inquisitor and their agents must arm and prepare themselves for a mission, so must a GM prepare to run an Inquisition game in **Imperium Maledictum**. Some GMs may be quite capable of crafting a nuanced, layered, investigation-focused game ‘on the fly’, but for most, it is a good idea to ensure as much as possible is in place before the first die hits the table.

CRAFTING THE STORY

The first step is determining the ‘core concept’ — a one-sentence description of the story. For instance, *‘The characters will investigate a Drukhari incursion in the sump of Hive Voll, only to find that the xenos are in league with an ambitious minor noble of House Castyx’*. From this, you can derive a story’s essential three acts: the beginning, middle, and end.

- **Beginning:** The characters are given their mission by their Patron to investigate rumours of a Drukhari incursion in Voll, after which they encounter the sinister xenos.
- **Middle:** Complications ensue as the characters uncover evidence that the Drukhari are in league with a member of House Castyx while continuing their efforts to deal with the xenos.
- **End:** Having uncovered sufficient evidence to implicate the noble, the characters receive assistance from their Patron through a squad of Deathwatch to finally destroy the xenos, then confront the noble with their crimes.

For each of these ‘acts’, you can derive story beats — the important scenes or events within. For example, in the first act, the beats may include *‘the characters meet with their Patron and are given their mission’*, followed by *‘the characters travel to Voll, enter the lower hive and examine the scene of the first Drukhari incursion’*, followed by *‘the characters have their first, brief skirmish with the Drukhari’*, and so on. You can then plan for each beat to be a scene, encounter or other event and can prepare settings, NPCs, loot and the like for each.

Each beat should flow logically from the one to the next. Clues (page 42) are a key way to advance the story within beats, but they can also link beats together. Some beats and the clues given in them can also be decision points, where the characters will choose to send the story in one of several possible directions.

For example, if the characters have discovered a xenos weapon that requires analysis, they may consider taking it to the Adeptus Mechanicus. But if they have another clue suggesting that the Adeptus Mechanicus may be involved in the corresponding xenos plot, do they find another way to analyse the weapon, which may take more time and at a greater expense?

You may only wish to develop a detailed story up to a decision point and then allow the players to decide where they want to go at the end of a session. That will allow you to continue developing the story following that choice and save you time from developing detailed story branches that may never be used! The number of such beats can vary. Fewer beats will result in a quicker, less involved story that is easier to set up, while more beats will provide a longer, more detailed story that also involves more work to create and run. It is up to you and your players to determine which works best for them based on their available time, and interests.

You should consider what resources you need for each story beat. NPCs, for instance, can be drawn from Contacts (page 122), Sector Threats (page 135), or the Bestiary (**Imperium Maledictum**, page 315). However, if you require specific NPCs, such as unique villains, you will have to adapt one already existing or even create one from scratch. You may want to prepare ‘read aloud’ text so you can flavorfully present all of the information players need to be immersed in a scene and do it in a way that captures the mood they desire, be it creeping dread, visceral horror, bureaucratic tedium, or something else.



MEMORABLE NPCs

NPCs should be distinctive and memorable. To assist with this, you can portray them with a particular voice and speech mannerisms suitable to their Faction and describe their appearance and dress in unique ways. The tables in **Imperium Maledictum** (page 84) can assist with this. NPCs should also serve a purpose in the story. Being antagonists or allies is an obvious aspect, but tricky NPCs can also possess (and perhaps try to conceal) clues or other information that would be useful to the characters' investigation.

PREPARING THE GAME

With your story in hand, whether a premade module or one of your own devising, you can now prepare for your next session. The following suggestions intend to assist a GM in doing just that.

Patron Review: Review the Patron's Boons, Liabilities, and Motivations. Also, review the Goals, Philosophies, and Techniques of the Patron's Ordo and their particular Philosophy. Finally, review their Influence with Factions that will be, or are likely to be encountered by the characters during the story. Knowing these things will help you roleplay the Patron during the game. Creating a Patron whose words and actions are consistent and whose expectations of the characters are clear will greatly increase the game's immersion while helping the players roleplay their characters.

Character Review: Know the characters! A common pitfall for GMs is to focus on knowing their 'side' of the story but not that of the characters. In particular, you should consider how to advance not just the story of their game but also that of the individual characters. If a player has decided that their character has a sworn enemy, for instance, then inserting clues regarding that enemy's actions and whereabouts will move that story forward and further invest that player in the game.

Skill Review: Determine which Skills and Specialisations are likely applicable to your story beats, when specific instances of Advantage or Disadvantage might apply, and when particular Tests would be Opposed, Extended, or even revealed in Passive Tests. Drawing on each player character's skills can give them each their time in the spotlight. However, it is unnecessary — nor even possible — to be exhaustive, as the players will likely do things you did not anticipate. Nonetheless, presetting particular Tests will make it easier to keep things balanced and save time.

Strengths & Weaknesses: You should also know the characters' strengths and weaknesses, what they can do well and what they cannot. This will assist you in setting up Tests that will be within the characters' abilities. If a particular clue or other piece of information is essential to move the story forward, then knowing the characters' stats will assist in setting up Passive Tests that will still allow players agency and their moment to shine. This avoids the risk of awkwardly stalling the game as a result of a failed Test.

Rules Review: Likewise, consider which rules are likely to apply to the game in general and the upcoming session, and ensure you are conversant with them. Suppose you expect the session to see the characters buying, selling, and trading for new equipment. In that case, they should review **Chapter VII: Armoury of *Imperium Maledictum***, particularly the section on Trading Equipment. Likewise, suppose you expect a session with a great deal of combat. In that case, they should ensure they have good knowledge of **Chapter IV: Rules of *Imperium Maledictum***, and particularly the sections on Combat, Damage, and Wounds.

Notes Review: Finally, you should review any notes they made at the end of the previous session. It is worthwhile to invest a few moments at the end of a session in making notes, capturing any points that would be relevant at the outset of the next session. This includes details like changes in character Influence with various groups, any Temporary Influence in effect, and the characters' Superiority Level.

By being prepared — knowing the characters and their Patron well, having a well-crafted story ready and knowing the relevant rules and mechanics — you can minimise friction and wasted time at the table and provide the players with a smooth, immersive, and exciting game.



LET THE PLAYERS LEAD

*“Against the alien and the traitor,
there is no fair way to fight.”*

The players will routinely face the deadliest of foes and impossible situations. Try to lean into their ideas! Superiority will often tip the scales, turning disaster into a pyrrhic victory, so entertain their wild ideas. The Inquisition is one of the few Imperial Factions to embrace pragmatism, no matter how slight. When preparing for your next session, consider what your characters are capable of and how they might use their most favoured Skills and Talents to solve the problems that arise.

PLANNING YOUR CAMPAIGN

A campaign in **Imperium Maledictum** is effectively a series of interconnected missions but with enough wiggle room to compensate for players making either interesting or terrible decisions. Building an Inquisition focused campaign typically begins with choosing one significant idea to focus on and then building missions to weave in and around this idea as characters progress towards a final confrontation. You must decide what this big idea is. Thankfully, the Inquisition is embroiled in so much activity in the Macharian Sector that you have plentiful options to choose from. Consider some of the following ideas to serve as a starting point or simply inspiration:

- ☠ The characters' **Ordo Hereticus Patron** is working to eradicate false scriptures of the Imperial Creed. They have heard whispers of a cult tearing down Lord Macharius's reputation and history. This cult plans to build power and assault Macharia to undermine the Imperium's control in the sector.
- ☠ The characters' **Ordo Xenos Patron** has heard whispers of Genestealer Cult activity working in the underbelly of a hive city. Tackling the cult, they discover links to other Genestealer Cults on other worlds and the involvement of a Polypsykana Inquisitor, who has been manipulating the cult to study their psychic abilities.
- ☠ The characters' **Ordo Malleus Patron** has discovered a Horusian Inquisitor is secretly operating in the sector. Their acolyte cells must be rooted out, the daemons they hunt destroyed, and the Inquisitor himself brought to justice.
- ☠ The characters' **Thorian Patron** is scouring the sector for Aeldari artefacts, hoping to reverse-engineer their technology to aid the God-Emperor's return to realspace. They are being hunted on two fronts: by the Aeldari, whom they are tricking and stealing technology from, and by their Puritan peers, who see their interest in xenotech as heretical.
- ☠ The characters' **Amalathian Patron** is investigating the fall of several noble houses in the sector, discovering a series of Drukhari assassinations — unbeknownst to them, they are secretly at war with a Recongregator Inquisitor, in league with the xenos, who seeks to tear down ruling houses they believe are false claimants to their authority.

☠ The characters' **Isstvanian Patron** is working towards promoting war against xenos factions in the Gallosque Nebula but has garnered the unfortunate attention of an Amalathian Inquisitor who does not wish to risk the status quo. A shadow war has broken out between the two Inquisitors. Can the characters' Patron simultaneously defeat their rival Inquisitor quietly whilst stoking the flames of war in the Nebula?

Besides incorporating the characters' Patron, some of the best campaign ideas hinge on the Inquisition's **Philosophies** and the **Threats** the Imperium faces; it is even better if your campaign can draw on both.

The Patron's chosen **Philosophy** can be the core of your campaign, a concept to thread throughout each mission — the outcome of a mission should help them further their goals, safeguard their tenets, or put their ideals into question. At the end of your campaign, you may see the Patron achieve their goals or see them utterly dashed. This outcome should be up to the actions of your players' characters and what they achieve. Do they wish to see their Patron succeed? Do they think their Patron has gone off the deep end into Radicalism and is no better than the enemies they have been fighting thus far? How do these outcomes play into their survival?

The Macharian Sector has traditional **Threats** aplenty: heretics, xenos, and daemons, but do not forget to include aspects of the Adeptus Terra, noble houses, Infracionist elements, or even opposing Inquisitors and their retinues within that category. Narratives are often more interesting when the lines are blurred between everyone involved. Introducing another Inquisitor to the mix halfway through the campaign can be a great ally or enemy, depending on how they relate to the Patron's Philosophy or goals (see *Between Inquisitors*, page 55).

TEST RUN

Before embarking on a full-blown campaign, it might be worth creating and running a few individual missions with your playgroup. This gives you, the GM, and your players time to understand their Patron and characters. Furthermore, it is an excellent source of inspiration for gauging what aspects of the Inquisition your players are most interested in and, oppositely, what they dislike.

STRUCTURE

Beyond the core concept, your campaign is built up as a series of missions, as described in **Crafting the Story** (page 38), considering that elements from one mission feed into the following or future aspects of the campaign overall. Similar to the three-act structure presented in **Crafting the Story**, a similar approach can be applied here, with each act containing a handful of missions. A short campaign could have as many as one or two missions per stage, scaling up as appropriate and increasing the stakes for all involved as the campaign progresses.

- ☛ **Early Missions:** Here the stakes are planetary-level. Send the characters on a few missions, let them get a feel for investigations and explore roleplaying their characters. As this act closes, you must establish the characters' ultimate enemy and their Patron's driving goals and Philosophies. Use these first few missions to reveal these aspects piece by piece.
- ☛ **Middle Missions:** Up the stakes, the whole system or subsector is at risk. Have the characters spread out their investigations, hop from planet to planet chasing down leads, uncover related heresies, and confront lower-level aspects of their enemy's organisation. But all of this is to reveal more of the more significant threat they are yet to face.
- ☛ **Final Missions:** Up the stakes one last time; now the threat could affect the whole Macharian Sector or harm a widespread aspect of Imperial culture and society. By now, the characters will have done most of their investigating against their prime threat and acquired some scars. In this closing act, line up the characters' enemies and have the characters tackle each one head-on.

Remember to give your players downtime between each mission (see **Chapter VIII: Between Missions**, in both *Imperium Maledictum*, page 228 and the *Inquisition Player's Guide*, page 125), and grant them regular contact with their Patron through briefing and debriefing sessions (page 58). Remember to hand out rewards as you go, as indicated in *Imperium Maledictum* (page 312).

Consider adding a Conclave to these between-mission segments (page 84), or it can be a mission in and of itself. Have the characters and their Patron encountered such a sector-spanning foe that they should involve the Macharian Inquisition? Have they garnered enough evidence of heresy against a Radial Inquisitor to petition for a declaration of *Excommunicate Traitoris* from their peers?

RAILROADING

It is essential to plan out the major arcs and pillars of your campaign, but listen to your players on a mission-to-mission basis. Build each subsequent mission, considering the ideas and avenues they wish to explore based on the clues you gave them (page 42). An exceptionally rigid series of events and missions can lead to railroading — forcing your players and their characters into something they do not want to do or explicitly laying the track out in front of them — which you should always strive to avoid.

Remember: Your job as GM is to facilitate the stories your players create due to the stage you set up for them to play on and generate consequences for their actions, both for their characters, the setting, and the cast of NPCs involved.

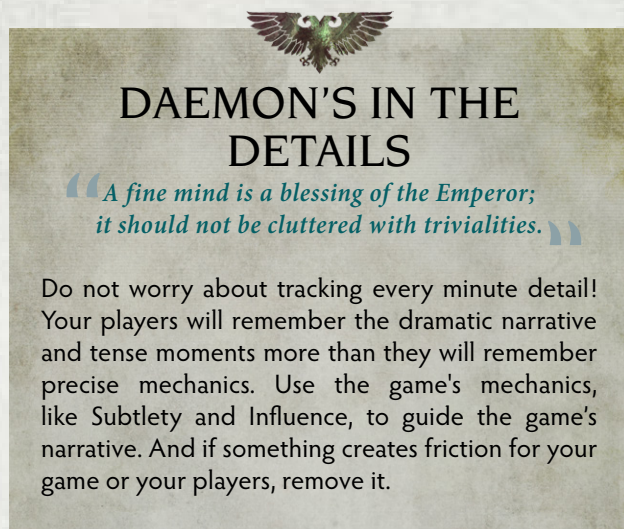
However, creating such an open sandbox sometimes leads players and their characters to get lost or pursue clues that are deliberate red herrings. The key to getting them back on track is rarely to tell them what they did was wrong — instead, it is to reward them for the avenues they have pursued and then show them what the campaign's prime antagonist has been doing in their absence. You can use this tactic as a GM if your players feel like they need a break from the larger narrative or if you need time for your antagonists to achieve something in the background.

You can use similar tactics when branching your narrative, giving players a choice of multiple missions to pursue or clues leading to different avenues of investigation or locations. But time is always of the essence. If they pursue one mission while ignoring the other, what happens due to their choices or neglect? Does it mean they gain something from succeeding in one mission, whereas their enemy gains ground elsewhere? There should be a balance, or the choices you put before them will feel unfair. Any narratives that branch outwards should come back around — they find more clues or information that lead back towards the primary threat or narrative.



RUNNING INVESTIGATIONS

Given the investigation-heavy nature of many Inquisition games in **Imperium Maledictum**, a GM must consider specific aspects of their story. Giving thought to these in advance will help you run an immersive and seamless game that is not plagued by unintentionally misleading clues, inadvertent investigative dead-ends, or having the story derailed by the unexpected use of a character's Equipment or Psychic Powers.



CLUES

Clues are pieces of information or physical objects that players discover during play, allowing them to advance the story. They may present as weapons, a bloodstain, an article of clothing, or even statements made by NPCs or entries in a personal journal. Regardless, clues should rarely remain hidden from the characters; their true meaning should be obscured. All clues must fulfil two conditions to be useful — they must be relevant to the story, and coherent.

Being relevant is self-explanatory. An irrelevant clue will not help advance the story and may simply stall it. This does not mean a clue's relevance must be immediately apparent. For instance, the importance of a bloody footprint in a corridor may only become evident when the characters discover a gruesome murder nearby. This is not to discount clues intended to be deliberate red herrings, but even these must be designed so their misleading nature eventually becomes clear. An oily footprint, for example, has no immediately apparent relationship to a murder. It is ambiguous and may waste game time unless you remove the ambiguity and demonstrate its relevance by having the players discover a clear link between it and the murder.

This is not to say that clues cannot be deliberately misleading. Such red herrings can certainly heighten tension in a game, but they should be used sparingly. Moreover, the players should be able to determine their misleading nature quickly. To do otherwise risks frustrating the players, needlessly slowing the game down and lessening their engagement.

Where you place a clue also matters, as is how it is presented. In general, rarely hide a clue from the players, especially one that begins a thread to more definitive ones. What is more critical is obscuring the meaning behind the clue — do not hide a bloodstain, but obscure the meaning of it. Give the players something to chew on. Oddities like this should stand out against the background of the scene, or revealed on a relatively easy or opportune search.

A clue is coherent if it flows logically from what came before it and points the players to what comes after it. For instance, a bloody footprint could point the players towards the footwear of various suspect NPCs. This could lead the players to examine that footwear, finding another clue: a boot with a distinctly matching print. That could then, in turn, lead the players towards a suspect or even to another clue — perhaps information indicating that the boot's owner has not worn that pair in months. Suggesting that the suspect is being set up could open a whole new line of investigation for the players.

As an aid to developing good clues, you can consider working backwards. For instance, if you know where you want the players to get at the end of a particular beat, you can design clues in that beat and the preceding ones to lead them there. And do not forget the three things commonly taken to prove a suspect guilty of a crime — means, motive and opportunity. Designing clues that will assist in revealing those aspects (and clues that point at those clues) will ensure that clues are relevant and coherent.

Note that some clues may require forensic or deeper analysis. If the characters do not have the means, this is an opportunity to engage other Factions related to the investigation or locale. For instance, an NPC from the Adeptus Administratum may be able to verify the authenticity of some paperwork — if the characters have or can gain the Influence to arrange it. Furthermore, offering the characters more than one clue at a time is often interesting, creating branching paths in the investigation. A selection of clues can be solved at different times, always giving the players a thread to follow if they believe they have come to a dead end.

TESTS

*Tests are described in detail in **Chapter VII: Rules (Imperium Maledictum, page 185)**. Make sure you are familiar with those rules before you continue!*

Tests may be required if the characters undertake actions during their investigation that transcend what would reasonably be basic knowledge and understanding. For instance, simply finding a bloodstain on a bulkhead does not require a Test, but discerning the significance of its spatter pattern does. You must balance using Tests against the need to keep the story moving and the players engaged. Too many Tests are time-consuming, and too few renders the players choice of Skills and Talents irrelevant.

You must also decide what to do about failure. If the PCs can fail a Test to identify the meaning or message of a cryptic sigil scrawled on a bulkhead, that information should never be so critical to advancing the plot that it brings your story to an absolute halt. In that case, what is your 'fallback'? To continue this example:

- ☠ The PCs could find someone (an NPC or Contact) to analyse the sigil definitively (thereby taking more time or incurring a debt).
- ☠ The PCs could search for more instances of the cryptic sigil (or similar) in the area, leading them to other potentially connected locations (thereby taking more time or forcing them to explore dangerous parts of the world).
- ☠ Alternatively, the PCs could uncover another clue in the vicinity that points in a similar direction (thereby delaying the revelation of the sigil's meaning until later but letting them continue their investigation).

Similar consideration should be given to the degree of success expressed by the Test's Success Level (SL). For instance, if the characters achieve an Astounding Success in the Test to identify the sigil, is there additional information that you could impart to them about it? They could discern the sigil's meaning at the base level of success. But with greater success, they could identify the cult that wrote the sigil and, even more so, learn what Chaotic deity they align themselves with.

For this reason — dealing with failure or unanticipated success — you should, as much as possible, plan the Tests that the PCs will have to conduct during their investigation. Especially take into consideration the concept of 'failing foward'. There is nothing worse for the players' investigation and investment in the story than a dead end. How can your players continue their investigations, analyse clues and track down suspects when they fail a critical Test? The answer should allow them to continue pursuing their threads but with more obstacles — they should still be able to succeed, but must work at it to do so.

For example, when setting up a bloodstain clue, you could determine that a Test to identify the species will use the *Medicae* Skill with the *Human* Specialisation and that the PC performing it will gain Advantage if they have the *Pathologist* Talent or use a *Diagnostor*. Having set the parameters for the Test, if PCs fail, they will still be able to obtain a sample that can be reliably analysed by an unhelpful NPC surgeon, costing them some time. An Impressive or Astounding Success in the Test will reveal not just the species but other traits related to the individual. By establishing this beforehand, you will be ready to deal with the Test and its outcome when it comes up in play.



PASSIVE TESTS

As an alternative to Tests, you can employ 'Passive' Tests. These forego the normal procedure for making a Test entirely. Instead, you can determine that some clues can simply be provided to a player if they have particular Skills, Talents, or Equipment. This provides a distinction between a PC with no relevant experience or training in a subject and one who does have it, without requiring a Test.

For example, say your characters are examining the scene of a battle between Gangers and Cultists in the lower levels of Hive Rokarth, trying to discern how events played out. If one of the characters has the *Awareness*, *Intuition*, or *Logic Skill* or the *Combat Master Talent*, then instead of making a Test, you may simply rule the character can reasonably reconstruct the events of the battle without a regular Test.

The advantage of such 'Passive Tests' is that it can reliably provide the players with information that will help advance the story. This is useful for story-critical information, meaning you do not have to worry about the consequences of a failed Test. It still allows that player or character to shine, showcasing their hard-won skills and knowledge.

Using a Passive Test does not preclude a subsequent regular Test. The combat-savvy character in the above example may be able to unravel the progression of the battle, but they may have to make a regular Test to identify the specific weapons involved.



DOWNTIME PONDERINGS

Litanies of Recollection, (*Inquisition Player's Guide*, page 131) is a group or individual Endeavour that characters may undertake between missions. The party, or the character, may use discussion, meditation, and reflection to consider what they have learned so far in the course of an investigation.

This may allow them to realise that they have missed important clues, see connections between clues that may not have been obvious, or otherwise 'remember' information that will assist in moving their investigation — and the story — forward. You could also consider allowing the characters to spend Fate during a session to realise that they missed something.

The sort of Test this may involve, or whether it involves a Test at all, is up to you. In the absence of a Test, you may simply wish to give the players an important clue they missed, reasoning that their extended period of quiet, contemplative reflection and discussion caused them to realise it.

A Passive Test, as described above, is another way of giving the players the information they are missing. This is a good way of dealing with missed or misunderstood clues, with the trade-off being that the characters are not able to undertake other Endeavours while engaged in the *Litanies of Recollection*.

Alternatively, you may wish to use the opportunity provided by the *Litanies of Recollection* to provide the players with new insights and revelations based on the information they already have. This is a good time to use an Extended Test (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 190). Successes accrued during each attempt provide a small piece of useful information, with a major revelation if the characters succeed overall. These successes could result in the characters having Advantage in subsequent Tests related to clues when they resume their investigation.

TECHNOLOGY

Technology can greatly aid in the conduct of an investigation. The usefulness of some types of technology is obvious — for instance, an Auspex would be helpful in locating a hidden recording device by detecting its emissions, while an Excruciator Kit could help compel testimony from an unwilling prisoner.

However, you should remain open to innovative uses of technology possessed by the characters. For instance, a character may propose using a vox bead as a temporary impromptu bug to listen in on a meeting between leaders of Infractionist gangs, a Chirurgeon's Kit to assist in determining if a dead body has been surgically altered, or a Diagnostor to help to identify blood and tissue samples. While such uses might technically fall outside a strict reading of these items as described in *Imperium Maledictum* (particularly the Tools section, page 145), they likely do fall within a reasonable envelope of capability for them. However, such unusual uses may require difficult Tech Tests, and may even be seen as blasphemy by some purists from, for instance, the Adeptus Mechanicus.

The investigative nature of Inquisition games also means that some sorts of often overlooked technology may be extremely useful. For instance, assume the characters diligently use a Pict Recorder and a Dataslate to record their ongoing investigations. You may wish to give Advantage on some subsequent Tests, grant Superiority, or even offer some benefit to *Litanies of Recollection*, any action that would benefit from having detailed and objective information collected earlier.

The Emperor's Tarot (and any similar sort of instrument of divination) is another useful way of imparting important information to the players, but it should be a more indirect sort of insight, given its mystical and prophetic nature. For instance, the Emperor's Tarot may not point directly at an incriminating document secreted in the files of an Adeptus Administratum NPC known to the characters. It may, however, offer a glimpse of endless rows of stacked documents being ceaselessly sorted by dour, blank-faced figures. Such a portent should be enough to get the characters at least considering their Contacts in the Adeptus Administratum for a closer look!

PSYCHIC POWERS

Psychic powers are detailed in Chapter VI: Psychic Powers (Imperium Maledictum, page 158).

The Inquisition has a complicated relationship with psychic powers. On the one hand, psykers represent a profound, even existential threat of the very sort that the Inquisition — and particularly the Ordo Hereticus — seeks to expunge from the Imperium, or at least strictly contain them by aiding the Adeptus Astra Telepathica. On the other hand, psykers can be a powerful addition to an Inquisitor's retinue, both to wield psychic might offensively and to defend against the psychic powers of their enemies. Assuming that one of the characters or an NPC cooperating with them is a psyker, the question of using psychic powers to further an investigation will inevitably arise.



Setting aside the myriad and complex issues around the legitimate use of psychic powers and their ramifications, such powers can be helpful as an investigative tool. You should allow the characters to employ their powers as they see fit — again, of course, being mindful of the potential consequences of using them, but of potentially being seen to be using them. Again, setting those matters aside, how much information should the characters be able to derive from psychic investigation?

Some powers have obvious applications to investigation. For example, *Preternatural Senses*, *Psychic Scrutiny* and *Soulsight* can all assist in gaining information about and locating clues at a crime scene, while *Spectral Hands* may assist in retrieving clues from otherwise inaccessible locations. *Mental Interrogation* can pry critical information from a suspect. Various powers of Divination, such as *Question the Warp* and *Psychometry*, can help the characters unravel what may have happened and the motivations of those involved.

The players themselves, though, may come up with innovative uses for Psychic Powers to assist them. For example, a character may use *Dull Pain* or *Seal Wounds* to ease the injuries of a wounded enemy in an attempt to make them more willing to reveal information — this could take the form of Temporary Influence (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 195). You should remain open to such novel uses of Psychic Powers.

Generally, you should view the characters' use of Psychic Powers as another useful way of providing them with information and clues. To that end, when creating a story, you should try to anticipate when the characters are likely to attempt to use Psychic Powers and prepare accordingly. And, if the characters begin to rely on them too much, the rules for Psychic Powers offer built-in limiters, such as accumulating Warp Charges, manifesting Psychic Phenomena, and triggering Perils of the Warp. Even if these things do not themselves result in disasters, they can attract unwanted attention to the characters and make their investigations more difficult!

EXPERT ASSISTANCE

There are several ways that the players may engage with expert assistance during the course of a game. The most obvious is taking advantage of their Contacts (page 122), either by making use of their Patron's Influence with that Contact's Faction, or their own Personal Influence (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 193), potentially boosted by Temporary Influence in the form of bribes or blackmail. Clever players may make note of potentially incriminating evidence of wrongdoing uncovered during the course of an investigation, but instead of simply bringing the miscreant to justice, they may hold onto that sinister knowledge to use as Temporary Influence later.

If the players do so, you should consider the sort of information that these Contacts might reveal. Even if the characters have considerable Influence with a Faction, members of that Faction are unlikely to undermine their own interests. For instance, if an officer of the Astra Militarum is involved in a profitable conspiracy to skim tithes from an Imperial world, then that officer is unlikely to assist the characters in uncovering that same conspiracy, no matter how much Influence they bring to bear — unless, of course, they can otherwise convince that officer it would be worth their while!



Not all expert assistance will necessarily come from using Influence with Faction Contacts, however. You may decide to simply make expert assistance available, if it would help advance the story. For example, in order to provide the characters with forensic expertise they do not have, you could simply stipulate that their Patron's retinue includes an NPC retainer with that expertise. This could allow the characters to focus on finding the clues, such as the evidence itself, that will advance their investigation — the exciting part — rather than spending time and effort finding some way to analyse the samples — a likely less-exciting prospect.

SUPERIORITY

Superiority is a resource which can fundamentally reshape a battle or encounter (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 196). It can be used to increase the SL on a single Test during a turn of combat, and is also compared with NPC Resolve to determine if those NPCs become Desperate.

Of the three ways given in *Imperium Maledictum* to gain Superiority, the results of an Inquisitorial investigation most obviously apply to two — Know Thy Foe and Know Thy Battlefield. In the case of Know Thy Foe, clues uncovered during the investigation may reveal critical weaknesses that can be exploited. For example, assume the characters find evidence of nothing but strikes by melee weapons at the scene of a suspected massacre perpetrated by a Drukhari raiding party. They may be able to infer from this that the Drukhari in question either do not have, or preferentially do not use ranged weapons in combat. If the players specifically draw that conclusion, then you should consider giving them +1 Superiority with respect to those Drukhari.

Similarly, suppose the characters discover a blood trail they believe to be left by an injured cultist fleeing into a safehouse somewhere in the lower levels of Hive Rokarth. In that case, they may be able to discern a likely destination. They could then use this information to learn more about the location from residents of the lower hive or Vigilites who have patrolled the area. Again, if the players make this connection, it would be reasonable to give them +1 Superiority for undertaking such forward-thinking preparations.

Note, however, that you should only grant Superiority if the characters draw a suitable conclusion from the results of their investigation. In the second example above, if the characters find the blood trail but do nothing but simply follow it, then a Superiority bonus

would not be justified. It is not sufficient to merely find clues to gain Superiority — the players must take the next step, using those clues as the basis for inferences that would warrant a Superiority award.

When you are preparing your story and designing your clues, it is a good idea to make notes of what sorts of conclusions drawn from them that would prompt you to give a Superiority award. This is not to suggest this would be exhaustive — the players may come up with other conclusions that are just as worthy and you should remain open to them. However, it is another way of saving time during play, while also making it less likely that you will miss an opportunity for the players to earn Superiority.

SUBTLETY

Chapter VII of the *Inquisition Player's Guide* (page 116) introduces the Subtlety mechanic to *Imperium Maledictum*. This optional ruleset provides a framework for GMs and players to dynamically adjust the world and characters in response to how covertly or overtly the players approach objectives. On the surface, it is an excellent tool for players to judge how well their characters and decisions perform and gain a small reward. But on a deeper level, it will enable you, the GM, to do the same.

The rules contained in the *Inquisition Player's Guide* outline the mechanics for players and GMs alike; consider the following advice:

- When using Subtlety, you secretly track the party's actual rating. The party has to spend time in or around their mission to figure out (and not always successfully) what their Subtlety rating is every time they want an update. Make it clear to them they should do this occasionally, as part of their duty as a covert agent is to know where they stand with their assets.
- The party may not be aware of everything affecting their Subtlety. Like gauging Subtlety, in some instances, they will have to put time and effort into figuring out what could be affecting their rating. This also allows you to introduce these aspects to your story (especially if the players missed earlier threads or threats against them).
- Consider introducing narrative elements in the world when their Subtlety Levels change (such as from *Suspicious* to *Overt*). Do NPCs react to them differently? Do they quickly hear rumours of people searching for them, or perhaps an enemy has detected them and goes deeper into hiding?

SIGNS OF CHAOS

‘Witch-marks’ and ‘Marks of Chaos’ are a generic term for things that reveal, or at least hint at, heretical actions on the part of the bearer (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 344). The most obvious are the horrific mutations of Chaos, but there are other types of marks. They may be literal marks, such as tattoos, brands, or similar things inscribed into a heretic’s flesh. Marks of Heresy can also include items worn on the person, such as jewellery or clothing, items of xenos technology, or even implants and augmetics.

Regardless of their nature, to be useful as clues in an investigation or for other game purposes, marks must be distinctive. This does not mean they have to be obvious, of course — a distinctive tattoo could be concealed beneath clothing, or surrounded by other tattoos to obscure it to anyone who does not know to specifically look for it. They do, however, have to be distinct enough to be meaningful to the players once they observe the mark in question.

That distinction may be evident from the game’s lore — for instance, three circles arranged in a triangle is well-known as a Mark of Nurgle. The distinction may also become evident during the course of the game. For example, a brand depicting a hand inscribed in a hexagon may be cryptic at first, but when the players discover this is the mark of the blasphemous cult they are seeking, it will then become distinctive for them.



When you design something intended to be a Mark of Heresy, make sure the players will recognise it or will learn about its significance soon after discovering it. Also, be wary of ‘unintended’ Marks. If you establish that surreptitious cybernetic implants are the Mark of an insidious T’au conspiracy, then be wary of throwing in a ‘casual’ implant. It should either be relevant to the investigation of the conspiracy or deliberately crafted as a red herring. Otherwise, you may send your players on an unintentional diversion from your story.

As always, it is a good idea to establish what constitutes Marks of Heresy in your game when you are crafting them, and plan for their introduction at appropriate points in your story. Identifying a mark requires a **Lore (Forbidden Knowledge)** Test. But, characters could also use *Linguistics (Cypher)* or (*Forbidden*) if the mark in question has language-based affectations, or even *Awareness (Sight)* if the mark draws in larger aspects, such as hidden within architecture or particular engineering. See **Chapter IV: Radical Methods** (page 74) for further guidance.

MARKS OF CHAOS

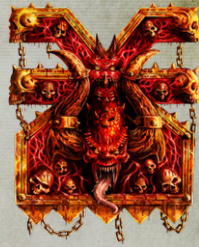
Each of the four Chaos Gods is represented by a distinctive mark, a unique glyph whose origins and peculiarities of design are entirely cryptic. A fifth Mark, a glyph representing the undivided ideology of Chaos itself, also exists — the form of an eight-pointed star, thought to represent Chaos’s many paths and possibilities. Given the endlessly jealous acrimony among the Chaos Gods, this Mark is profoundly rare and extremely powerful, as it combines the effects of all four of the other Marks (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 344). You should reserve this particular Mark for extraordinary and particularly powerful villains!

The other form of Chaos ‘Marks’ are the myriad physical, mental, and spiritual mutations inflicted on mortals by its perverse, reality-twisting nature. Since mutations are determined randomly, some will be subtle and easy to conceal, while others will be grossly obvious. This fits with the mercurial nature of Chaos. Tzeentch, for instance, may see fit to bless a heretical adherent with a mutation that will be easy to conceal, allowing them to continue their insidious blasphemy without being detected. However, Tzeentch may likewise twist another heretic into a malformed horror, causing them to be immediately discovered. The schemes of Tzeentch are woven into supremely complex tapestries, however, so it may suit some subtle plot for this particular mortal to be revealed — and probably put immediately to death. The mind and purposes of a Chaos God such as Tzeentch are, after all, unknowable things!

The following sections present some of the more common visual aspects and domains of the Chaos Gods you can use in crafting your adventure's clues. Pay particular attention to each God's sacred numbers — the dark gods and their followers often arrange elements of their marks, organisation, and iconography after these numbers, whether consciously or otherwise.

KHORNE CLUES

Blood for the Blood God, Skulls for the Skull Throne. The Lord of Battles, the Great Butcher. He is the patron of warriors, conflict, hatred, and bloodshed. His influence can be found on battlefields, gladiatorial arenas, and bloody murder scenes.



- ☠ Khorne's sacred number is 8
- ☠ Skulls and severed heads, often marked with further sigils
- ☠ Blood sacrifice, bloodletting, blood-painted sigils
- ☠ Depictions or use of bladed weapons, particularly swords and axes
- ☠ Gates as per the teeth of his icon
- ☠ General use of brass or black iron

NURGLE CLUES

Grandfather of plagues and pestilence. He is the patron of despair, decay, and disease. His influence can be found festering in the bowels of Humanity, particularly among the sick and ailing. He spreads supernatural maladies, daemonic parasites, and disfiguring mutations.



- ☠ Nurgle's sacred number is 7
- ☠ His marks can often manifest within the symptoms of disease or illness
- ☠ Tri-lobed designs; particularly bloated spheres arranged in a distorted triangle
- ☠ Insects: mainly flies, worms and grubs
- ☠ Often accompanied by bile, pus, or other sickly fluids.
- ☠ Appears in verdigrised bronze or rusting steel

In addition to the **Mutations and Malignancies** Tables in *Imperium Maledictum* (pages 222–223), you can use the following **Marks of Chaos** Table to 'offer' an even greater array of horrific malformations to your NPCs — and, if they earn them, the players' characters.

SLAANESH CLUES

Dark Prince of excess and pleasure. He is the patron of desire, obsession, and debasement. His influence can be found among noble courts or wherever inequality presents masters and servants. He spreads greed like a plague, amplifying the desires of the few to subjugate the needs of the many.



- ☠ Slaanesh's sacred number is 6
- ☠ The symbol often appears directly as so but can manifest in any living material as mutation, such as a pattern of iridescent scales, a knot of pumping veins, or pupils twisted into a new shape
- ☠ Garish colours and contrasting materials, a balance of ostentatiousness and foulness, meant to stand out
- ☠ The brand often represents the Dark Prince's ownership
- ☠ Often surrounded by excess or acts of vanity

TZEENTCH CLUES

Changer of Ways and Architect of Fate. He is the patron of sorcery, trickery, and mutation. His influence can be found wherever knowledge gathers or where the longing for change manifests. He operates through esoteric prophecy and the spreading of secrets.



- ☠ Tzeentch's sacred number is 9
- ☠ Forms of stylised staring eyes, or even methods of surveillance
- ☠ Serpentine Curves, often barbed
- ☠ Many Marks draw on ever-changing aspects: the flow of fire, chemicals, or light
- ☠ Often draws on aspects of cryptonumeracy and numerology
- ☠ Appears in silver or liquid metals

MARKS OF CHAOS

d100	EFFECT
01-05	Beak: The flesh around your mouth twists and hardens into an avian beak. You have –10 Fellowship, but your Unarmed Attacks lose the <i>Ineffective</i> Trait and gain the <i>Rend (1)</i> Trait instead.
06-10	Bizarre Colouration: Patches of your skin take on strange hues, such as bright green, deep blue, or lurid purple, in random locations.
11-15	Bone Spikes: Your skeleton extrudes hard, bony spikes that protrude through your elbows and knees. Although they do not interfere with your movement, your clothing and armour must be altered to accommodate them or else you have Disadvantage on all Athletics Tests. They are fearsome weapons. Your Unarmed Attacks deal 2 + StrB Damage and lose the <i>Ineffective</i> Trait, as long as the spikes are fully exposed.
16-20	Chaos Organ: An unnatural, throbbing cyst bulges from your neck. You have –10 Fellowship, but the vile organ empowers you, granting you +10 Toughness.
21-25	Cloud of Flies: You are constantly surrounded by a swarm of buzzing flies. You have –5 Fellowship, but you do not have Disadvantage in melee combat even if you are not wielding a melee weapon or shield.
26-30	Cloven Hooves: Your feet transform into hardened stubs that become cloven hooves. You have –1 SL to all Tests for Climbing, or any that would otherwise benefit from actual feet. However, treat any kicks you make in melee combat as if you are wielding a Hammer. You cannot wear normal Leg Armour unless it is specially made for you.
31-35	Crown of Flesh: A ring of fleshy protuberances forms around your head. These may simply be amorphous polyps, but they can also include fingers, toes, tongues, or small tentacles.
36-40	Evil Eye: One of your eyes glitters with malignance. It may be multifaceted like an insects, contain two constantly warring pupils, or be a constantly roiling pearlescent crimson. When the eye is visible, you suffer –1 SL to Fellowship Tests, but gain +10 to Presence (Intimidation) Tests.
41-45	Featureless Face: Your face becomes a smooth, featureless mask of blank skin. Somehow, you can still see, smell, and speak normally. You suffer –2 SL on Fellowship Tests if people can see your face, but you are not affected by any injuries to your eyes, nose, or mouth. You no longer need to eat or drink.
46-50	Pincer: One of your hands and forearms hardens and splits into a crab-like pincer claw. It can hold items, but you have Disadvantage on any Tests that require finer or more complex manipulation with that hand. Your Unarmed Attacks with that hand deal 4 + SL Damage, lose the <i>Ineffective</i> Trait, and gain the <i>Penetrating (2)</i> Trait instead.
51-55	Prehensile Tail: You sprout a sinuous, prehensile tail from the base of your spine. You have –10 Fellowship if your tail is visible. However, while it is free to move, it functions as an extra arm (sans fingers) and gives you +1 SL on all Unarmed Attacks.
56-60	Radiant Skin: Your flesh radiates a soft, diffuse and strangely alluring glow. You have –1 SL on all Stealth (Hide) Tests.
61-65	Serpent's Tongue: Your tongue becomes long, sinuous, and forked. You have –1 SL to any Test that involves you speaking. However, you have +1 SL to any Awareness (Smell) Tests.
66-70	Snout: Your nose deforms into a gnarled, pig-like snout. While you have –5 Fellowship, you have Advantage on all Awareness (Smell) Tests.
71-75	Tentacle Fingers: Your fingers soften into pliant, writhing tentacles. While this does not affect the primary uses of your hands, you have –1 SL on all Dexterity Tests. You also have advantage on any Grappling Tests or Tests that might cause you to become disarmed.
76-80	Trails of Slime: You leave a trail of slimy footprints regardless of your footwear. Anyone seeking to track you by your footprints has Advantage on any related Test.
81-85	Transparent Skin: Portions of your skin have become translucent, revealing the tissue and organs beneath.
86-90	Unnatural Appetite: You have an unnatural compulsion to eat one particular type of disgustingly inedible 'food' such as spiders, flies, vermin, or mould. At the beginning of each day, you are <i>Poisoned (Minor)</i> until you can consume a serving of your chosen 'food' item. You thereafter have –1 SL in all Fellowship Tests with anyone who witnesses this repulsive spectacle.
91-95	Warty Skin: Much of your body is covered with large, hairy warts. You gain +1 Armour on all locations.
96-100	Weeping Sores: You are afflicted with weeping sores on your body. At least one will always be in an obvious location, such as on your face or the back of your hand. Medicae Tests made to heal you suffer a –1 SL penalty.

SIGNS OF XENOS

Marks of Heresy reflect the influence of xenos in many diverse ways. They generally reflect the character of the xenos species in question but otherwise represent a collection of physical marks on the body, augments, implants and other biochemical changes, and illicit weapons and other technology. The following Marks do not present an exhaustive list. You can certainly use them in your own games, but you could also use them as inspiration for xenos Marks that better suit your needs.

AELDARI

The Imperium knows very little about the Aeldari other than what the Ordo Xenos has gathered at great expense or through opportune interrogations. From their point of view, the Aeldari remain essentially unknowable aliens, capable of enacting capricious plots and, therefore, not to be trusted. Even their presence in the Macharian Sector is unknown — unlike the more straightforward enemy their Drukhari brethren present, who raid and pirate within Imperial space.

Aeldari trade their goods and services with Humanity only where it benefits them. While they act as invaluable contacts or mercenaries, especially when exploring the unknown parts of the sector, anything traded in their favour is another small foothold against the Imperium. Do not forget that they look down upon Humanity as a lesser species; some foresee an end for Humanity that mirrors the destruction of their own kind, a succumbing to the Ruinous Powers. Some Aeldari fear this, not for the pity of Humanity's end, but for the resulting galaxy-wide destruction that could swallow up the rest of their kind.



DRUKHARI

To the twisted, cruel Drukhari, Humans are simply another type of potential captive — or victim. Exploiting the strange netherworld realm known as the Webway, their incursions are usually focused on causing painful bloodshed and taking prisoners to fates that can be literally worse than death. Drukhari collaborators help facilitate these interdimensional raids and cover up their aftermath, paving the way for further raids.

Drukhari collaborators are most likely unwilling in the role, but if the alternative is agonising death or worse, then the heresy of collaboration may seem the lesser of evils. If the Drukhari choose to mark their reluctant confederates, it will invariably be in a painful way — brands and amputations are common. Likewise, Drukhari may provide potent drugs to their 'allies', granting them temporary, superhuman abilities. But the cost is predictably terrible, as these drugs are designed for Drukhari physiology and are likely to inflict crippling addiction and other side effects on Humans.

THE LEAGUES OF VOTANN

The Kin of the Leagues of Votann are often known to the Imperium by the somewhat pejorative term 'Squats', and many believe their classification varies between abhuman and true xenos. As such, they are often mistaken for harmless citizens of the Imperium, but acolytes of the Inquisition should always err on the side of classifying the kin as outright xenos. Their culture represents as much of an existential threat to the Imperium as any other xenos culture — their supposedly superior technology is clearly outside the God-Emperor's and Omnissiah's sanction, especially the rumoured living machines that co-exist with them.

To the Inquisition, the exact scale of empire the Leagues of Votann represent is yet to be fully understood. They have only recorded encounters with minor scouting and prospecting fleets at the edges of the Imperium. However, some League representatives are smart enough to avoid Inquisition detection. Some are eager to accept mercenary and simple trade contracts with representatives of the Imperium as a practical means to garner wealth and, more insidiously, intelligence on Imperial assets.

NECRONS

A soulless machine species that despises all living things, the Necrons are unlikely to willingly deal with Human collaborators. To the extent that they will do anything but attempt to destroy life that gets in their way, they may at least initially attempt some infiltration. Awakening a tomb world and preparing it for battle takes time, and any information gained in the meantime could be useful to ensure victory.

When Necrons seek to control an enemy species, they use strange implants or devices known as 'mindshackle scarabs' to override and influence people's behaviours. Their stiff, stilted manner might trigger an acolyte's suspicion, with the revelation of implanted tech confirming their altered nature. Perhaps more dangerous is the very allure of their mysterious technology, drawing the attention of hereteks and those susceptible to tech-heresy. These heretics toy with powers beyond their comprehension, unaware or ignorant of the collateral damage their experiments are sure to produce.

T'AU EMPIRE

T'au infiltration into the Imperium is not uncommon. Dedicated to pursuing their foul 'greater good', T'au leaders often try to recruit spies and other agents among the native population of a planet or system they seek to add to their Empire. Swayed by gifts of advanced technology and possibly promised great power under a new T'au regime, such confederates may provide their T'au handlers with information, or even engage in acts of sabotage. The point, of course, is to pave the way for a subsequent T'au incursion, or even an outright invasion of Humanity's space.

The most likely Marks indicative of a T'au intrusion into the Imperium is suspiciously advanced tech in the hands of Imperial citizens. Sophisticated scanners and recording devices used for spying, clandestine communications gear, and characteristic T'au pulse weapons are all possible things to implicate someone in collaboration with the T'au. Regarding behaviour, watch for talk about their 'greater good' or any vast open-mindedness on display. Inquisition reports suggest that the T'au Ethereal caste has been experimenting with broadening pheromone-based control to afflict other species, including Humans.

ORKS

Orks are rarely interested in other species' cultures, generally preferring a good punch-up over subtle or insidious infiltration that other species may attempt. However, some Warbosses enjoy scheming, so they may infiltrate Human settlements to seek targets and resources. They are scavengers — signs of their presence often result in effigies made of scrap, various gubbins welded or bolted on, miscellaneous glyphs, and brutish sigils otherwise painted or scratched into the original item.

TYRANIDS

Tyrannids are ravening, existential horrors that exist solely to consume. Within the Imperium, a subset of heretics worships these monsters, working within targeted worlds to pave the way for a subsequent invasion by a Tyranid Hive Fleet. These so-called Genestealer Cults insert themselves into the doomed society, sowing chaos and spreading the gospels of false xenos gods. If they successfully establish a firm foothold, then their psychic emanations aim to draw the nearest hive fleet to consume the world, cultists and all.

Genestealer Cults are profoundly secret societies. Their highest ranking members are often vile hybrids of Human and xenos genetics. They seek to exploit Human fears, desires, and other weaknesses to draw adherents to their ranks. Hybrid cultists are generally obvious, so tend to remain out of sight, but later generations may appear Human enough to remain undetected by the naked eye.



GENESTEALER CULT SYMBOLOGY

Like Chaos cults, Genestealer Cults work with an established pattern in their symbology and cyphers. (See also, the Genestealer Mutation heretical mark, *Imperium Maledictum*, page 344).

- Most cults have their own variant of the coiling, insecto-serpentine glyph known as the wyrm-form.
- This wyrm-form can be expressed in hidden tattoos or graffiti to mark territories or send warnings to other cultists.
- Talismanic variants of the wyrm-form icon can appear in modified weaponry, even in functional aspects, the curve sharpened into a blade.
- As cults rise in an area, they will brazenly deface Imperial iconography with their own. This can be a sign that their uprising is soon to begin.



ROLEPLAYING INQUISITORS

Inquisitors see the Imperium from an incomparable vantage, burdened with unique scope, power, and freedom of thought. Their duty is to no system, sector, or segmentum, but to the God-Emperor's domain as a whole. They serve no master save Him on Terra. Their freedom to interpret their duty places them beyond the hold of the Lex Imperialis and Imperial Creed, holding doubts and philosophies that any ordinary citizen would be condemned for. These few souls, who know the true breadth of horrors that threaten to choke the Imperium, bear a duty to become horrors themselves, for in the salvation of the Imperium, there is no deed beyond their limits, no cost counted in Human lives that is deemed too high. Billions of souls have been condemned on the orders of the Inquisition, for innocence is never enough for a soul to be spared.

In their scope and jurisdiction, the only souls of equal standing to an Inquisitor are others of their creed. Inquisitors primarily work alone, typically only coming together to face the direst threats. To the citizens of the Imperium, Inquisitors are so far removed from their everyday lives that they are made near-mythic through their distance and holy duties — terrors lurking in the darkness to some, little more than tall tales to most. Inquisitors act with the full sanction and authority of the God-Emperor; they are His eyes in the darkest corners of the Imperium and His instrument of justice and punishment. To the people of Kallastin, a world that felt the sting of their presence in the Macharian Heresy, Inquisitors are remembered as the lurking death of the apostate, the God-Emperor's wrath and tyranny manifest.

This chapter provides advice and inspiration for GMs portraying Inquisitor Patrons in their games. How to build their mythology and relationships with their acolyte characters and portray them as the utterly terrifying and world-shaking characters they truly are. Additionally, there is mechanical advice about setting up briefings and debriefings with your players' characters, how they should be treated in moments of loyalty and betrayal, and how GMs and players alike should handle the Inquisitor's Rosette as a defining piece of equipment.



MACHARIAN INQUISITORS

Pages 62–73 contain a roster of sample Inquisitor Patrons, who are also the leading personalities of **Chapter V: The Heresies Macharia** (page 84). These can be used as pre-made Patrons during character creation or as allied or opposed characters in your campaigns. Take note of their secrets, but do not share them with your players. Note each one's **Future Boons & Liabilities** Table, which suggests additional upgrades and downgrades that can affect players and Patrons alike when they reach story milestones.



DUTY & AMBITION

Inquisitors are individualistic people with powerful personalities that defy true categorisation. Those who share the same Ordo should not be painted with the same broad brush. Two major and often opposing principles guide an Inquisitor's motivations. First, the duties demanded of them by the Holy Orders. Second, by the ambition of their philosophy. Through these principles combined, each Inquisitor forms their definitive and personal understanding of how best to serve and preserve the Imperium.

The Inquisitor's Ordo defines their principal area of investigation — what each Inquisitor is actively searching for. However, this is often simply a starting point. If an Ordo Hereticus Inquisitor is investigating a Chaos-worshipping cult revealed to be under the influence of xenos corruption, they must still purge this cult. They cannot simply hand the investigation over to an Ordo Xenos Inquisitor and move on just because the threat does not match their Ordo's charge. They must tackle the threat head-on, but they are more likely to reach out to Ordo Xenos operatives for advice and support.

Their philosophical faction will influence their methods and desired outcomes — but not so far as to conflict with their ultimate duty of serving and protecting the Imperium. Puritans may demand their acolytes publicly uphold their faith during operations, while Radicals often hide behind masks of false Puritan philosophies to continue their ancillary works undisturbed. Characters serving an Amalathian Inquisitor (page 16) might be instructed to strike down any heretical collaborators within the Adeptus Terra they come upon or use them to root out further heresies. Meanwhile, those serving a Radical Xanthite Inquisitor (page 29) might be granted powerful Warp-tainted weaponry to purge their opposition effectively while simultaneously being expected to keep such technologies secret.

Consider how the aspects of Ordo and Philosophy are presented between yourself as the GM and your players characters. For characters, understanding their Ordo's duties should be relatively straightforward. Engaged in activities related to mission-specific objectives and what threats and situations they are likely to encounter. At the same time, their Patron's Philosophy should initially be shrouded in mystery, one gradually peeled away as missions occur and the Inquisitor grows to trust their acolytes.

PLANS WITHIN PLANS

Each Inquisitor has a range of agents and resources, some may operate with only a tight circle of agents and singular cells, while others might have hundreds or thousands of operatives at their disposal. Yet the time Inquisitors can spend with their various agents, especially in person, is often at a premium. Even if the Inquisitor had a direct hand in an acolyte's recruitment, they may rarely meet in person, receiving instead various missives or orders passed through their chain of command. They are more likely to be granted time with one of the Inquisitor's Interrogators or high-ranking members of their retinue.

The reason for this is straightforward: most Inquisitors are mired in hundreds of different heretical plots and investigations at any given time. Though any cell's mission is crucial to their plans, the characters are only one of possibly thousands of cells across the sector, each operating independently and often compartmentalised for years to decades at a time.

Meeting with their Inquisitor should often be a reverent moment. The characters are confronted with one of the sector's most powerful entities, someone thought to be imbued with the God-Emperor's will. They will never meet anyone more influential for the rest of their comparatively infinitesimal lives.

That said, if their Patron is physically present before them, it means the characters have often done something tremendously wrong or exceptionally right. They should feel the weight of this moment appropriately and ensure the Inquisitor's actions reflect their nigh-infinite power. If displeased, they may be punished before their comrades, or rewarded with authority and equipment that cannot be found outside the Inquisition.

How much an Inquisitor leads the characters' cell after that point is up to you as the GM. The Inquisitor's presence should only be maintained when the stakes are appropriately high. Characters should always feel on edge when around their Patron. They are powerful, influential, and ostensibly on the characters' side. Still, it is often only a matter of time before an Inquisitor's suspicions turn on their servants or, if pleased, the Inquisitor themselves become so radical or corrupt that the characters should grow suspicious of them.

OTHER CELLS & OPERATIVES

When an Inquisitor must ensure a mission succeeds, they can deploy more than one cell of acolytes to the same area. Other Inquisitorial acolytes operating nearby are neither a boon nor a liability to the characters; they are another narrative force you can include as the GM to add an extra twist to the story.

Competing cells may set the bar high, effectively at odds for the Inquisitor's favour; the Patron may see healthy competition as a means to drive the effectiveness of both teams. Rivalries are likely, and for players, it opens another avenue to their roleplay experience. On the other hand, the characters could be sent to clean up another cell's blunders, presenting mistakes the players' cell should avoid or other avenues for investigation they might have missed earlier.

For redundancy's sake, the other cell can also be a source of replacement characters should one of the players' characters die in the line of duty — which is never outside the realm of possibilities given the enemies the Inquisition regularly faces.

Characters might encounter a cell or acolytes of another Inquisitor. In most cases, they should be immediately wary of these other acolytes, being a group just as dangerous or more capable than themselves. It is rare for more than one Inquisitor to happen upon the same target of investigation; canny characters should take the initiative to figure out why they are here. The other cell might have different and conflicting goals or exploit the investigation to spy on the characters and, by extension, their Patron's organisation.

INFLUENCE

When your characters meet another Inquisitor or their acolytes in the field, you may give them their own level of Influence (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 192) to represent levels of trust and favours earned between cells or Patrons.

If you need a starting point, consider using the same value as the characters' Influence with the Inquisition or that Inquisitor's Ordo, representing what they might have heard about the characters' reputation. From there, Influence can degrade or improve independently as if the Inquisitor were their own Faction. But make it clear to your players that there is still a positive and negative link. Reaching an *Honoured* level of Influence with an Ordo Xenos Inquisitor could improve their standing with the Ordo as a whole, but the same goes for becoming *Vilified* or *Hunted*.

BETWEEN INQUISITORS

Inquisitors meeting in the field should be a significant moment in any campaign, akin to an unstoppable force meeting an immovable object. Even a meeting between cells can be a turning point in the narrative — will these new NPCs present themselves as an aid or hindrance to the characters? Given the Inquisition's penchant for deception, the characters may not know they have a powerful new opposition until it is too late.

Despite appearances, characters should be wary of this meeting of giants occurring; the Imperium and its heresies are so vast that encountering another Inquisitor's cell or Inquisitor themselves is often no mere coincidence. It could mean that both Inquisitors are after the same target or 'prize', which could result in some level of collaboration. But it is just as likely that Inquisitors stand at opposite ends of the Radical-Puritan spectrum or behind competing philosophies. As utterly intractable characters, neither Inquisitor would back down without bringing their influence to bear against the other — either the surmounting *threat* of violence or underhanded harm against the other. In this, they will need the aid of trusted acolytes to get their hands dirty and provide a modicum of plausible deniability.

These revolving philosophical struggles can be a campaign's backdrop or central point of conflict. Some Inquisitors are so directly opposed to one another's aims that sabotaging the work of another Inquisitor may appear more vital to an Inquisitor than their duties to their Ordo. Here, characters spend time surveilling opposing cells of acolytes between acts of counter-espionage to protect themselves and their Patron, waiting to pull the trigger only until they uncover damnable proof of the enemy Inquisitor's heretical activities (or defending the Radical actions of their own). This can happen behind the scenes of more 'regular' Inquisitorial investigations, perhaps to string together a series of disparate one-shot adventures or missions.

In extreme cases, the active hunting of an enemy Inquisitor can be the entire focus of a campaign. Every other Imperial organisation meticulously purges the records of heresy in their ranks from archiviums and datavaults; the Inquisition strives to maintain the 'true' record of heresy across the Imperium, even among their own ranks. Where sufficient evidence is presented, an alleged heretical Inquisitor may be declared *Excommunicate Traitoris* by their peers, a condemnation that rallies other Inquisitors to pursue and destroy this rogue and their agents. For Inquisitors who take on this responsibility out of piety, philosophical opposition to the condemned, or realising an opportunity for personal gain, their acolytes assume the role of hunting hounds.

ROSETTES

An Inquisitorial Rosette is a badge of holy office, wielded by Inquisitors and their agents to bypass the order of common, lesser souls and respected by all factions, institutes and houses of the Imperium. The construction and function of Rosettes are as varied as the Inquisitors who bear them, and carry the classified attributes of their masters' power and duties. Some carry genetically encoded details of an Inquisitor's identity and prove they operate with the Throne of Terra's authority.

Rosettes are rarely used in dealings with the common populace of Imperial worlds. To flaunt Inquisitorial authority is to draw attention, elicit fear, and demand absolute acquiescence. Rosettes see sparing use in ground-level investigations, for the sight of one will often sow word of the Inquisition's presence, spreading unease through a local populace and alerting those who would prefer their heretical deeds remained in the shadow. In the rare moments when a Rosette is bared in this manner of investigation, it is understood by those who view it as a marker of absolute authority, and that a dreadful fate looms for those who fail to comply.

Some are made to the specifications of the Inquisitor bearing them, while many others existed long before their bearer's birth, created by those they may never meet. A Rosette could be an inheritance or gift from a predecessor, a holy relic used for millennia assigned to an Inquisitor in recognition of their pious deeds, or an artwork of its own right commemorating victories long since wiped from Imperial records. The diversity of Rosettes also lies deeper than in aesthetics, with some featuring internal data probes and many incorporating gene locks to ensure that only the Inquisitor and those they deem worthy can handle the rosette, where tamperers instead set off alarms or internal defence systems.

Inquisitors rarely allow their acolytes to use their unique Rosette. Instead, they often provide their acolytes with an emblem, pendant, ring, or badge representing their authority or, in rare cases, a sanctioned simulacra of their Rosette. Most operatives bear this symbol discreetly as part of their clothing or uniform, easily hidden or revealed at a moment's notice — thereby bearing a sliver of their Inquisitor's terrible authority into the field.

Not all Rosettes have a special function beyond representing the Inquisitor's authority. However, you can use the following tables to roll for or choose a unique effect and form that fits an Inquisitor character's or Patron's Rosette.



ROSETTE CONSTRUCTION

d10	CONSTRUCTION
1	The Rosette is made from silver and inlaid with circuitry akin to an electro. When its Inquisitor engages its gene sensors, its circuitry shimmers.
2	The Rosette is made from vat-grown bone sourced from the Inquisitor's own DNA, naturally carrying their genetic marker.
3	The Rosette is composed of black marble, hewn into an icon of the Inquisition. It is perennially ice-cold to the touch but believed to burn the flesh of the impure.
4	The Rosette is hewn from the bone of a long-forgotten Inquisitor Lord, intricately inlaid with polished silver shaped into an incomprehensible script and the symbol of the Inquisition.
5	The Rosette is composed of layers of damaged plasteel armour that reportedly belonged to a saint, salvaged from an ancient battlefield.
6	The Rosette is composed of a seemingly featureless slab of incredibly dense, unidentified metal. When its Inquisitor activates its gene lock, it projects a miniature hololithic image of their face and accompanying credentials.
7	The Rosette is composed of hardened glass and shaped into an hourglass filled with fine sand. High Gothic stricture debossed into the glass lists the names of the many Inquisitors that have used this Rosette in the past and proclaims that the sand within is from Holy Terra.
8	The Rosette is composed of battle-worn ceramite. Meticulous carvings tell grim tales of how its protection has saved the lives of its previous bearers.
9	The Rosette is composed of reclaimed rockcrete from the ruin of a cathedral, the site of a battle against an enemy of the Holy Ordos. Shaped into a censer, its inner chamber partially filled with the Inquisitor's cerebrospinal fluid to bear their unique genetic signature.
10	The Rosette is composed of densely layered purity seals, treated with potent lacquers to fuse them together. The conglomerate of scriptures seems to join together through fervid design or inconceivable coincidence, forming a disjointed orthopraxic hymn that lingers in the mind.

ORDO HERETICUS ROSETTES

d10	FUNCTION
1-2	The Rosette is suffused with once-sanctioned psychic energy, which can be used as a Psy Focus and the wielder to make a Psyniscience Test with Advantage once per day.
3-4	The Rosette incorporates the bones of a blank servant of the Inquisition. By spending a point of Fate to activate the Rosette, psykers within Medium Range must make a Difficult (-10) Discipline (Composure) Test or become visibly <i>Stunned</i> for the next 3 Rounds.
5-6	The Rosette is inscribed with archaic hexagrammic wards, capable of expediting the dissipation of psychic energy. Wielders can spend an action to immediately halve their current Warp Charge. These wards regain efficacy after one week.
7-8	The Rosette features cryptic technology that functions similarly to a Soulguilt Scanner. Once per day, the bearer can gain Advantage on an Awareness, Intuition, or Navigation Test to hunt heretics, rogue psykers, or mutants.
9-10	The Rosette is enmeshed with psycho-active materials similar to a Psyoculum, exhibiting barely detectable micro-vibrations when brought closer to a daemon or psyker within Medium Range.

ORDO MALLEUS ROSETTES

d10	FUNCTION
1-2	The Rosette features a sensitive psycho-active crystalline structure that vibrates and chimes ominously whenever realspace is breached by a Warp portal or a daemonic incursion within 1km.
3-4	The Rosette is covered in concealed hexagrammic wards. When a Psychic Power targets the bearer of the Rosette, they may present the Rosette to impose Disadvantage on the Psychic Mastery Test. The hexagrammic wards then briefly burn out and can be restored by spending an hour in meditation and devotion.
5-6	The Rosette is composed around a core similar to a Null Rod. This Rosette can be used as part of a melee attack against a target with a Warp Threshold. The attack gains <i>Rend (X)</i> , where X is the current Warp Charge of the target. After this effect is used, it takes a week to recharge.
7-8	The Rosette incorporates a miniature Aurascrye, a rare and arcane piece of technology that operates similarly to an Auspex (<i>Imperium Maledictum</i> , page 145) explicitly designed to detect the presence of daemons. It works for one hour before requiring a 12-hour recharge.
9-10	The Rosette is genuinely ancient and built around a miniaturised Geller Field generator. The Geller Field generator can be activated as an Action with a Very Hard (-30) Tech Test to protect the individual holding it for a number of hours equal to the SL from the effects of Perils of the Warp, Warp Phenomena, and Psychic Powers, or shunt them from the Warp into realspace. A high-ranking Magos of the Adeptus Mechanicus may be able to recharge this device after it has been used.

ORDO XENOS ROSETTES

d10	FUNCTION
1-2	The Rosette is hard-wired with archaic translation technologies, allowing its user to make a Linguistics (Forbidden) Test with Advantage once per day.
3-4	The Rosette incorporates an anachronistic system of scanners that can determine the provenance of a piece of technology. A character can make a Difficult (-10) Tech Test to determine whether or not a xenos species may have constructed the tech.
5-6	The rosette bears Jokaero modifications, including a digi-laser set into it for the Inquisitor to use as a last resort. The rosette acts as a Laspistol, in which the Magazine automatically regenerates fully 24 hours after firing, fed by a Jokaero-crafted power source.
7-8	The Rosette can be activated to emit a high-pitched debilitating screech only discernable by a particular xenos species within Medium Range (choose from Aeldari and Drukhari, Orks, T'au, or Kroot). Characters affected by this shrill noise must make a Difficult (-10) Fortitude (Endurance) Test or become <i>Deafened</i> and <i>Stunned</i> for 3 Rounds.
9-10	The Rosette incorporates a Bio-sample Extractor. Make a Difficult (-10) Tech Test to identify a sample; it can only identify material catalogued within a particular Ordo Xenos library, hundreds of years old, so newer species may not be known.

UNIVERSAL ROSETTES

d10	FUNCTION
1-2	The Rosette is trapped with a Melta Bomb (<i>Imperium Maledictum</i> , page 136), which is triggered whenever it is handled by an individual who the Inquisitor has not sanctioned.
3-4	The Rosette contains an emergency distress beacon that emits a homing signal. It broadcasts its location through coded communication only discernable by Inquisition-controlled vox channels. Its range extends to the area of a planet.
5-6	The Rosette has an emergency trigger that can be activated as a Free Action and functions as a Smoke Grenade, a Signal Jammer, and a Stummer simultaneously (<i>Imperium Maledictum</i> , pages 136 and 150).
7-8	The Rosette contains a concealed data port that can interface with a cogitator. It can be used as a Combi-tool (<i>Imperium Maledictum</i> , page 146) and confers +1 SL when the Inquisitor's credentials are relevant and capable of overwriting any access requirements.
9-10	The Rosette is trapped with a potent neurotoxin bomb, triggered whenever an individual who the Inquisitor has not sanctioned handles it. When triggered, every creature in the same Zone as the Rosette must make a Challenging (+0) Fortitude (Poison) Test or gain the <i>Poisoned (Major)</i> Condition.

BRIEFING & DEBRIEFING

To stand in the presence of an Inquisitor inspires awe and terror in all Imperial citizens, but perhaps none more so than their acolytes, those they expect the most from. Acolytes who serve them will become accustomed to this tension with cold familiarity, for to one who holds such absolute power, their lives are only as valuable as their duties.

Meetings between Inquisitors and their agents become regular punctuation to the lives of both parties. Evidence is traded for inscrutable orders: coordinates, targets, and names, with duties of investigation, destruction, and execution — while the Inquisitor has absolute authority, it is their acolytes who must venture to enact their instruction, however righteous, however cruel.

Inquisitors rarely communicate with their acolytes as straightforwardly as an officer of the Astra Militarum marshals their warriors. Limited contact, coded messages, and Interrogators following the chain of command are all ways an Inquisitor may obscure their communications from an ever-vigilant enemy. Direct contact often suggests significant importance to the task set before them and an indication that the Inquisitor is beginning to consider them more than expendable. These communications take on ever more vital importance when an Inquisitor orders that, as needs of their investigation impose, their retinue operate under compartmentalised status — communicating only between one another, to the exclusion of all other Imperial forces, even the Inquisition.

Briefings and debriefings are the primary ways characters interact with their Inquisitor Patron. Consider the advice below in conjunction with the 'Running Investigations' section included in *Imperium Maledictum* (page 307). Beyond receiving orders and presenting evidence, briefings and debriefings allow characters to get to know their Patron, building the mystery around them and gradually presenting aspects of their motivation, philosophy, and goals with each subsequent meeting.

To begin with, characters will know very little of the depths of philosophical conflicts that make the Inquisition such an interesting organisation to centre campaigns around, so these meetings should allow them glimpses into the organisation's byzantine nature of competing philosophies and the clashes from bickering to total enmity that arise among Inquisitors as those uniquely allowed to act as individuals in their service to the Imperium.

CONVOLUTED COMMUNICATION

d10	METHOD OF COMMUNICATION
1	The Inquisitor uses a relay of astropaths and psykers to mentally transmit orders to one of their acolytes, rendering them incapacitated until they finish delivering the message on their behalf.
2	The Inquisitor uses Infracionist couriers to relay messages: well paid, sufficiently threatened and blackmailed individuals who fear their wrath.
3	The Inquisitor broadcasts book cyphers on a local vox system — the characters need to use the contents of a particular local archivium to decode each message.
4	The Inquisitor plants encoded messages into the sermons of local preachers. The characters need to attend each daily service to ensure they receive new messages.
5	The Inquisitor hides written orders packed within the bullet casings of munition shipments sent to their acolytes; each bullet is stamped with the Inquisition's mark.
6	Through means unknown to the characters, the Inquisitor hijacks servo skulls in local service and re-directs them to deliver and retrieve messages from them.
7	The Inquisitor uses polymorphine — on themselves or designated messengers — to issue commands behind the faces of the local populace, identifying themselves using a signet ring resembling their rosette.
8	The Inquisitor's messages are delivered by a cyber-familial bird of prey with bladed wings and numerous augmetics, including a hololithic projector installed in a second mechanical head that relays the Inquisitor's orders visually.
9	The Inquisitor uses a rotating schedule of encrypted vox channels. Characters are expected to know the mathematics and cyphers to use the correct channel and check in at the correctly scheduled times.
10	The Inquisitor assigns a servitor to the characters that broadcasts Imperial hymns to ensure they keep true to their faith. In reality, it broadcasts messages through coded interference to the signal, producing sounds that others can only identify as a cacophony.

Note: This table presents ideas for ways their Inquisitor Patron can send or receive messages from their acolytes. Each method is fairly secure but might require the characters to maintain a schedule or specific piece of equipment in their missions to remain in contact. Where some methods function one-way, characters can use dead drops to send information back to their Inquisitor.



BRIEFING

When an Inquisitor summons their acolytes for briefing, their deployment into the field is certain, and the trials to come inexorable, borne in shadow by the heretic, mutant, and alien. The true breadth of an Inquisitor's plan is rarely revealed, only the objective to which their acolytes must risk their lives, chancing a death in which they never know the consequence of their service. To these orders, they arm themselves with prayer and wargear, board their transport and hope that their preparations were enough to tide them through the mission ahead.

RUNNING A BRIEFING

Unless characters are mid-mission, sessions of **Imperium Maledictum**, wherein the characters' Patron is an Inquisitor, typically begin with the characters receiving a briefing from their Patron. This may be their only active communication with their Patron until their mission succeeds or fails. Inquisitors frequently avoid association with the actions of their acolytes in the field, especially when those actions might skirt the boundaries of Lex Imperialis.



BRIEFING EXAMPLE

The characters' Patron gives them the following instruction during their briefing: 'Gather evidence of heresy among the Highborn Thrax family of Jocasta Hive on Persepolis. Upon arrival, make contact with Sister Famula Phaedyxia and inform only her that you are in service to His Holy Inquisition. She will introduce you as servants of the Ministorum.' This introduction gives them a clear objective to their investigation (looking for evidence of heresy), a location (Jocasta Hive on Persepolis), a contact with whom they will likely see a lot of interaction, and can provide clues and guidance if needed (Sister Famula Phaedyxia), and a stipulation (only Phaedyxia can know the party serve the Inquisition, their cover story is that they are servants of the Ministorum, and must therefore disguise themselves and act in a manner appropriate to resemble this allegiance).

In a briefing, despite any convoluted means of communication, avoid giving characters any unclear orders. Simply ordering characters to, for example, *'Investigate the Highborn Thrax family of Jocasta Hive on Persepolis'* gives them little to go on, and may be frustrating for players, particularly during the start of their investigation when they are effectively without leads. Instead, aim to offer more direct commands. Briefings benefit from including:

- **Objective:** Describe duties given to the characters. Avoid vague verbs like 'Investigate' and instead aim to provide clear, specific mission objectives. For example, *'steal records from a datavault,' 'find evidence of heresy among a specific group,' or 'learn the connections between the operations of two factions.'*
- **Location:** Investigations can span sectors, but a mission should have a precise location or contained area of operation. For example, *'the lower levels of a hive city,' 'an asteroid research void station,' 'a voidship' or 'an Astra Militarum fortress.'* Sometimes, the Patron could grant characters a secure safehouse to work from within or nearby the required location — or make it part of the characters' mission to set one up. See the **Inquisition Safehouses** Table (page 60) for ideas.
- **Contacts:** Introduce NPCs likely to be central to the characters' investigation. They could be known Contacts to the Inquisitor, their Ordo, a whistleblower, or witnesses embroiled in events. For example, *'a voidship officer who witnessed strange Warp phenomena,' 'a Commissar who saw strange behaviour spreading through the ranks of their regiment,' 'a Ministorum informant who has worked for multiple Inquisitors,' or 'a scribe who suspects they are receiving altered records.'*
- **Clues:** These provide the initial leads for characters to follow at the outset of their investigation. They may be material evidence, reports, testimonies, or records of events; some might need to be sought out and retrieved in the field to be analysed further. For example, *'a testimony from a heretical Rogue Trader,' 'a seized shipment of xenos-produced goods,' or 'details on a recent uprising in a hab-block.'*
- **Additional Stipulations:** Discretion is often essential for the Inquisition to complete its holy work. Many missions may require characters to disguise themselves as members of other Factions or operate from the shadows. Their Patron should make it clear at the outset of the mission if there are any lines they should not or are expected to cross (some of these stipulations could affect their Subtlety, page 47, if broken).

INQUISITION SAFEHOUSES

d10	SAFEHOUSE
1	Secure rooms set aside at a hostelry. The host and operator are bound to the Inquisition through regular payments or deadly blackmail.
2	An abandoned Astra Militarum barracks. It is some distance from the other Imperial outposts but lightly fortified; you can easily see anyone approaching.
3	An abandoned Arbites or Vigilite watch post complete with a guard tower. There are some lockers within containing old uniforms and odd pieces of equipment.
4	An ancillary hangar unit attached to the local voidport. It is large enough to base a Valkyrie or similar vehicle and is close to local and off-world transportation hubs.
5	The basement of a run-down bar owned by an infractionist gang. Has a secluded service entrance. Characters can work the bar above to gather intel and solidify their cover identities.
6	An empty wing of a noble's mansion, complete with secret entrances and exits. The noble of the house is a sour fellow who dislikes the presence of the characters despite owing their Patron dearly.
7	The uppermost floors of an abandoned hive spire, containing floors of dusty apartments, meeting halls, and viewing platforms. A hidden elevator leads to the hive below; otherwise, it is a long way down.
8	An unused corner of a manuforum, set aside by a local Tech-Priest for Inquisition use. It has a surplus of essential tools and materials, and the surrounding industrial ambience can obscure loud activities.
9	A seldom visited wing of an Administratum archivium, filled with ancient and dusty tithe records. Characters on good terms with the Administratum can access local information easily from adjacent wings.
10	A small but well-maintained cathedrum. The small Imperial Cult attached to the cathedrum is a carefully devised front — but the priests within are still devout and have been told to stay away from the characters and treat them as if they were saints.

Note: This table presents ideas for safehouses that an Inquisitor Patron can grant to their acolytes. These locations are set up in advance by the Patron's asset networks and tend to have a few caches of basic equipment, supplies, and amenities — such as a vox receiver, medicae supplies, basic weapons, and ammunition.

DEBRIEFING

When characters return from a mission, how long does any sense of relief last? The lull offers safety in private offices, fortified barracks, or voidship cabins, but they know the Inquisitor awaits their report. Their Patron requires them to divulge the events of their mission and provide any evidence in relation to their stated goal (as well as any other evidence suggesting further heresy). Information imparted in debriefs will shape the course of future operations undertaken by the characters, regarding both direction and force permitted for the characters to utilise.

Debriefings may readily include admonition if a mission was not performed to their Patron's standards, such as through unsanctioned extrajudicial killings or the gathering of limited evidence. Inquisitors rarely provide comfort or positive reinforcement to acolytes beyond the cold acknowledgement of an adequately performed job and the responsibility to wield ever more brutal force in their Patron's name. As GM, it is an opportunity for players to see behind the curtains, revealing some of what they might have missed or the consequences of unforeseen actions.

RUNNING A DEBRIEFING

During a debriefing, characters must present the evidence they gathered on their mission and discuss their actions and methods (ensuring that the evidence gathered justified any more dubious means employed). You can use the **Strange Meeting Places** Table to pick or inspire a clandestine location to run your debriefings.

When characters present the evidence gathered during the debriefing, each piece of evidence grants +1 SL on Fellowship Tests made in conversation with their Patron. Characters may have to present convincing arguments to their Patron in the following ways, with Tests ranging from **Challenging** (+0) to **Very Hard** (–30), depending on how far they may have strayed from orders or authorised actions:

- ☛ **Justification:** Characters may have to justify more extreme actions undertaken on a mission, from breaking the strictures of the Lex Imperialis or arresting suspects, to extrajudicial executions or engaging in combat. Successful justification may convince their Patron to dispatch additional aid in future missions, such as extra security operatives or access to forbidden knowledge.

☛ **Shaping Future Investigations:** Guided by their evidence, an Inquisitor may send their acolytes to follow up any identified lead further or to apprehend those condemned by damning evidence. Inquisitors with intense preoccupations may be convinced that evidence gathered by their acolytes is worth diverting their attention, mainly if characters identify a threat the Inquisitor was unaware of. Enough evidence of a severe threat may even force the hand of an Inquisitor and see them joining their acolytes in the field.

☛ **Knowing Thy Foe:** Strong evidence can guide an Inquisitor to commit their assets to better preparation. Characters may gain +1 Superiority in a coming conflict if their evidence can offer guidance. It may convince the Inquisitor to prepare additional aid for the cell, including special weapons or equipment to fight their particular foe or provide Contacts with relevant information.

☛ **Strange Complications:** The characters should inform their Patron of any strange complications — the interference of unlikely groups or clues that lead towards unrelated heresies. Informing their Patron allows them to use other cells and Contacts within their network to determine if something else is amiss. In some circumstances, characters may believe hiding or obscuring information from their superiors may benefit them, but this is their chance to come clean without repercussions. Their Patron will undoubtedly discover the truth eventually and be less forgiving, although hiding such information could lead to some powerful dramatic moments in the future.

REWARDS & DOWNTIME

Part of the Inquisitor's debriefing is an opportune time to reward characters for their efforts; this will also help build their relationship with their Patron. Additionally, it is unlikely their Patron will have their next mission ready for them, as they are still processing the outcome of the last, so characters should be granted a period of downtime after the debriefing is complete. **Chapter VIII of *Imperium Maledictum*** (page 228) and the ***Inquisition Player's Guide*** (page 125) cover downtime activities, Endeavours, and Events.

Standard character rewards are outlined in ***Imperium Maledictum*** (page 312), but as acolytes are special operatives of the Inquisition, consider offering them an extra gift from their Patron. This could be a new weapon or tool from the Inquisition's armoury, something that might serve them well in a future mission. As a group, they could be granted a more secure safehouse, vehicle, or the funds to secure such a thing for themselves.

STRANGE MEETING PLACES

d10	LOCATION
1	In the inner chambers of a constantly busy cathedrum, the Patron arrives from a secret pathway known only to those of their philosophical faction.
2	A decommissioned vox-relay satellite in orbit — local Adeptus Mechanicus agents can provide transport to and from the satellite.
3	In an abandoned control room in a busy manufactorum, the constant industrial noise covers up any attempts for others to listen in.
4	An abandoned rail transport station. The Patron has an engine and carriage in the station that can pick up and drop off their agents across the rail network.
5	The deepest cells within a Vigilite or Arbites Precinct-Fortress. They might employ the Arbites to haul the characters off the streets and bring them to the cell directly.
6	An abandoned section of an Administratum-run morgue, plentiful service entrances, and individual cold storage units for corpse storage and other equipment.
7	A forgotten cathedrum in the lower reaches of a hive city. It is attended by an esoteric yet unobtrusive Imperial cult that accepts the Patron's presence without question.
8	A condemned hab block so obviously on the verge of collapse that even gangers keep their distance. Has storage areas for large vehicles and other bulky equipment.
9	A secluded garden filled with exotic plant species under a spire's rooftop dome. The Patron knows of a secret entrance at the spire's base and a small pad for aircraft landing.
10	A back-alley surgeon's office, often frequented by Infractionists. The Patron has their own office within, kitted out with ample but dubious medicae supplies and instruments of interrogation.

***Note:** This table presents ideas for safehouses that an Inquisitor Patron can grant to their acolytes. These locations are set up in advance by the Patron's asset networks and tend to have a few caches of basic equipment, supplies and amenities — such as a vox receiver, medicae supplies, basic weapons, and ammunition.*

It is also the perfect time to consider whether their Patron receives a new Boon, Liability, or subsequent increase or decrease in their Influence with certain Factions. Consider what the characters' mission results mean for their Inquisitor Patron. Did they clash with or favourably cooperate with another Faction? You could also consider if events caused the Patron to overcome one of their Liabilities and have it stricken from their Patron sheet.

KSENIA BAEK

'It is my destiny to find the God-Emperor's next vessel, a task passed down from Thorian to Thorian, from my mentor to me. My duty is to herd the psykers of the sector and cull the impure from them, find the best among them and train them to be better. Holy Terra awaits.'

Ordo: Hereticus (page 6)

Philosophy: Thorian (page 28)

Known Interrogators: Severina Melnyk

Operational Territory: Cytheris Subsector (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 262)

Primary Concerns:

- ☛ Seek out pure psykers across the sector.
- ☛ Hunt rogue psykers and heretical cults.
- ☛ Train psykers to bolster the Inquisition's strength.

As a member of the Ordo Hereticus, Inquisitor Ksenia Baek has carved herself a reputation within the Macharian Inquisition as the sector's foremost expert on psykers and witchcraft. Her work has kept her close to the goals of her Thorian philosophy — to seek out a pure psychic avatar for the God-Emperor to inhabit upon his eventual return. Ksenia chases psykers across the sector to seek out this prophesied avatar, spurred by reported miracles and psychic divinations.

The now deceased Inquisitor Onderghast identified Baek's psychic abilities in her early childhood, during an investigation of a xenos cult on her home agri world of Rauss V. Onderghast noted the child emitting an unnerving psychic presence, disrupting his connection to the Emyrean. Through training and mentorship, he instilled within her the tenets of the Thorian philosophy — believing for some time that she might become the God-Emperor's new avatar. But through extensive testing and trials, Onderghast eventually deemed her not pure enough. Instead, it was Baek's destiny to succeed him and take up his task.

Baek brokered a deal with the League of Black Ships, aiding them in investigating and capturing problematic psykers in return for a base of operations aboard one of their voidships. On *The Penitent Burden*, Inquisitor Ksenia Baek has overseen the training of hundreds of Inquisitorial acolytes and fledgeling psykers. Baek has long worked alongside the Adeptus Astra Telepathica, her investigations generating a wellspring of psykers. Many are loaded aboard the Black Ships as part of their damned cargo, but a select few go on to serve the Inquisitor, sometimes bypassing their sanctioning when Baek sees fit, and installed within her acolyte cells across the sector.

BAEK'S SECRETS

Baek is sure that an Ocularian (page 22) Inquisitor from the Calixis Sector is secretly operating in the Macharian Sector, collecting information to fuel their grand divinations. She believes the collective information and prophecies the Ocularians have made can guide her to the destined avatar she has spent most of her life looking for — she is also curious to see what divinations they hold about herself.

Baek's closeness to the League of Black Ships works towards the culmination of her plans. Once she has secured the God-Emperor's avatar, she plans to commandeer *The Penitent Burden* or whatever Black Ship is nearest (by force if necessary) and make haste for Terra — dropping whatever Inquisitorial investigations she is in the middle of. Though the chance of this happening is improbable, her hopes rest on a personal divination she received in her early years of training from Onderghast — a vision he saw of her aboard a Black Ship back to Holy Terra. Perhaps naively, Baek interprets this divination positively rather than as a sign of future damnation.

Psykers in the presence of Baek and her acolytes have been known to experience a similar, disquieting phenomenon to that reported by Inquisitor Onderghast. Baek is afraid to pick at this psychic scab within her soul, fearful it will confirm her impurity. Regardless of her intentions, every expression of Baek's considerable psychic might is deeply unsettling to non-blanks in her vicinity. Most are left with recurring nightmares for days or experience waking visions of death — usually their own.

This is because the Inquisitor has a shadow, a Daemon calling itself Baek. It has haunted her since childhood, confined to the Warp but always nearby. Time in the Warp is fluid, ebbing and flowing as it wills, frequently turning back upon itself. Baek keeps the Inquisitor close because it knows that she will one day be responsible for its own creation. If he became aware of the unusual aura she projects, Alis Raud (page 68) would be interested in studying her.





PARTY SUBTLETY

10-8	COVERT
7-5	SUSPICIOUS
4-2	OVERT
1	EXPOSED

PATRON NAME

FACTION & ORDO

PAY GRADE

PHILOSOPHY

DEMEANOUR

BOONS

Psychic Instruction: Your Patron is directly involved in the training of psykers, or has close ties to the Adeptus Astra Telepathica. They can arrange training for psykers in their service, either personally or by arranging a meeting with an ally. Whilst being trained in this way, the XP cost of purchasing additional Psychic Powers is reduced by 20.

LIABILITIES

Witch Hunter: Your Patron requires you to be ever-vigilant of sorcery, and demands you aid in capturing psykers to fulfil the tithes of the Black Ships. If your Patron gains any information that would suggest there is a psyker in the vicinity of your mission who has not been corrupted by the Ruinous Powers, they will demand you capture them. If your Patron gains any information that there is a rogue psyker in the vicinity of your mission, they will demand you bring them their head.

INFLUENCE

[illegible]

d10	Boon	Liability
1-2	Clandestine Inquisition Training Facility (<i>Imperium Maledictum</i> , page 30)	Corrupt (<i>Imperium Maledictum</i> , page 37)
3-4	Contact Network (<i>Imperium Maledictum</i> , page 31)	Overextended (<i>Imperium Maledictum</i> , page 40)
5-6	Null Sanctum (<i>Imperium Maledictum</i> , page 34)	Strange Tastes (<i>Imperium Maledictum</i> , page 41)
7-8	Psychic Protection (<i>Imperium Maledictum</i> , page 34)	Suspect (<i>Imperium Maledictum</i> , page 41) (<i>Inquisition</i>)
9-0	Psyker Support (<i>Imperium Maledictum</i> , page 34)	Warped Visions (<i>Imperium Maledictum</i> , page 41)



AEGIDIUS HALIKARN

'Heretics are like vermin. Unless discovered and purged, they breed incessantly in the shadows, until the walls of your hab are composed more of traitorous inclination than of rockcrete.'

Ordo: Hereticus (page 6)

Philosophy: Recongregationism (page 26)

Known Interrogators: Caecilius Elbegdorj

Operational Territory: Cytheris Subsector (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 262)

Primary Concerns:

- ☠ Root out heresy and cult activity amongst the sector's most populated worlds.
- ☠ Uncover systematic corruption among the major factions of the Imperium in the Macharian Sector.

As a Recongregator and in contact with other like-minded Inquisitors across the Imperium, Halikarn focuses on upending the Macharian Sector's noble houses. He believes that the sector's twisted histories obscure a terrible truth. That it was established (and subsequently re-established) incorrectly. This revisionist history is ignorant of the finer points of the Emperor's will and enmeshes heretical practices into the very fabric of this western arm of the Imperium.

Based on these lines of inquiry, the Ordo Hereticus Inquisitor has already exposed innumerable heresies within noble families and Imperial factions. Halikarn operates with as much secrecy as he can manage, ousting and replacing those in positions of power while maintaining a veneer of as little personal involvement as possible. But he has garnered some infamy; some use his name as a byword for protracted Inquisitorial presence, as his preferred methods involve investigating leads at lower levels of Imperial organisations and then proceeding rank by rank until a source of corruption is identified at the top.

The Adeptus Mechanicus have developed a particular frustration with Halikarn's methods, as his escalating levels of investigation have the potential to cause delays at multiple stages of production, leading to manufactorum backlogs and quota errors, through which the same frustration is passed directly to the Administratum.

Halikarn has a history of working alongside Inquisitor Raud (page 68) following their collaborative investigation of the Leonova Orbital Rebellion in the Cytheris Subsector, which toppled two Rogue Trader Dynasties responsible for trade in heretical, Warp-tainted artefacts. They maintain a lasting level of what could almost be called trust — despite Halikarn viewing Raud's means as overly destructive and Raud thinking Halikarn's philosophy a fruitless pursuit.

Inquisitor Aegidius Halikarn was the featured sample Patron of the *Imperium Maledictum Starter Set* adventure *The Blazing Seraph*. Characters can continue to serve him as a Patron, going into **Chapter IV: The Heresies Macharia** (page 84), following on from their adventures on Voll.

HALIKARN'S SECRETS

Among Halikarn's favoured operatives is a squad of acolytes referred to by Halikarn as 'The Faceless', formerly in the service of Inquisitor Horst (page 66), who thinks they are dead. These agents willingly accepted serving Halikarn and his Recongregator philosophy, knowing that it spites their former patron.

While working in Leonova, Inquisitor Raud claimed to have destroyed all the Warp-tainted artefacts they uncovered. In truth, she collected most of them at her base near the Ayzinith Abyss for further study. If Halikarn learns of Raud's Xanthite beliefs, he will lose trust in her. Raud planted several agents within Halikarn's retinue, and he has yet to discover them.

Halikarn has been aided by Drukhari raiders in the past. In his fleeting contact with these Cabalites, he directed them to targets from which the aliens could mock the weakest Imperial power structures, aiding him in dethroning the corrupt within. But he knows these heretical agreements must be obscured from his peers. Eventually, he seeks to feed information on their whereabouts to Inquisitor Serranus (page 70) to keep the Ordo Xenos Inquisitor from interfering with his Recongregator goals.





INQUISITOR PATRON SHEET

PARTY SUBTLETY	
10-8	COVERT
7-5	SUSPICIOUS
4-2	OVERT
1	EXPOSED



Aegidius Halikarn

PATRON NAME

Inquisition, Ordo Hereticus

FACTION & ORDO

Standard (100 solars per day)

PAY GRADE

Recongregationism

PHILOSOPHY

Inscrutable

DEMEANOUR

BOONS

Limitless Authority: Your Patron is an Inquisitor, empowered with theoretically limitless authority over the other Factions of the Imperium. When you use your Patron's Influence, you may choose to use their Influence with the Inquisition instead of the target's Faction. There is a chance that your target might find this insulting, find your particular Patron unimpressive, or even be outright heretical — ultimately, the Gamemaster determines the results.

Fearsome Reputation: The mere mention of your Patron's name is enough to strike terror into the hearts of any who know of them. When you mention your Patron's name, you can choose to force anyone who is aware of their reputation to make a **Hard (-20) Discipline (Fear)** Test or become *Frightened*. You may assume that anyone who shares a Faction with your Patron knows of their reputation, while it is up to the GM who else is aware of it.

Sanctum Obscurus: Your Patron gives you access to a secret safehouse hidden from the rest of the Imperium, festooned with equipment for clandestine activities. None but your party and your Patron know the location of this sanctum, and it is stocked with the following equipment: a Cameleoline Cloak, a set of Photo-visors, an Auspex, a Clip/Drop Harness, a Comm Leech, a Disguise Kit, 3 Magnoculars, a Pict Recorder, a Signal Jammer, and a Vox-caster.

LIABILITIES

Abrupt: In all their dealings with other Factions, your Patron is brusque and abrasive. Your Patron has -1 Influence with 3 Factions as a consequence of this behaviour (included below).

Demands Discretion: Your Patron insists on keeping their involvement in your missions private, allowing you to use the sway of their name only when absolutely necessary. Your Patron may dock your pay for using their Influence without strong reasoning.

Such secrecy can be akin to a damning admission of guilt in the Imperium. The Gamemaster may decide that this Liability causes your Patron to have -1 Influence with the Administratum or the Inquisition.

Paranoid: Your Patron trusts no one — including you. They doubt your loyalty and might show it by questioning your reports, spying on you, or even despatching you on missions that mean certain death.

INFLUENCE

FACTION	INFL.	CONTACTS	INTEL
Inquisition	+2		
Adeptus Mechanicus	-1		
Adeptus Ministorum	-1		
Administratum	-1		
Rogue Trader Dynasties	-1		

AEGIDIUS HALIKARN: ADDITIONAL BOONS AND LIABILITIES		
d10	Boon	Liability
1-2	Clandestine Inquisition Training Facility (<i>Imperium Maledictum</i> , page 30)	Corrupt (<i>Imperium Maledictum</i> , page 37)
3-4	Cleansing Flame (<i>Imperium Maledictum</i> , page 31)	Incessant Updates (<i>Imperium Maledictum</i> , page 39)
5-6	Cover Story (<i>Imperium Maledictum</i> , page 31)	Known Meddler (<i>Imperium Maledictum</i> , page 39)
7-8	Plausible Deniability (<i>Imperium Maledictum</i> , page 34)	Revisionist (<i>Imperium Maledictum</i> , page 40)
9-0	Strategos Extremis (<i>Imperium Maledictum</i> , page 35)	Suspect (<i>Imperium Maledictum</i> , page 41)



SYLVESTRINE HORST

'The Emperor has determined a path for each of us. You have strayed from your path. The consequence is as written for each traitor before you.'

Ordo: Hereticus (page 6)

Philosophy: Amalathian (Puritan, page 16)

Known Interrogators: None

Operational Territory: Gallosque Nebula (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 299)

Primary Concerns:

- ☠ Maintain the status quo among the Imperium's noble houses.
- ☠ Discover the truth of what happened to former Inquisitor Lord Hieronymo Drake, and understand the Kryptman Protocol.
- ☠ Become the new Inquisitor Lord of the Macharian Sector, or find a suitable candidate to elevate (see **Chapter V: The Heresies Macharia**, page 89).

As an Amalathian, Horst believes that the Emperor's grand plan for the Macharian Sector, the Imperium, and the entire galaxy is progressing precisely as His perfect mind has foreseen, and any deviation from the status quo is a form of heresy.

Horst grew up in and around the shrines of Macharia, among the Sororitas Order Dialogus of the Solar Quill, before joining the Inquisition at Inquisitor Lord Hieronymo Drake's request. She was tasked with investigating the upper echelons of Imperial society for heresy, seeking out those who would threaten the status quo. Her success and proliferation of assets under her control elevated her to the rank of Interrogator. Her public piety has helped to cement the Sisters Famulous as a contact network among Highborn houses throughout the Gallosque Nebula, granting her access to generations worth of records kept by these families under the Sororitas' watch.

Among other Inquisitors, she is known for sending her supplicants on hazardous missions, often bordering on suicidal — Horst believes that such crushing hardships are some necessary part of His divine plan.

Acolytes who please her and show some semblance of sacred purpose are rewarded with a new face, an impassive plasteel death mask cast in the visage of a revered saint. These masked figures have taken on a mythic quality amongst the noble houses of the Gallosque Nebula, lurking taciturn in the shadows to punish any misdeed ruthlessly. Oppositely, acolytes who fail her and survive are forced to serve penance as her 'Faceless', receiving similar surgeries with completely blank masks.

HORST'S SECRETS

The brutal standard to which Horst holds her operatives is not without drawbacks. Horst lost contact with a group of her acolytes several years ago while they were engaged in heavy fighting in the bowels of the city-vessel Cassian on the oceans of Jotungarth. Horst has since received troubling reports from her other operatives that a covert group bearing arms and equipment that mirrors their own is attempting to sabotage her ongoing investigations.

Horst remains unaware that these operatives have served as mercenaries to Inquisitor Halikarn on several occasions. It is less the case that their attacks have been to counteract Horst's goals but somewhat further Halikarn's broader Recongregator goals, naturally opposed to Horst's Amalathian beliefs.

Despite outward appearances and theatrics, Horst was woefully involved in the death of her mentor, Inquisitor Lord Hieronymo Drake. She is shaken that her mentor was a secret heretic, and puzzled by his mysterious 'Kryptman Protocol' (the evidence of which is uncovered in **Chapter V: The Heresies Macharia**, page 84) and is worried that his taint will reflect poorly on her and her legitimacy as an Inquisitor.





10-8	COVERT
7-5	SUSPICIOUS
4-2	OVERT
1	EXPOSED

DEMEANOUR



ALIS RAUD

'The words of a single heretic can bring ruin to a world. Condemn any billion citizens to death, and you'll likely slay at least one heretic. Who but the Emperor can say if this is a worthwhile trade?'

Ordo: Malleus (page 8)

Philosophy: Xanthite (Radical, page 29)

Known Interrogators: Damien Savantas

Operational Territory: Drimor Subsector (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 281)

Primary Concerns:

- ☠ Maintain the secrets of the Ordo Malleus.
- ☠ Hunt daemoniac entities and cults she believes are connected to the ostensibly centuries-dead heretical Genusus Cyrus of the Macharian Crusade.

Raud is a veteran Inquisitor who has uncovered heresy in a thousand forms and sees its shadow everywhere. Her long service has seen her philosophy tempered by Xanthite beliefs; Chaos is ultimately beyond the possibility of defeat, and Humanity's only hope is to bend daemonkind to its will. She closely guards the secrets of the Ordo Malleus against other Inquisitors in the sector, to the benefit of her Ordo, but also to keep her Xanthite research hidden from her peers.

Raud has spent much of her time as an Inquisitor cultivating a sprawling web of spies across the sector, including agents planted within the retinues of all the sector's Inquisitors. From this, she wrests much of her influence and vigilance, hidden archiviums filled with secrets and blackmail, and hair-trigger signals ready to warn her of daemoniac activity. Her eagerness to pounce upon heresy at first trace has led to the deaths of numerous unsanctioned psykers, to the frustration of her fellow Inquisitor, Ksenia Baek (page 62).

Raud is currently engaged in a personal hunt for the heretic General Cyrus of Saint Macharius' Seventh Army Group (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 252) that has spanned decades of her life. Despite previous Inquisitorial investigations concluding that Cyrus fell in battle, Raud holds that as the Drimor Subsector was undeniably shaped in Cyrus' passing. She believes his twisted intentions linger, hidden deep within the sector's power structures, waiting to strike.

Of particular interest to Raud is the spatial anomaly rumoured to have been the origin of Cyrus' corruption, for if the heretic general still draws breath, the path to finding and destroying him may begin in the Ayzinith Abyss. Raud regularly commandeers the data of listening posts on its perimeter to trace potential signs of daemoniac or heretical presences in its inky depths. However, this has led to a fraught relationship with the Imperial Fleet's presence in the subsector.

RAUD'S SECRETS

For some time now, Raud has held suspicions of heresy against Eskender Thracious (page 72), that the Ordo Xenos Inquisitor has cavorted with xenos entities, but more to the point, that he has built strange networks that often lead to dead ends and several of her lost agents. She continues to build evidence on him, waiting for the right time to strike against him.

Raud remains uncorrupted despite the pitfalls of her Ordo's duties and Radical research. Daemons who sought to corrupt her have begun to target her Interrogator, Damien Savantas, instead. Daemons whisper in his dreams, planting unconscious seeds of betrayal. But his corruption is a double-bluff on Raud's behalf; she is fully aware of it — secretly using methods upon him similar to preparing a daemonhost, Raud has been luring daemons towards Savantas to keep them from interfering or manipulating her work. Dangerously, he is the only man worthy of succeeding in her role as Inquisitor.

Raud commands a void fortress hidden at the edge of the Ayzinith Abyss. In addition to being the central hub of her spy network — routing communications throughout the sector — she keeps her damnable collection of twelve daemonhosts and the bulk of her Xanthite research into demonology. She believes that the daemonhosts, in particular, are the perfect bait to draw out General Cyrus.





INQUISITOR PATRON SHEET

PARTY SUBTLETY	
10-8	COVERT
7-5	SUSPICIOUS
4-2	OVERT
1	EXPOSED

Alis Raud

PATRON NAME

Inquisition, Ordo Malleus

FACTION & ORDO

Standard (100 solars per day)

PAY GRADE

Xanthite

PHILOSOPHY

Pragmatic

DEMEANOUR

BOONS

Limitless Authority: Your Patron is an Inquisitor, empowered with theoretically limitless authority over the other Factions of the Imperium. When you use your Patron's Influence, you may choose to use their Influence with the Inquisition instead of the target's Faction. There is a chance that your target might find this insulting, find your particular Patron unimpressive, or even be outright heretical — ultimately, the Gamemaster determines the results.

Daemonshield: Your Patron bids you daub sigils upon your equipment with Unguents of Warding, lest you encounter the daemon in your duties. Once each mission, you can choose to gain Advantage on a Test you make to resist Corruption, or an Opposed Test made against a psyker or daemon.

Spy Network: Your Patron maintains a cohort of insider informants in every Imperial Faction — compromised Vigilites, bribed Administratum adepts, or other individuals who engage in espionage on their behalf. If you can make contact with an informant, they may have useful information on the Faction's current activities. It is up to the GM if they know anything useful about your current situation, but they should at least be able to point you to someone who does.

LIABILITIES

Demands Discretion: Your Patron insists on keeping their involvement in your missions private, allowing you to use the sway of their name only when absolutely necessary. Your Patron may inflict punishment, or even disappear a character entirely, should they ignore this edict.

In certain areas of the Imperium, such secrecy can be akin to a damning admission of guilt. As the campaign progresses, characters may find themselves the target of Administratum adepts or even an Inquisitor's acolytes, drawn by rumours of their Patron's obsessive secrecy.

Known Meddler: Your Patron has a reputation for interfering in the affairs of other Factions. Whenever you attempt to use your Patron's Influence, the party's next Fellowship Test is made at Disadvantage. Additionally, your Patron's past meddlings have earned them -1 Influence with two Factions, chosen by the Gamemaster.

Obsessive Objective: Your Patron holds a single objective above all others, a personal preoccupation or vendetta that claims dominance in your Patron's goals. They may call on you to investigate any relevant leads that may be discovered whilst on mission, even if this is at the cost of the mission's primary objective. Failing to act on these new orders will certainly draw their displeasure.

INFLUENCE

FACTION	INFL.	CONTACTS	INTEL
Inquisition	+2		
Infractionists	+2		
Adeptus Astra Telepathica	-1		
Imperial Fleet	-1		

ALIS RAUD: ADDITIONAL BOONS AND LIABILITIES

d10	Boon	Liability
1-2	Backchannel Contacts (<i>Imperium Maledictum</i> , page 30)	Abrupt (<i>Imperium Maledictum</i> , page 37)
3-4	Blackmailer (<i>Imperium Maledictum</i> , page 30)	Excommunicated (<i>Imperium Maledictum</i> , page 38)
5-6	Cover Story (<i>Imperium Maledictum</i> , page 31)	Loose Cannon (<i>Imperium Maledictum</i> , page 39)
7-8	Forger (<i>Imperium Maledictum</i> , page 32)	Psyker Slayer (<i>Imperium Maledictum</i> , page 40)
9-0	Witch Hunt (<i>Imperium Maledictum</i> , page 36)	Saboteur (<i>Imperium Maledictum</i> , page 41)



KONSTAN SERRANUS

'The hand that touches that which has been tainted by xenos must be severed to maintain the purity of the whole.'

Ordo: Xenos (page 10)

Philosophy: Monodominant (Puritan, page 20)

Known Interrogators: Arnaut Cisneros

Operational Territory: Andosk Subsector (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 293)

Primary Concerns:

- ☠ Curtail any xenos interference or invasion in the Macharian Sector.
- ☠ Use this knowledge to strike out at alien foes beyond the borders of the Imperium.
- ☠ Investigate the uptick of Genestealer Cult activity across the sector.

Serranus is a hard line firebrand of the Monodominant philosophy, a staunch absolutist who believes wholeheartedly in eradicating xenos, seeing their corruption as if it were a literal disease. Serranus is infamous for cutting off his own hand when it came into bare-fleshed contact with a piece of Aeldari technology, and he has executed many acolytes for similar 'crimes' that taint the purity of their Humanity.

Of the Inquisitors operating in the Macharian Sector, Inquisitor Serranus is one of the most active in the field, for how else can one ensure the destruction of the loathsome xenos than by personally overseeing its obliteration? Serranus possesses a short temper kept in check by his fervent faith, a strength he presses upon his acolytes to ensure their motivation and loyalty.

Serranus' upbringing in the Andosk Subsector ensured that he would carry the flame of Arrian's piety, kept burning by generations of devout who formed their faith in the wake of the zealous master of Saint Macharius' Sixth Army. Serranus's beliefs were solidified long before his ascension to Inquisitor. In his youth, Konstan was a rare survivor of an Ork assault that the mighty Deathwatch quelled before his eyes.

Most acolytes under Serranus's command are heavily augmented, as their flesh and former prosthetics are frequently replaced to prevent xenos contamination. He is unwavering in his beliefs that even to witness heresy is to foster corruption, ensuring that the eyes of long-serving acolytes are replaced with augmetics. His personal guard of former Astra Militarum troopers who accompany him in the field could be mistaken for warriors of the Machine God for the breadth of augmetics they bear. Serranus also heavily uses expendable servitors and has established a staunch alliance with the Adeptus Mechanicus of Forkas-63 and Ibal Primus. Dealings between the Ordo Xenos Inquisitor and the Magos of the Machine Cult are often tense, but in return, Serranus is dogged in his pursuit of hereteks meddling with xenos tech on their behalf.

SERRANUS' SECRETS

A former Inquisitor named Agrippa Gandash, was declared *Excommunicate Traitoris* for consorting with the Aeldari, a xenos species for which Serranus still holds a highly personal disgust. Allegedly, Gandash went so far as to incorporate their blasphemous technologies into his own flesh. Serranus sees this as the ultimate perversion of pure human flesh, and has sworn to find Agrippa himself. Reluctantly, Serranus recently accepted the aid of specialist Valerius Nabopalassar (page 72). Nabopalassar's knowledge of the Aeldari has already aided in this hunt, but in fact the 'specialist' is more than he seems, and has already marked the intractable Serranus as a threat to his own agenda.

Serranus is so consumed by his Monodominant beliefs that he is not even above his own suspicions — his long service to the Ordo Xenos has irredeemably exposed him to the loathsome alien. He knows that his mind is the last bastion of their corruption within him. Secretly, he has subjected himself to mind-wiping procedures to erase specifically haunting memories and expunged the Inquisition's matching records. To his own detriment, Konstan is unaware that he is perhaps the sector's foremost expert on Necron activities.





10-8	COVERT
7-5	SUSPICIOUS
4-2	OVERT
1	EXPOSED

DEMEANOUR



ESKENDER THRACIUS

‘The Macharian Sector gives credence to the saying, ‘survival of the fittest’. Long ago, Lord Solar Macharius crushed or bent the will of weak houses and rebels, uniting the sector as one, but that was a long time ago. The Imperium cannot prosper while on the back foot, and I have the perfect enemies in mind.’

Ordo: Xenos (page 10)

Philosophy: Isstvanist (page 18)

Known Interrogators: Julios Macrio

Operational Territory: Cytheris Subsector (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 262)

Primary Concerns:

- Study of xenos designation Aeldari.
- Use this knowledge to prepare for the return of the God-Emperor.
- Maintain his web of aliases and avoiding death or capture.

Long before his excommunication from the Inquisition, Thracius used his position as a member of the Ordo Xenos to further his Isstvanian goals — drawing the Imperium into conflicts with xenos forces in and around the Macharian Sector. He believes that xenos are Humanity’s most potent enemy — bizarre enough to test and broaden the skills of Humanity’s war machine and a uniting enemy, one that all of Humanity can easily agree to rally against.

Thracius has spent long years consorting with the Aeldari, investigating their culture and technologies, but for the end goal of luring several Craftworlds into open warfare with the Imperium. He knows that other Inquisitors in the sector, particularly Raud (page 68) and Serranus (page 70), have shreds of evidence towards his meddling, though more towards declaring him an outright heretic than a Radical Isstvanist.

Since the recent death of Inquisitor Lord Drake, Thracius has turned his trade towards the Macharian Inquisition itself — partly to occlude his heretical operations but otherwise to apply his Isstvanist beliefs from a different angle. He feels that if the Inquisition were put at war with itself, in its currently weakened state, it could lead to the ascension of more Inquisitors and perhaps the entitling of a new Inquisitor Lord.

THRACIUS' SECRETS

Fearing the Inquisition’s wrath, Thracius has spent decades building a roster of aliases, allowing him to remain active within the Macharian Inquisition. Each one he can perform in person, using the scarce substance known as polymorphine, or from afar using various technologies to reroute his communications and shroud locations.

THRACIUS' ACTIVE ALIASES

NAME	TITLE	BELIEVED TO BE...
Kai Varol	Ordo Hereticus Inquisitor	Active in the Macharian Sector (Primary Alias)
Valerius Nabopalassar	Ordo Xenos Specialist	Working closely with Inquisitor Konstan Serranus as an Aeldari specialist
Bayezid Karvonan	Long-lost scion of the nobility of Harjus	Seeking to reclaim their position within the Harjus nobility
Selim Iaysus	Semi-legitimate scion of the Iaysus Rogue Trader Dynasty	Exploring the Drimor Subsector for trade opportunities

In his guise as Valerius Nabopalassar, Thracius has earned his closest allies in the Xenarites of the Adeptus Mechanicus, a radical sect of the cult of the Machine God, who deem the collection of alien knowledge their holy work. Far from their homeworld of Stygies VIII, a small Xenarite sect formed unnoticed on Eskutchax during a siege of the world from Chaos forces. The Black Templars’ arrival on the planet as reinforcement has driven the Xenarites to tighter secrecy; thus, interaction with Thracius has become a vital lifeline to their research, with Thracius’ acolytes readily equipped with xenos tech and wargear in return.





PARTY SUBTLETY

10-8	COVERT
7-5	SUSPICIOUS
4-2	OVERT
1	EXPOSED

Inquisition, Ordo Xenos

FACTION & ORDO

Isstvanist

PHILOSOPHY

DEMEANOUR

BOONS

Xenotechnician: Your Patron has two remarkably rare facets: an interest in proscribed xenos technology, and the power to keep these forbidden curiosities without being executed. Your Patron has no issue with your group looting and using xenos weaponry and other technology, and will in fact reward you for bringing these outlawed items to their private collection. Unfortunately, your Patrons unorthodox approval of such behaviour will do little to protect you from any other Imperial authorities.

LIABILITIES

Heretek: Your Patron regularly equips you with gear that falls far outside of the doctrines of Mars, with modifications even occasionally straying into the heresy of invention. At the start of a mission, each piece of otherwise-legal equipment you carry has a 5% chance of having some tech-heretical modifications. If agents of the Adeptus Mechanicus are encountered whilst on mission, they may try to confiscate and destroy the item, and attempt arrest of the character wielding it.

INFLUENCE

[illegible]

d10	Boon	Liability
1–2	Adeptus Mechanicus Instruction (<i>Imperium Maledictum</i> , page 29)	Convuluted Communicae (<i>Imperium Maledictum</i> , page 37)
3–4	Arms of the Alien (Aeldari) (<i>Inquisition Player's Guide</i> , page 32)	Enemy (<i>Imperium Maledictum</i> , page 38) (<i>Inquisitor Konstan Serranus</i> , page 71)
5–6	Forbidden Archive (<i>Imperium Maledictum</i> , page 32)	Excommunicated (<i>Imperium Maledictum</i> , page 38)
7–8	Sanctum Obscuris (<i>Imperium Maledictum</i> , page 35)	Offended the Ommissiah (<i>Imperium Maledictum</i> , page 40)
9–0	Tentative Alliance (<i>Imperium Maledictum</i> , page 36)	Suspect (<i>Imperium Maledictum</i> , page 41)



IV

RADICAL METHODS

In their ongoing investigations, acolytes are constantly pushed further towards the edge of their understanding; many are forced to bear the burden of knowledge simply to survive or complete their mission. Sometimes, Inquisitors see the logic in fighting fire with fire, using the damnable knowledge of the Ruinous Powers against their own daemonic influences. Most Inquisitors hide these methods from others — for if they are revealed, they may find themselves condemned by their peers and branded as heretics in their own right.

This chapter discusses the use of *Forbidden Knowledge* as player character Skill Specialisations and the ramifications of characters receiving and displaying such knowledge. Later, we discuss the mechanics of possession and exorcism, tools often used by radical Ordo Malleus Inquisitors and their acolytes to bind or expel daemons from realspace.

FORBIDDEN KNOWLEDGE

The Imperium and Inquisition suppress information for an array of grim reasons. The most obvious reason for restricting information is that the education of vast swathes of Imperial citizens is not pertinent to the survival of Humanity. They only need to know how to perform their simple, drudging duty to the Emperor. This ignorance further serves two additional purposes: it protects the minds of those billions upon billions of souls, and it makes it more difficult for the heretic, the mutant, and the xenos to hide among them.



Ignorance is a shield for much of the Imperium. Knowledge of Chaos, the Warp, and daemonkind can make Human souls vulnerable to their sinister predations. Like a vile infection, the threat of Warp-dabbling practices and technologies could grow unchecked, making the impossible odds the Inquisition faces daily even more daunting. The weight of panic and terror that could grip the labouring population of the Imperium if they knew of the dangers of not just daemons but of heretic Astartes, traitor guardsmen, and insidious xenos surrounding the sector would be too much.

Indeed, burning zealotry and faithful ignorance protect many such citizens and make them anathema to Chaos. Many Inquisitors of the Ordo Hereticus believe ignorance is critical to preventing the spread of heretical ideas, and can often aid in their hunt and persecution of heretics. Infractionists and cultists can expose themselves by what they know, how they act, and how they respond to certain revelations. This is useful not just in observations but also in investigations and interrogations. Furthermore, when the Inquisition discovers an effective method of eradicating their foes, they ensure none know of their techniques so it cannot be foiled or turned against them.

Sources of forbidden knowledge often lie in the minds of heretics. They sprout their corruption when tempted to preach or eternalise their dangerous ideas and methodologies in writing.

Other times, forbidden knowledge results from unsanctioned encounters with xenos species; knowledge is rarely gifted but inferred through heretical curiosity. Some ideas are not damned until much later when denounced by the Ministorum, Administratum, or Inquisition. People who become heretics by this happenstance are sometimes purged to maintain order and purity but otherwise should learn quickly to forget what they know.



EXAMPLES OF FORBIDDEN KNOWLEDGE

- ☠ A grimoire seized from a Chaos cult containing guidance on rituals to summon a daemon
- ☠ Understanding aspects of the Warp pertaining to daemonic entities or psychic powers
- ☠ A heretical text that analyses and denounces the God-Emperor as the saviour of Humankind
- ☠ The knowledge to construct, operate, modify, or repair xenos or daemonic technology
- ☠ Knowing the history or lore of any xenos species beyond what Imperial propaganda proscribes
- ☠ Analysis or medicae reports related to the anatomy of a xenos species
- ☠ Manuals or instruction in xenos or Imperium-restricted languages (such as Thoughtmark or Lingua Technis)
- ☠ Any information otherwise redacted by Inquisitorial order

GAINING FORBIDDEN KNOWLEDGE

The Talent *Forbidden Knowledge* (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 110) is a requirement for a character to gain various proscribed Skill Specialisations, including *Linguistics* (*Forbidden*), *Lore* (*Forbidden*), and *Medicae* (*Forbidden*). A character cannot purchase the Talent without the permission of the GM, but there are some situations wherein the Talent might be granted to a character to represent the mechanical consequences of a narrative development.

Example: *In the course of an Inquisitorial investigation, Acolyte Despina comes into possession of a terrible tome looted from a Chaos-worshipping heretic. She decides to study the tome to learn more about the heretic, their cult, or what power they might be serving so that she may more effectively eradicate the Emperor's enemies. The GM decides that such a study would require a **Difficult (–10) Linguistics (Cypher)** Test to decipher the grotesque scrawl and a **Difficult (–10) Discipline (Composure)** Test to resist the corrupting influences of the tome. Despina succeeds in both Tests, and the GM determines that she gleans a few clues as to the cult's beliefs and other activities and access to the Forbidden Knowledge Talent.*

While some Inquisitor Patrons are willing to impart dangerous knowledge upon their acolytes, knowing it could be helpful for the battles ahead despite the dangers of such knowledge, others are unwilling or untrusting. Inquisitors vary significantly in their philosophical approaches to their unending duty to the Imperium. Some seek plausible deniability in their acolytes by telling them little, whether they have a Radical or Puritan approach. Other Patrons tell their acolytes lies, like the greater Imperium; this might be for protection, or, depending on the nature of the Patron, it might even be a test. It is essential to consider how the Inquisitor treats their acolytes concerning knowledge, how they approach forbidden knowledge, and how it might affect other connected individuals. For example, is there a rival Inquisitor waiting for an opportunity to condemn them, or do they have Contacts among other Factions that also endeavour to learn forbidden knowledge?

USING FORBIDDEN KNOWLEDGE

Forbidden knowledge can serve as a remarkable temptation for Radical Inquisitors and acolytes. Many Inquisitors would use a daemon's true name to banish them; why are the steps toward more esoteric understandings of daemons and the Warp so immediately terrible? Knowledge is power, and the Inquisition fights on dangerous fronts of knowledge and the unknown, struggling to rationalise and make sense of what they encounter.

Depending on the source, forbidden knowledge is simply that: knowledge. This could involve information about the enemy's nature, strengths and weaknesses, and how to fight or banish them effectively. This could include discovering the true name of a daemon and the means to banish them. It could also include learning more about a specific xenos species, such as the weapons they use and how to detect, track, and fight them. Knowing this information could grant the characters Superiority (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 196), which can help turn the tables in their favour.

The Imperium and Inquisition play a dangerous game with knowledge, especially forbidden knowledge. By censoring knowledge about Chaos, the Warp, daemons, and various xenos topics, the individuals who express knowledge of these topics expose themselves to the Inquisition and other interested parties. This can play an essential part in investigation; if an NPC knows too much about a given topic that the Imperium considers forbidden or censored, the characters should be able to notice that and act on it.

THE BURDENS OF KNOWLEDGE

Learning and possessing this knowledge is fraught with peril, not merely from the dangers posed by other elements of the Inquisition or faithful members of the Imperium. Regardless of its form, some knowledge is so dangerous that it might exact a physical and spiritual toll or is so desired by various factions that the character is never safe with it in their possession. Some manifestations of forbidden knowledge are corrosive, corrupting, and subversive. They might be forbidden tomes of Warp knowledge that twist a character's perspectives of reality. Other information might be highly desired for the advantage it could give over other factions, xenos species, or the cosmos itself.

Example: *At the end of a raid on a cultist hideout, Icharus discovers a peculiar item on the leader's remains, something they were desperately reaching for during the fight. It is a cube of dark, iridescent metal, marked with symbols that writhe and crawl. The cube whispers with a hissing, sibilant voice. Icharus wants to give it a cursory examination to determine the item's nature, so the GM has him make a **Difficult (-10) Lore (Forbidden) Test**. Putting the clues together and succeeding on the Test, Icharus learns the cube is covered in forbidden sigils, and within it, a daemon is contained, able to answer questions and bequeath knowledge. Later in their investigations, Icharus uses the box to learn something about their ongoing investigation. The GM asks him to make a **Difficult (-10) Extended Test** that requires 6 SL, requiring at least one Lore (Forbidden) or Linguistics (Cypher) Test to make sense of the cryptic whispers and one Fortitude (Endurance) Test to resist the corrupting effects of the black cube. Each Test takes an hour, and each failed Test inflicts 1 point of Corruption. Possession of such an item could attract unwanted attention, especially from those who can identify the daemoniac nature of the cube. It could result in Chaos cultists seeking to retrieve it and even members of the Ordo Malleus seeking to execute the acolyte and destroy the box.*

Example: A team of acolytes are investigating a strange area of a feral world that is believed to be the source of psychic disruptions affecting the locals. After parsing ancient legends and rumours and crewing an expedition to ancient sites, the team find a curious structure jutting from the environment. Kappa, the tech-focused Savant, investigates the structure with a Tech (Engineering) Test. With an incredible roll, Kappa learns that the structure forms an Aeldari Webway gate. While Kappa spends time learning more about the structure, rumours of the Webway gate escape their expedition. This draws the attention of an Ordo Xenos Inquisitor, who prepares to hunt them down. Furthermore, Kappa's Contact within the Adeptus Mechanicus reaches out to get the information from him. Thanks to his investigation, should any xenos emerge from the Webway gate, the acolytes will be prepared and gain Superiority for avoiding surprises and fighting from prepared positions.

Example: In their persecution of a rogue psyker, Drusilla and her fellow acolytes discover a tome among the renegade's possessions. Drusilla spends some time examining the tome, and determines that it is an instructional tome on manipulating the power of the Immaterium, useful for psykers who might seek to expand their repertoire beyond what the Imperium sanctions. In secret, Drusilla seeks to learn from it new powers she might leverage against their foes. The GM asks her to make a **Difficult (-10) Extended Test** that requires 6 SL, requiring at least one Linguistics (High Gothic) and Psychic Mastery Test to follow the techniques presented and at least one Discipline (Psychic) Test to resist the energies of the Warp drawn to the unsanctioned and unfamiliar techniques. Drusilla succeeds in learning a new Psychic Power, knowing that more remain within the tome, but there is a strain upon her mind and soul.

WHEN THE SECRET IS OUT

If other entities in the world discover the characters are hoarding or learning from forbidden knowledge, many narrative consequences might arise. These could include garnering attention from other Inquisitorial agents or even the interests of heretical agents, like cultists or infractionists.

The Inquisition and its collected philosophies and approaches are divided. The Puritans of the Inquisition believe that possession of this knowledge is the first step on the road to the Radical and then the heretical. They think that by accepting this lore, this knowledge, the Inquisitor and their acolytes become damned and may end up serving the enemy. Other, more Radical approaches believe that only by knowing the tools of the enemy can true victory be achieved. Radicals often turn the tools of the enemy on themselves, wielding dangerous weapons, and consorting with xenos and daemonhosts to better ensure the Imperium stands another day.

For example, hunting a daemon or intending to bind it to a vessel for imprisonment often requires knowledge of the Warp and daemonkind, which is not common even among the Inquisition. Those who walk the Radical path claim that it is worth the danger of corruption to uncover tools that prevent and banish daemons or even turn those daemons against Chaos itself. Some Radical Inquisitors believe to know the Great Game of daemonkind, enough to turn the murderous forces of Khorne against the hedonites of Slaanesh, or the sorcerous changers of Tzeentch against the foetid daemons of Nurgle. Others believe this is the path of pure heresy and nothing more.



SEVERITY OF FORBIDDEN KNOWLEDGE			
	ORDO HERETICUS	ORDO MALLEUS	ORDO XENOS
Minor	Contact with Infracionist characters known to work with Radical Ordo Hereticus agents — such as hereteks, rogue psykers, and smugglers	Identifying knowledge of daemons, Chaos, and cults that would otherwise be censored	Knowledge of xenos wargear, how to obtain it, and how to use it
Major	Knowledge of Warp sorcery and forbidden psychic powers outside the bounds of the Imperium	Knowledge of how to summon and bind daemons, such as using daemonhosts or making Daemonblades	Knowledge of xenos services, and how to contact and use them, such as xenos bounty hunters or guides through frontier space
CONSEQUENCES OF FORBIDDEN KNOWLEDGE			
Societal Response	☠ Possession of forbidden knowledge attracts the attention of Imperial authorities (Arbites, Ministorum investigators and ultimately other Inquisitors) who seek to eradicate that knowledge and cleanse any in the Imperium — including the characters — who have learned of it. ☠ The characters attract attention from among their enemies, who seek to claim the knowledge they have, or further tempt them away from the Imperium — such as daemons willing to bargain, or perfidious Aeldari who seek to manipulate the characters in their xenos schemes.		
Negative Results	☠ Cult knowledge, the tools of infracionists, and consorting with abhumans or the wretched can weaken faith in the Imperium, and stain a soul akin to gaining Corruption. ☠ Knowledge of using recidivist resources could spread, impacting Subtlety.	☠ Interaction with tomes of Chaos, knowledge of the Warp, and more conveys Corruption. ☠ Any resulting daemonic activity in the area could cause Psychic Phenomena, thereby impacting Subtlety.	☠ Interaction with xenos creatures or wargear/devices can break the mind, or leave a stain on the psyche, equivalent to Corruption. ☠ Knowledge of consorting with xenos entities could spread, impacting Subtlety.
Positive Results	☠ Identifying cults and their differences. Gain Superiority when fighting related enemies.	☠ Knowledge of how to banish daemons and their capabilities. Gain Superiority when fighting related enemies.	☠ Knowledge of their tactics, weapons, and capabilities grants characters Superiority when fighting related enemies.



POSSESSION & EXORCISM

Among the enemies of the Imperium, even amidst the enemies of Chaos itself, there are few who are so corrupting and so malicious as the daemon. One of the greatest dangers such entities pose is their ability to possess a living soul, walking realspace in their shoes, with the potential to wreak unchecked havoc. While psykers are typically the most vulnerable, any creature — excluding those with the Pariah Gene — could face the danger of possession. The daemon could hide within its vessel for a time before any of the signs of possession manifest, allowing it to scheme and plot. And a possessed psyker, empowered by the madness and power of a daemon could unleash cataclysmic misery upon whole worlds.

The dangers of possession can arise in a campaign that faces Chaos, and the threats of daemons and the Immaterium. This might involve investigating and eliminating a Chaos-worshipping cult who seek to summon a daemon, offering one of their members as a host, or they might be tracking an individual already possessed, leaving a trail of destruction and corruption in their wake. The danger of daemonic possession could even be levelled against NPCs, such as those who fight alongside the characters or serve as Contacts and informants. Worse still, the characters themselves could face the danger of possession.

DEFINING DAEMONHOST

Daemons and daemonhosts are Chaos incarnate. Much information surrounding daemons and how they function is vague and sometimes contradictory. Daemonhost is a term used for a mortal whose body has been prepared to host a daemon's will or has been used in the past. However, the specifics of possessing a physical body vary greatly. As a GM, you can play into this, or determine how it works for your campaign in a way that better serves your narrative.

TRANSPARENCY AND CONSENT

Daemonic possession is not something to be trifled with — it is a horrendous fate from which most never recover, a loss of agency and identity every bit as substantial as death itself. As a GM, you should be careful before allowing a player character to fall victim to possession. It robs them of their agency, and, if handled authentically, will ultimately alter the player character's personality, goals, values, and more. Survivors of daemonic possession are rare, their insights into the nature of daemons are often valuable, but only if their psyche has survived the experience.

As a GM, you should not inflict this fate upon a character unless you are certain their player is an enthusiastic participant in the dark storytelling that must, by necessity, follow. This can be done simply by asking them, either at the table or between games. During play, be sure to telegraph what is happening and give them plenty of opportunity to plausibly escape. Make it clear, for example, that they are entering the lair of an unnatural entity, or that a cult they risk capturing has designs on binding a daemon into mortal flesh. As with most storytelling, foreshadowing a threat will make it more impactful, and will avoid springing a threat on players without the opportunity to prepare for it. Inform players that they can burn Fate to avoid possession (permanently reduce their fate to overcome a dire circumstance), giving them the opportunity to veto the experience should they wish (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 220).

If you think a player character becoming possessed may be a significant feature of your game, it is best to talk to your players about it well in advance. The best time to do this is session zero, as presented in *Imperium Maledictum* (page 305), and should certainly be discussed if your players are considering working for an Ordo Malleus Patron.

As always, remember the golden rule — *Imperium Maledictum* is a game and should be enjoyed by all its participants. If something would make a player, as opposed to their character, uncomfortable, just don't do it.

THE EFFECTS OF POSSESSION

Daemonic possession varies greatly, united only by the severe danger it poses. Over time, or rather quickly in the case of a sudden and forceful possession, the vessel will become twisted by the unnatural energies of the Warp, twisting into a horrible abomination. Daemonic possession has a limited duration. Eventually, the vessel will be consumed and destroyed, causing the daemon to return to the Warp, becoming exorcised. A possessing daemon has wildly different goals from another, they might simply seek wanton destruction or a more complex and subtle plan of corruption. Only the extremely fortunate individual can survive the harrowing process of possession and then undergo the rigours of exorcism, removing the daemon, and leaving the vessel alive.

Characters who face possession will not typically face a dramatic and total possession. Instead, it will normally be the result of failing to deal with the consequences of exposing oneself to various things; forbidden tomes, forbidden knowledge, bargaining for secrets, or exposure to psychic powers and perils of the Warp. When the narrative opportunity arises, it should be clear to the players the consequences of engagement and failure. The controlling player and the GM should work together to understand how the daemon affects the character, and how this affects roleplaying. Determine how the daemon might prey upon specific emotions or motivations of the player, and how the daemon might twist these for its own goals. This is also true of NPC possession, as a GM consider how the presence of the daemon can affect an NPC's personality over time. The GM should consider the type of possessing daemon. Sometimes this will be a natural effect of the narrative; if the characters are specifically hunting a daemonic nemesis, you should have a strong idea who this daemon is, what it wants, and what it is capable of.

Example: *Icharus, the acolyte who recovered a daemonic black cube from a raid on cultists, has used the cube to learn more about their enemies, and has gleaned forbidden knowledge from the daemon trapped within. Throughout their investigations, Icharus has earned Corruption from the cube, and in his latest attempt to learn something from the cube, he miserably fails his Discipline Test. The GM knows that the daemon wants out of the cube, and Icharus has suffered Corruption from its use.*

A bridge has been made, and with the player previously well-informed about the consequences, the GM decides that the box fails to answer, and Icharus gains Corruption. Worse still, though Icharus will not know immediately, the daemon has begun to possess him. The GM can use the bestiary to find the profile of a daemon that matches; a Pink Horror, a daemon of Tzeentch, matches the kind of daemon that would be bound to such an item.

Characters possessed by daemons ignore the upper cap limits of Corruption (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 224), ignoring when they have more Mutations than their Toughness Bonus or Malignancies more than their Willpower Bonus. Under daemonic possession, their Corruption levels can skyrocket, relating to how deeply the daemon has dug their claws into the character's soul.



As a possessed character gains Corruption, they progress along the Possession Tracker. When they are first possessed, the character gains 2d10 Corruption immediately — which can cause them to gain Mutations or Malignancies as normal. When a character gains enough Corruption to reach the threshold of another possession type, they change.

POSSESSION TRACKER		
CORRUPTION LEVELS	POSSESSION TYPE	RESISTING/ CONTROLLING THE DAEMON
01–30	The Puppet	Difficult (–10)
31–60	The Gateway	Hard (–20)
61–99	The Vessel	Very Hard (–30)
100	The Chosen	Impossible

THE PUPPET (01–30 CORRUPTION)

A subtle form of possession, the daemon remains within the Warp but uses a conduit or channel to the victim to begin to suffuse their soul with part of its daemonic essence. The puppet is usually unaware of what is occurring, but the daemon can begin to exhibit control over the puppet's actions, behaviours, and even their perceptions.

At this stage, the daemon can attempt to exert minor control over the possessed character by encouraging and empowering certain behaviours. When the possessed character attempts a Skill Test that matches the Skills of the possessing daemon, the GM can have the daemon add +2 SL to the Test, but the character gains 2 Corruption. The possessed character can attempt to resist with a **Challenging (+0) Discipline (Composure)** Test, decreasing Corruption gained by 1 point for every positive SL.

THE GATEWAY (31–60 CORRUPTION)

The victim becomes aware of the possessing daemon — perhaps as it progresses from a prior possession — and the daemon begins to exert more influence over the victim, temporarily taking full control in violent or chaotic blackout moments.

During moments of heightened emotion, when the character is at risk of gaining Corruption, or when the GM decides it serves the narrative, the daemon can attempt to exert control over the character. The controlling character can attempt to resist by making a **Discipline (Composure)** Test, the Difficulty determined by the **Possession Tracker** Table. If they fail, the daemon takes control for a number of minutes of narrative time, or 1d5 rounds plus 1 additional round for every –1 SL. Additionally, the character suffers 1 Corruption for every –1 SL on a failed Test.



UNLEASH THE DAEMON

A possessed character can draw upon the daemonic energies within them to gain leverage during a battle or gain an edge when making a Test. The controlling character makes a **Discipline (Composure)** Test, the Difficulty determined by the **Possession Tracker** Table. If they succeed, they can choose to gain one of the following bonuses:

- +2 SL to a Skill Test that matches the possessing daemons type, such as *Awareness* or *Lore* for Tzeentchian Daemons; *Rapport* or *Reflexes* for Slaaneshi Daemons; *Fortitude* or *Medicae* for Nurgle Daemons; and *Athletics* for Khornate Daemons.
- Gain the use of a Talent associated with the daemon, or at the GM's discretion, for a number of hours equal to the character's WilB + the decimal number of their current Corruption.
- The character gains a surge of vitality and recovers Wounds equal to their WilB + the decimal number of their current Corruption.

The controlling character then gains 1d5 Corruption. If the character fails their Test, they still gain the boon for a single Action or a single minute of narrative time, but the daemon then takes control as if the character had failed to resist the daemon.

THE VESSEL (61–99 CORRUPTION)

In the case of sudden possession, or as the result of the daemon gaining more control, the victim's mind and soul are imprisoned and put to one side, and the daemon wears their flesh without restraint. It is only a matter of time before the rampant mutations and corruption become untenable for the flesh. There are very brief windows wherein the victim can, for mere minutes, gain some control over their body once more.

Possessed characters can fight for control of their body and attempt to wrest it away from the daemon for a very short period of time. The character can do this a number of times per day equal to their Willpower Bonus (WilB). They make a **Fortitude (Endurance)** Test, Difficulty equal to resisting the daemon in the **Possession Tracker** Table. If they are successful, they assume control for 1d5 rounds plus 1 additional round for every +1 SL on the Test, or if using narrative time, the same number of minutes.

THE CHOSEN (100+ CORRUPTION)

Those devoted to Chaos may open themselves up to a daemon, freely allowing it to possess their body and wreak havoc, or an unfortunate character may have had one trapped inside them for a considerable amount of time, scraping away at its confines, aiming to take total control. The character is possessed as normal, but the daemon gains full control immediately.

Whenever the chosen daemonhost is required to make a Test or take an Action, they can assume the characteristics of the vessel or the daemon, gaining 2 Corruption each time they use the daemons characteristics. Furthermore, the daemon can Unleash the Daemon (page 81) anytime it chooses, gaining Corruption and warping their flesh vessel without restraint.

A character who gains 100 Corruption while possessed will gain this possession type. There is no hope for a character when they reach this point. The daemon within can choose at any time to wholly sacrifice the vessel to manifest in realspace.

The Daemonhost stat-block on page 172 represents a character in The Vessel stages (61–99 Corruption). They begin with 70 Corruption, or otherwise choose a number within this range when deploying them.

EXORCISING DAEMONS

Mortals who become possessed by a daemon rapidly succumb to the suffusing Warp energies, the rampant and unceasing corrosive stain upon their souls, and the madness that seeps into the mind twists their perceptions and taints their thoughts. Senior members of the Inquisition and Adeptus Ministorum argue about the potential for exorcism, what methods work, when and why to attempt it, and whether it is even possible. Many would insist that once possessed, it is better to destroy both the vessel and the daemon and be done with it, while some more Radical Inquisitors see the potential use in a mind and soul touched by the Warp and the powers of a daemon.

An exorcism can be attempted for a possessed individual. It is believed an exorcism, rooted in the occult and forbidden, can take many forms. Preparations, and methods, vary greatly. Some are approached as a test of faith, surrounded by icons of the Emperor, specially crafted incense choking the air, and clerics singing and chanting hymns and prayers. A more profane approach might involve symbols of banishment, occult and forbidden phrases and words of power, and the sacrifice of pure and corrupt souls in exchange for the vessel. Daemons are so multitudinous in form and will that no singular method works against all.

The potential for exorcism is a decision left to the GM. It might involve an Extended Test at a Difficulty determined by the current Corruption, as seen in the **Possession Tracker** Table. The Extended Test could use *Lore (Forbidden)*, *Psychic Mastery (Various)*, and *Discipline (Composure)* or *Discipline (Psychic)*, though the GM may reward creativity or careful and thematic preparation. The SL of the Extended Test is determined by the Corruption total of the possessed individual. When the SL reaches the Corruption total, the daemon is exorcised, and the character regains total control over their body once more. They immediately gain the *Tainted Vessel* Talent at no cost (*Inquisition Player's Guide*, page 67).



SUMMONING DAEMONS

Cultists, in their accursed rituals, often attempt to use a daemonhost to summon daemons into realspace. As the GM, you can handle this in a purely narrative sense or reverse the method of exorcism previously described to track how far along their summoning ritual they are, corrupting the vessel over several rounds or days given their timescale. Consider the cult making an appropriate Test and adding their SL to the vessel's Corruption, eventually reaching 100 Corruption or beyond to manifest the daemon.



BINDING DAEMONS

Characters can attempt to bind daemons, taking their essence from the Warp and containing it within a physical medium — be it a damned Daemonhost, holy relic, or technological construct thought to be strong enough to include it. Characters may wish to pursue this dangerous method to seal a threat away for an extended period, capture the daemon in question to extract fell knowledge from it, or exploit the monster for its raw power.

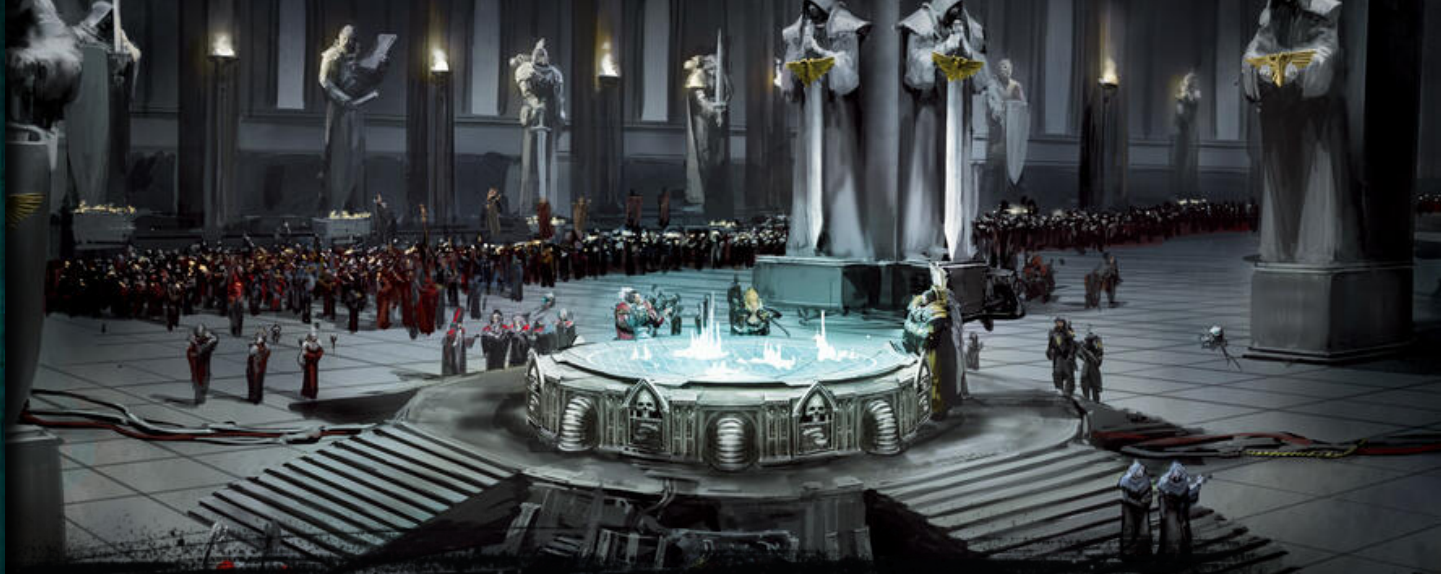
Conducting the ritual requires the characters involved to make a Group Extended Test similar to the one described in Exorcising Daemons (page 82), except here they should aim for a certain number of successes, determined by the daemon's Role:

- ☠ **Troop** = 25 Successes (*Minor Exposure*)
- ☠ **Elite** = 50 Successes (*Moderate Exposure*)
- ☠ **Leader** = 75 Successes (*Major Exposure*)

Additionally, characters can pursue the *Learn a True Name* and *Prepare a Ritual of Binding* Long-term Endeavours (*Inquisition Player's Guide*, pages 135–136) in advance to prepare and strengthen themselves for a binding, gaining the benefits described in each Endeavour.

GMs are encouraged to generate complications throughout this ritual: have the daemon lash out at the characters, attempt to possess one of them, try to distract them, or affect the surroundings. Characters involved must make a Test to resist the levels of Corruption listed on this page. Substantial failures or Fumbles throughout the ritual could increase the Difficulty of their Extended Test or easily result in an effect generated from the **Psychic Phenomena** or **Perils of the Warp** Tables (*Imperium Maledictum*, pages 164–165).

Binding a daemonhost (*Inquisition Player's Guide*, page 136) this way results in the host starting with Corruption equal to the successes on the corresponding Extended Test thresholds listed on this page. Physical contact with relics used to bind a daemon becomes a source of Corruption, the amount depending on the Role of the daemon trapped within.



THE HERESIES MACHARIA

Inquisitor Lord Hieronymo Drake is dead. Before the veil of the Noctis Aeterna lifted from Belnshudha (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 266), cut off from the rest of the sector, Drake and his forces fought on the planet's surface. To his horror, the Inquisitor realised he had underestimated the enemy's strength. Where Drake expected an entrenched cult, he found a company of heretic Astartes anointing a Noctilith Crown with the blood of fools who had rallied to their heretical banner. The foul traitors called forth endless scores of daemons from the Warp, threatening to provide the Ruinous Powers with a foothold at the heart of the sector. Ultimately, the Inquisitor Lord had no choice but to order an *Exterminatus* of the planet while remaining trapped on the surface. Without their sacrifice, the Cytheris Subsector and the rest of the Macharian Sector would be lost.

The remaining Inquisitors of the Macharian Sector have carried on without an Inquisitor Lord ever since, free from Drake's scrutiny. Though he commanded their respect, Drake was sometimes, in the eyes of his peers, far too conservative in his methods. The Inquisitors have been left to their own devices for too long, without coordination or cooperation, and mired in their increasingly radical methods without checks or balances.

But all that is about to change. Drake's former Interrogator, now elevated to the position of Inquisitor herself, **Sylvestrine Horst** (page 66) sees a great opportunity: to unite the Inquisitors of the sector in a series of Conclaves and coordinate their efforts against the sector's most significant threats and eventually see a new Inquisitor Lord put in place. But can the other Inquisitors truly trust **Horst** in this endeavour? Is she simply invoking her mentor's name and towering reputation to elevate her position, or does she have an ulterior motive in mind?

Horst's summons is the inciting incident behind the **Heresies Macharia**, a decades-spanning Inquisition campaign framework for *Imperium Maledictum*. A series of seven Conclaves, gathering the Inquisitors of the sector and their retinues together in one place, provides an opportunity to share leads and resources. Each Inquisitor has reasons to attend the Conclave and hear their fellows out. Some earnestly believe unity can be found; others believe that strife breeds strength or wish to keep an eye on their rivals.

Your characters and their Patron are attendees of these Conclaves, privy to the arguments and rumoured perils. Each Conclave influences the party's subsequent missions, the trials and threats they face for the coming years, and the horrors they must conquer before the next Conclave. But heresy is everywhere, hidden across the sector, even in the dark corners of Mare Cinis. Problems left unchecked anywhere fester into sector-threatening horrors. Each Inquisitor schemes to save the Imperium in their own distinct way, and their intense politicking within the Holy Orders often consumes those who participate in it.



RUNNING CONCLAVES

The **Heresies Macharia** campaign framework is punctuated by a series of seven Inquisitorial Conclaves, with years set aside between each one for characters and their Patrons to complete their missions, follow up on their own tasks, and return in time to Mare Cinis for the next one to begin. It is intended that GMs build their own threats, missions, and opportunities around and on top of these events, with the Heresies Macharia providing mission outlines and larger plots as a backdrop. To make the characters' involvement more personal and tailored to the players' desires, the GM must work hard to bring everything together.

Each Conclave, laid out across the chapter, presents the following information:

- ☠ **Dramatis Personae:** Who among the sector's Inquisitors have attended this Conclave. Apart from the first Conclave, not every Inquisitor will participate in each gathering. Inquisitors are not bound to the authority of their peers and may be busy elsewhere, resolving what they deem to be more critical issues.
- ☠ **Intrigues:** Rumours and secrets characters can hunt down outside main Conclave sessions, including new Contacts and resources they can acquire. These intrigues may point to fallout from previous Conclaves, set up side missions for characters to pursue in the years between, or seed future Strifes.
- ☠ **Strifes:** These points represent the main issues discussed at the Conclave, including which Inquisitors are bringing them forward and who might stand against them. Typically, there will be two to three Strifes to discuss per Conclave, each with its own Operation (an outline of the mission or missions related to resolving the Strife) and Outcome (what happens if the party is successful or not, and what might happen if another Inquisitor deals with the problem instead).

YOUR PATRON

The Heresies Macharia allow parties to follow any of the six sample Patrons provided (pages 62–73) or add their own Inquisitor Patron to the mix, allowing them to bring their own concerns to each Conclave. Consider how the other Inquisitors might react to their presence and goals. Depending on their Ordo or Philosophy, they could be friendly or antagonistic towards them, and the same goes for their acolytes.

The Heresies Macharia has been designed with Inquisitorial Patrons in mind, but other Faction Patrons can participate. Such a Patron would be at an extreme disadvantage when faced with the all-consuming authority of the Inquisition and would likely quickly become subject to the will of one or more of the Inquisitors present. While this may present exciting opportunities for storytelling, deception, and intrigue, we recommend that parties select an Inquisitor Patron.



REWARDING PATRONS

As the campaign progresses, player characters are rewarded or punished for their efforts. The GM should reward their Patron in the same manner. The Outcome of each Conclave summarises what happens in the world and alterations to the involved Patron's Legitimacy scores (page 89), but there are two other ways a Patron can grow.

Primarily, the Patron can be rewarded or docked Influence (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 193). Consider the Factions they or the party involve themselves with during the Strife. How do those Factions feel about the Patron — and, by extension, the behaviour of their acolytes — by the end? Reward or remove a point of Influence accordingly.

Secondly, there are additional Boons and Liabilities. Reward these in the event of extreme success or devastating failure. The Macharian Sector's sample Inquisitor Patrons (pages 62–73) each have a table of suggested boons and liabilities to choose from, but you are not limited to them. If the group created their own Patron, as GM, you should look at the options available in advance — do any tie into potential plots and outcomes? On the other hand, a Patron can lose a Boon they already have if it no longer makes sense for them to have access to that Boon. The same goes for Liabilities if the outcome of the Strife allows the Patron to 'overcome' that Liability for good.

CONCLAVE PROCESS

Enough happens at Inquisitorial Conclaves for them to be considered missions or sessions in and of themselves. The following list outlines the general process we advise when running a Conclave.



1. **Describe the characters' arrival.** How did they reach Suluk? Did they arrive in plenty of time, or are the meetings about to begin? Did they travel with their Inquisitor, or are they already in attendance?
2. **Tell the players which characters are in attendance.** Give the players a rundown of the Inquisitors present and any noticeable characters in their retinues or witnesses brought into the Conclave halls (*see each Conclave's Dramatis Personae and Intrigues sections*).
3. **Tell them what Strifes are on the agenda.** In the central chambers of the Mare Cinis facility, the Inquisitors read the Conclave's agenda. Be sure to include who is involved in each Strife and indicate any supposed threats (*see each Strife's tagline for a quick summary*). Consider what Inquisitors not directly involved in the Strife think of it, though most may consider these events to be not worth their time.
4. **Give the players time to investigate.** As the Patrons gather in the central chambers to debate, the players have time to search the Mare Cinis facility and uncover more information. Some of the helpful activities they can pursue are as follows:
 - a. **Investigate other Inquisitors and their retinues.** Find out what the other Inquisitors are up to. Dig deep enough, and they can find clues to indicate any Radical behaviour, hidden goals, or philosophies — though they should watch their backs, as other acolytes will be doing the same.
 - b. **Investigate Mare Cinis.** The Inquisition facility on Suluk is a labyrinthine hold containing a wealth of Ordo-gathered information and secrets. They might find something to aid their characters or Patron in the missions ahead or uncover hidden aspects of the Strifes being discussed.
 - c. **Attend Conclave meetings.** Though it may be difficult to gain entry to the central chamber at times, listening carefully to the Inquisitors and their debates can reveal hidden enmities, alliances, and philosophies that could be relevant later. Some characters may have to provide witness testimony or information pertinent to the matters at hand.
 - d. **Look into additional Intrigues.** There may be more going on at each Conclave than what is discussed within the central chambers. Characters can gather threads, Contacts, and clues for more missions or look into anything of personal relevance.
5. **Present their findings to their Patron.** Here, the Patron has asked the player characters to provide a report on any new information they have gathered about the current Strifes. Players debate and decide among themselves — much like the Inquisitors within the central chambers — which Strife they are interested in pursuing as a group. As GM, roleplay the Patron much like you would in a mission briefing (page 59). The Patron may have interest in one Strife over another if it involves their Philosophy or rivals, but the final choice should ultimately land with the players.
6. **Depart for the mission.** Give characters time to make any last actions, check the Inquisitorial archives on Mare Cinis, for example, or gather any gear from the moon's stockpiles. Decide whether or not their Patron is accompanying them or if they have other important matters to attend to.

If players are stuck, unsure of what they can do (during step #4), their Patron could urge them to investigate one thing in particular or present a few options. It could benefit their cell if all the options are covered, or they could work together to tackle a single mystery.

ACOLYTE AGENCY

Though primarily the Patron and other Inquisitors lead the debates at each Conclave, as GM, encourage your players to discuss these dire issues among themselves. What do they believe is the best course of action? You can take these discussions further and allow your players to take on the guise of the Inquisitors present and roleplay the arguments between them. Present everyone at the table with each Conclave's Strifes, and let them discuss where they think it is best to go next as a group (though keep the particulars of the Operations and Outcomes to yourself). From this, you will better understand their desired direction for the campaign.

Bring their debates to a close in the form of a report: the Patron requests the characters' input in the form of an official report with their recommendations for action attached. The Patron is by no means bound by their deliberations, but as GM, the Patron's opinion should reflect what the players desire to pursue.

Remind the players that the Inquisition cannot be everywhere simultaneously, despite the propaganda they perpetuate among the citizenry. Ensure the players understand they alone cannot tackle all the new Strifes presented. You will need to track what issues have been left to other Inquisitors to resolve and what problems are discarded entirely. These situations may return in worse states later if not dealt with at all, and you can seed these into future Conclaves via new Strifes or Intrigues of your own design.

INTRIGUES, RUMOURS AND THREATS

The time players have to investigate Mare Cinis outside the central chambers is the perfect opportunity to introduce new Contacts, rumours and ancillary missions into your Heresies Macharia campaign. Each Conclave's Intrigues section provides some pertinent options, mostly related to the current Strifes. Still, those say nothing of what the players' Patron or characters wish to personally pursue — to further the goals of their philosophy or work towards defeating a particular threat or nemesis.

During a Conclave, Mare Cinis is a goldmine of information. Specialists from every Ordo Majoris are in attendance, including agents seconded to the Inquisition from every Faction within the Adeptus Terra. But schedules are tight, and security is high; characters must barter and politick their way into face-to-face meetings, especially with other Inquisitors. Often, it is best to start with members of their outer circles and work their way in, trading small favours and nuggets of information themselves.

Moreover, the moon's halls echo with whispers and rumours. Outside the central chambers is a veritable information market, but few words are traded freely. Acolytes and agents from across the Macharian Sector are present, and everyone is searching for something — volatile rumours, weaponised secrets, new information to curry favour with their Inquisitor or just a solid favour. As GM, consider what your characters are looking for and who could provide it to them. At the same time, characters should consider what occurrences, clues, and assets from previous missions they could trade for favours or new information.

Characters should not forget the most significant threats to the Macharian Sector may well be present in the Conclave's halls. The Inquisitors are among the most powerful and dangerous mortals in the sector, and so is much of the company they keep. They may have been brought together to combat the sector's threats, but with all the sector's Inquisitors in one place, there is a greater chance they will get in each other's way, and acolytes are easily trodden over. Members of their retinues may serve multiple masters, those who expect their involvement with the Inquisition to bear recompense and are looking for angles of their own. So, characters should tread carefully — there are ample records of brazen backstabbing and betrayals in the central chambers of Mare Cinis alone.

MARE CINIS

Each Conclave gathers on Suluk, a moon of Persepolis (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 262). All that remains on the moon is an ancient Imperial outpost surrounded by a great ash plain dubbed the Mare Cinis. Long ago, the Inquisition cleansed the moon when its people accepted xenos aid during a daemonic incursion. They have since blockaded the moon, preventing anyone but Inquisitorial retinues and their agents from landing there. The Inquisitors have reappropriated parts of the base as lodgings, storage or datavaults, and the deepest levels of the facility hold hidden caches of forbidden knowledge and secret chambers.

Persepolis is located at the heart of the Cytheris Subsector. The hive world is the capital of the Macharian Sector and is a major crossroad and point of pilgrimage for citizens. Inquisitors and their acolytes have little trouble securing transport to arrive in time to join the Conclave.

MAJOR PLOTLINES

As characters weave through the ongoing Strifes of the Heresies Macharia, a number of major plotlines continue to build and progress in the background. As GM, you should be aware of and keep track of these elements and their potential repercussions.

THE INTERROGATOR ELEVATED

Gathering the Inquisitors of the sector together is no trifling matter, and **Sylvestrine Horst** knows this; the other Inquisitors could consider her a troubling upstart or see through her plans from the get-go, and the consequences could conceivably end in violence. But she has been planning the Macharian Conclaves for a long time and finally believes it is worth the risk to put them into action.

Primarily, **Horst** intends to gain the favour of her fellow Inquisitors to either reach the position of Inquisitor Lord herself or elevate someone she judges worthy of the position (or someone she can manipulate). Either way, this would improve her authority in the sector and open doors for her to achieve her other goals.

Secondarily, **Horst** desires to know what led to the death of her former master, Inquisitor Lord Hieronymo Drake, on the planet Belnshudha. **Horst** already investigated Battle Group Fortis to exhaustion, and those ordered to enact *Exterminatus* upon the planet found little to pursue. But her investigation is a cover for her misdeeds and the actual actions that led to her ascension. Now she is cleaning up her former master's messes, hearing utterances of the 'Kryptman Protocol' loosely tied to Drake's previous activities that she wishes to thoroughly investigate in secret.

THE KRYPTMAN PROTOCOL

The truth is this: Hieronymo Drake spent the latter years of his life seeding a network of loyal acolytes and sleeper agents throughout various institutions across the sector, including the Astra Militarum and Navis Imperialis. These agents are charged with a singular task: upon receipt of a code phrase known only to Drake, hidden hypno-indoctrinated orders within their minds are revealed, compelling them to action. By utilising the resources and authority they had accumulated, they are to use the Imperium's arsenals to ravage numerous worlds along the border of the Macharian Sector and render them lifeless. Each agent knew only of their specific task, which was often hidden in the depths of their mind.

None save Drake knew of the scale of destruction this secretive cabal would unleash.

The Kryptman protocol intends to create a cordon of lifeless worlds, a firebreak to prevent Leviathan from feeding on the sector's biomass. This stalls the inevitable invasion and buys time until the Imperium can find a better solution. But even Drake lacked the will to use this weapon before the Hive Fleet's arrival, knowing the sacrifice of billions of lives and countless productive worlds would alter the Macharian Sector for centuries.

He considered it entirely possible that, in saving the heart of the sector, he would condemn it to a conflagration of civil strife and privation to equal that of the Macharian Heresy. He kept all this a secret from the rest of the Inquisition, partially out of fear that his work would become undone and because Drake feared that the High Lords of Terra would find out and force his hand and sacrifice the Macharian Sector to protect Segmentum Solar.

EXCOMMUNICATE TRAITORIS

Inquisitor **Eskender Thracius** (page 72) of the Ordo Xenos treads on thin ice. He has avoided contact with the rest of the Inquisition for decades to further his Istvanist goals without any of his peers getting in the way, but he knows that Inquisitor **Konstan Serranus**, a Puritan member of the Ordo Xenos, is on his tail. **Serranus** knows that **Thracius** has consorted with the Aeldari and that alone is enough for **Serranus** to think of him a traitor.

However, **Thracius** is a self-aware adherent of Radical Istvanist philosophy (page 18); he knows that many see his actions as heretical and that their interference is expected, so **Thracius** has spent decades preparing for a personal shadow campaign to continue his efforts hidden from the Inquisition's oversight. Primarily, he has established numerous false identities, some amongst the Inquisition itself, employing psychic powers and the potent shape-changing chemical polymorphine to shroud his true identity.

As the Macharian Inquisition is called to Conclave, the time has come for him to fake his death and disappear into the background, allowing his carefully constructed aliases to thrive and effectively take his place. Furthermore, **Thracius** does not trust **Horst's** intentions at face value. He even suspects the former Interrogator of having plotted against her master. After all, too many Inquisitors fall afoul of assassination by their own Interrogator.

Was there even a Noctolith Gate on Belnshudha to begin with? Furthermore, **Thracius** knows enough about the Kryptman Protocol to piece together some version of the truth — might **Horst** be an Agent of the High Lords of Terra tasked with intentionally sacrificing the sector?

At the very least, **Thracius** knows that these Conclaves might rattle the cages of the Macharian Inquisition and may compromise his identity. Thankfully, he still has a seat at the table under the guise of Inquisitor **Kai Varol**. An Ordo Xenos Inquisitor who rose from the ashes of the Noctis Aeterna, a hero of the Imperium that repelled xenos invasions through the years of blinding, has become well-established within the Macharian Sector. Impersonating another Inquisitor is an incredibly fraught prospect, but **Thracius** has the advantage of being one. His only means of survival may be to nudge the Inquisition, as a whole, carefully in the right direction or even go as far as claiming the title of Inquisitor Lord for himself.

THE HERALD'S HOWL

For generations, the Genestealer Cults of the Macharian Sector have been slowly infecting its worlds, seeding their tainted lineage among the people and patiently awaiting the inevitable arrival of their star-borne saviours. But many within the cults are not content to wait for their day of ascension; they intend to hasten the fated arrival of the Tyranid Hive Mind and have concocted a horrifying plan that spans multiple worlds, one the Inquisition must act upon or risk losing the entire sector.

The unintelligible minds of the Patriarch alliance have instructed their cults to abduct Human psykers, conjoining them into a horrifying union of chitin and soft encephalic flesh, thrumming with psychic energy. A grotesque mass of neural matter capable of projecting a monumental psychic wail. The Maguses' have dubbed this the Herald's Howl, intended as an unignorable signal to summon their longed-for star gods, a beacon screaming, *'Come to us! We have found worlds ripe for your enlightenment!'*

Whether this gruesome plot will achieve its intended goal is impossible to tell. If the Herald's Howl succeeds, they might accelerate the arrival of Hive Fleet Leviathan in the Macharian Sector, hastening it by generations. Even if the profane ritual fails, Inquisitors of the Ordo Malleus suspect that such a massive gathering of psychic potential may provide an open door to daemonkind — thereby trading a xenos threat for a grand-scale daemononic incursion.

Ultimately, the characters and their Patron's actions will decide how the Herald's Howl resolves. Some of the most likely outcomes are thus:

- ☠ They might seek to destroy the Herald's Howl before it can draw the attention of the Hive Fleet.
- ☠ A Radical group might seek to nullify the Howl somehow but preserve it for study.
- ☠ They might fail to deal with the Howl entirely, forcing them to enact the Kryptman Protocol.
- ☠ They might let the Herald's Howl come to fruition, luring a tendril of Leviathan away from Holy Terra. A group which has uncovered the Kryptman Protocol might seek to use Drake's hidden network to combat the Tyranids when they arrive.

AN INQUISITOR LORD ASCENDS

In serving the goals of the Conclave, each Inquisitor's actions in the field further their legitimacy as a successor to Inquisitor Lord Drake. This is not an election between the sector's Inquisitors but rather an ascension to a higher position based on their actions and presence of power. Throughout the Heresies Macharia, each Inquisitor is given a Legitimacy score to track the development of an Inquisitor's worthiness.

- ☠ This score starts at zero for each Inquisitor.
- ☠ An Inquisitor's Legitimacy score should not be shared directly with the players.
- ☠ If they wish to find out which Inquisitors are in the running, they can investigate during a Conclave (similar to gauging their Subtlety) to see who is ahead.

Each Strife's Outcome includes a Legitimacy increase for the characters' Patron (or the Inquisitor their Patron serves) if they successfully resolve the Strife. If they do not work to resolve the Strife, another Inquisitor will take the opportunity to do so, with the Outcome section indicating which Inquisitor increases their Legitimacy instead.

At the final Conclave (page 116), the Inquisitor with the highest Legitimacy score has demonstrated that they alone exhibit the capacity to hold rank and respect as Inquisitor Lord. By taking the boldest actions, they will have shown the will to act where others would hesitate, the pragmatism to know what must be excised for the survival of the Imperium as a whole, and the wisdom contained in their own philosophy as a means to enact the God-Emperor's will. However, note that this position will not free an Inquisitor from rivalry; their opponents may continue to work against them in the shadows.

CONCLAVE I

For the first time since the end of the Noctis Aeterna, an Inquisitorial Conclave has been called on Suluk. In a glass-domed assembly chamber, with a view to the distant hive spires of Persepolis far below, six Inquisitors and their allies have gathered to determine the fate of the Macharian Sector.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

The six Inquisitors operating in the Macharian Sector, including their retinues and representative allies, are in attendance at the first Conclave. The GM should ensure that the characters can meet with or learn about each of the six Inquisitors during this first Conclave.



SYLVESTRINE HORST

(Page 66, Ordo Hereticus) **Horst** bears herself with a calm determination. She has yet to appoint an Interrogator but is accompanied by a retinue of acolytes clad in gold masks, each one the face of an Imperial saint. They precede members of the Sisters Famulous from the Adepta Sororitas Order of the Hallowed Glass.

KONSTAN SERRANUS

(Page 70, Ordo Xenos) **Konstan Serranus** is a dour and zealous man; his augmetic arm is a testament to his absolutism. A retinue of heavily augmented acolytes and a Magos representing the Tech-Priests of Eskutchax accompanies him.



ALIS RAUD

(Page 68, Ordo Malleus) Tall, heavily armoured, and resolute, **Alis Raud** has all the bearing that many would imagine of an Inquisitor. Accompanying her are representatives of her myriad contacts — noble house agents, Rogue Trader associates, and Navis Imperialis officers.



AEGIDIUS HALIKARN

(Page 64, Ordo Hereticus) **Aegidius Halikarn** is watched warily by the other Inquisitors, for his pursuit of heretics is dogged and absolute, having excised corruption from within sacred Imperial institutions. The known Radical leads a compact retinue comprised of older yet hardened agents: former Tempestus Scions, and other soldiers recruited from among the specialised ranks of the Astra Militarum.



KAI VAROL

(Page 72, Ordo Xenos, alias of **Eskender Thracius**) **Kai Varol** comes across as wise and furtive, accompanied by specialists from the Imperial Fleet. He mainly watches the proceedings, observing with cold calculation, speaking only when he feels the moment is right.

KSENIA BAEK

(Page 62, Ordo Hereticus) **Ksenia Baek** is an intense woman whose dominant psychic presence breeds discomfort in her peers. She leads a cadre of psykers, members of her retinue and representatives of the Adeptus Astra Telepathica.



INTRIGUES

The presence of so many Inquisitors, their retinues, and their allies provides characters with ample opportunity to make Contacts who may later prove helpful to them and their Patron. Among the attendees are:

- ♣ **Antonius Tavnir**, a representative of House Taval of the Merchant Fleet (page 104)
- ♣ **Sister Famulous Lysara** of the Order of the Hallowed Glass, operating among the nobility on Xenophon (page 96)
- ♣ **Magos Tal-Theta 661** of the Adeptus Mechanicus serving on the forge world Eskutchax
- ♣ **Knight-Centura Augustina**, a Sister of Silence of the Adeptus Astra Telepathica (page 103)
- ♣ **Kharket Graan**, an astropath in service to Ksenia Baek (page 62)

Mare Cinis holds intrigues beyond the glut of attendees. The Inquisitorial base contains a wealth of information accessible to those with vermillion-level clearance, access to much of which can also be granted by an Inquisitor to their acolytes if justified. The datavaults and libraries include records of heretic activity dating back to the Macharian Crusade and beyond, ancient accounts passed down from Inquistitor to Inquisitor. However, access may be limited due to the sheer number of other acolytes competing for the same assets or information — but this may provide an opportunity for the characters to learn about what may be of interest to the other retinues.

STRIFE I-A The Void Stalker

Inquisitor Eskender Thracius of the Ordo Xenos is presumed dead. A shattered Aeldari battleship lies at the edge of the sector — one Inquisitor petitions for its immediate destruction, and another seeks to investigate, confirming the fate of Thracius.

The tomb of thousands of Aeldari souls has claimed a new occupant — **Inquisitor Eskender Thracius**. Tarran Selvir, the sole surviving acolyte of **Inquisitor Thracius**, delivers the news of his master's death. During an expedition aboard the Aeldari Void Stalker, he witnessed his master gunned down by remnants of the ship's automated defences, a total freak accident.

- ☠ **Kai Varol** suggests contacting Valerius Nabopalassar of the Ordo Xenos to study whatever **Inquisitor Thracius** sought to recover.
- ☠ **Konstan Serranus** loathes the Aeldari utterly and raises instead the vessel's destruction. If the voidship, even in its shattered state, has brought about the death of an Inquisitor, it continues to pose a threat, making destruction imperative.
- ☠ **Alis Raud** is unconcerned with the voidship's fate but suggests **Thracius's** body is recovered to prove the Radical Inquisitor's death.

OPERATION

The characters embark upon a long journey to the edge of the sector to investigate Inquisitor Thracius's death and scour the remains of an Aeldari vessel before it attracts undue attention.

Regardless of whether the Void Stalker is to be destroyed or **Thracius's** field research recovered, **Kai Varol** approaches characters undertaking this mission, offering to contact Selim Iaysus, a Rogue Trader whose voidship is already bound from Persepolis to the region where the wrecked Aeldari vessel was last sighted. Unbeknownst to the Conclave or characters undertaking this mission, Selim Iaysus and **Inquisitor Kai Varol** are both aliases of **Inquisitor Eskender Thracius**, whose past investigations into Aeldari technology had brought him dangerously close to being deemed *Excommunicate Traitoris* by **Alis Raud**. Under his alias of Selim Iaysus, **Thracius** aims to ensure his field notes are recovered, either by characters undertaking this mission or by Selim's voidsmen.



THE VOID STALKER

One of the largest classes of Aeldari voidship, the Inquisition has recorded sightings of these vessels dating back to the Gothic War. The Macharian Inquisition has no records of investigating such a vessel up close. Despite its wrecked state, surrounded by a debris field of its shattered stern and solar sails, parts of the voidship remain operational, including its voidshields and holofield. Characters can discover that the reason for its decimated state is pure accident — contact with a freak meteorite storm.

A boarding action to recover the body of **Inquisitor Thracius** provides an opportunity for an assured controlled shipboard demolition, saving the expenditure of macro-tons of the God-Emperor's ordinance. Upon approach, it becomes evident that the debris field is not the only hazard surrounding the Void Stalker; some of its automated defences remain operational, commanded by the souls of dead Aeldari still interred within the voidship's operational technology. Small vessels approaching the wreck must run a gauntlet of starcannon and bright lance fire.

Characters who board the Void Stalker find its crew long dead, unlit halls littered with desiccated Aeldari bodies. However, derelict **Wraithguard** (page 174), wraithbone war constructs, still undertake guard patrols. The sound of their unmaintained forms scrapes against the vessel's corridors, reverberating through voidsuits with an almost musical, sharp shrillness.

Characters may come across the bodies of **Thracius's** acolytes (save Selvir, the one survivor who fled), who fell while holding the position of **Thracius's** field laboratory close to the shattered remnants of the vessel's bridge. The Inquisitor's research is present, with stacks of cogitators watched by inert servo-skulls, but **Thracius's** corpse is absent.

Upon reaching this area of the vessel, the characters begin to detect traces of other living creatures aboard the vessel, approaching their position. A team of House Iaysus **Voidsmen** (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 337) also travelled to the Void Stalker, seeking to recover **Thracius's** research. Their orders, purportedly left by the late **Inquisitor Thracius**, included commands to avoid any other operatives aboard and, if discovered, eliminate all witnesses.



OUTCOME

Whichever operation the characters undertake, their Patron gains +1 Legitimacy on their triumphant return. The failure to recover the body of **Eskender Thracius** plants a seed of suspicion within the characters' Patron. **Alis Raud**, who had already begun to suspect **Thracius** of radicalism bordering on heresy, is incentivised to further investigate **Thracius'** last activities.

If characters recover **Thracius'** research, their Patron gains the favour of **Kai Varol** and Valerius Nabopalassar, an Aeldari specialist to whom the research is passed (secretly yet another of **Thracius'** aliases).

If the characters' Patron does not take action, or should they fail to destroy the voidship, **Serranus** commandeers a small naval fleet to destroy the xenos voidship. He earns +1 Legitimacy and the ire of **Kai Varol (Thracius)**. Robbed of his research, **Thracius** will take action against **Serranus** when the time is right.

STRIFE I-B Goros Pok

Four prominent cults have risen to power on Goros Pok, each one is suspected of heresy. One Inquisitor seeks to cut the heads off each cult and let each body wither without leadership. Another suggests eradicating them, to quell any further uprisings on the planet.

In the wake of the Noctis Aeterna, cult uprisings and civil unrest on Goros Pok have become commonplace. The planet's inhabitants struggle to cope with the growing mounds of rotting unclaimed agricultural produce and subsequent belief that the God-Emperor ignored their plight. Characters deployed to tackle this Strife could spend years investigating and purging these cults.

- ☠ **Sylvestrine Horst** argues that strike teams should be deployed to investigate each cult and subsequently eradicate its leadership. Surgically removing each cult's leadership will cause the body to wither without their direction.
- ☠ **Aegidius Halikarn** believes the Inquisition should eradicate the major cults entirely but through subterfuge, infiltration, and goading them into internecine conflicts between one another.

Severina Melnyk, Interrogator to **Inquisitor Baek** presents an initial report on each of the major cults:

- ☠ **The Blood-crop Combine**, whose increasing blood sacrifices resemble Khornate cult practices.
- ☠ **The Twisted Sickle**, followers of an alleged three-armed saint, preaching of the God-Emperor's return.
- ☠ **The Harrower-In-Green**, hold that the produce stored but uncollected was the Emperor's will. They now gather and hold vast stockpiles of produce, jubilant in its rot as intended by Him on Terra.
- ☠ **The Changing Season**, of whom little is known, save for their association with ritual killings. But are a cause for concern due to confirmed Warp phenomena associated with each killing.

OPERATION

The characters begin a years-long mission on Goros Pok to determine the fate of the suspect cults, the planet, and potential implications for the Yix Subsector.

Regardless of which plan of action they seek, characters are deployed to the surface of Goros Pok. They must first contact Confessor Verity Tiberius, who oversees the planet's spiritual needs and has come to identify the major strains of unsettling zealotry that risk deviation from the Imperial Creed.

Further investigation demands working alongside the Adeptus Administratum, who has become inundated with reports on cult activity, many of which they have yet to realise the importance of. The situation on Goros Pok is exceptionally fragile, and any mismanaged strike against these cults will likely spur mob violence rather than a shadow war, as one group of zealots assigns blame and labels of heresy to another. The planet's enforcers do not have the resources to quell the rising of multiple cults or a full blown civil war, but they may be able to crack down on individual cults if given the correct guidance.

In investigating each cult, characters can discover the following information, key in dealing with each one:

- ☠ **The Blood-crop Combine** continue to worship the God-Emperor, but some of their rites draw close to worshipping only the act of violence itself, 'returning blood to the soil'. This cult is not beyond saving; only a few rising death cult members have swayed towards Khornate influence, and their salvation would bear a strong ally for the Inquisition on Goros Pok.
- ☠ Central to **The Twisted Sickle's** worship is a three-armed woman bearing xenos-tainted genetics and a prodigious psychic capability to bend the wills of those around her. They are the beginnings of a Genestealer Cult cell whose goal is to disrupt supply chains out of Goros Pok, bloating the planet's biomass and ripening it for Hive Fleet invasion.
- ☠ **The Harrower-In-Green** was initially perceived as an aspect of the God-Emperor, but more and more of the cult's rites worship Him by this name alone and pay no heed whatsoever to the teachings of the Imperial Creed. A shadow leadership of Nurgle cultists steer citizens towards greed and excess.

- ☠ **The Changing Season** sees the Noctis Aeterna as the death throes of a season some 10,000 Terran years long. A group of heretic psykers leading this group are guided by a voice from the Warp, under whose guidance they perform sacrificial rites to 'ready the soil for the season's turn'. Behind the scenes, a Tzeentchian daemon sees Goros Pok's landscape as a prime target for manipulation and chaos.



OUTCOME

Characters who succeed in their operation on Goros Pok earn +2 Legitimacy for their Patron.

If they carried out **Horst's** plan of targeted strikes, the cults are curtailed with minimal impact to Goros Pok's tithe production, and they earn the Inquisitor's respect.

If they play the cults against each other or eradicate them, their corruption will be purged from the world, but with it, the planet's productivity falls dangerously low. Famine begins to spread on worlds reliant upon Goros Pok for sustenance.

If the characters take no action in this Strife, **Halikarn** and **Raud** combine their resources to incite war between the four cults, earning both of them +1 Legitimacy, and the latter above results for the planet and sector.

STRIFE I-C *The Fate of the Lucanus*

Reports from multiple sources claim unusual activity on Calvus Station, an isolated asteroid mining colony in the Andosk Subsector. They claim sightings of a predatory xenos species, co-occurring with increased nonstandard worship practices among the populace.

A strange report comes from the crew of the freighter *Lucanus*, brought to light and delivered to **Konstan Serranus**. The voidship's communications were scrambled on its most recent return to Calvus Station, other than a cacophonous screeching emitted by the vessel's astropath, one that was felt by nearby choirs in the subsector.

- ☛ **Konstan Serranus** argues that the source of this corruption must be uncovered and excised, lest it pose a risk to navigation in the subsector.
- ☛ **Ksenia Baek** suggests capturing and studying the affected psyker (and any other psykers in the station) to curtail and understand the source of the unnerving psychic phenomenon.

OPERATION

The characters are sent to investigate Calvus Station and uncover the hidden xenos threat. Unbeknownst to them, this represents their first steps towards confronting the Herald's Howl.



VOIDSTATIONS

Voidstations are space-tight structures of varying sizes, some small outposts, others as large as cities. All voidstations are built for a purpose, and most have some tie to the Imperial Fleet, acting as supply depots, orbital defences, or voiddocks. Some, like Calvus, are built into the sides of massive asteroids where their citizens work tirelessly to excavate the rare ores. Daily life is not unlike that in a hive city, but resources are often even more scarce. Life is more deadly too, with often only a thin plasteel wall between citizens and endless vacuum.

Characters deployed to Calvus Station find the *Lucanus* undergoing repairs, apparently after damage it suffered in transit. The crew claim this as an inconsequential delay, although the bridge is maintained off-limits by voidsmen on orders from the voidship's officers, who are currently aboard the asteroid station.

On Calvus Station, life appears to continue in its normal cycles of industrial drudgery, although many of the workers bear oddly similar appearances: hairlessness, visible veins on the head and neck, and heavy brow ridges. Any queries about these features are met with dismissal and claim that these features are merely the effect of the conditions of working in the asteroid field, between limited radiation shielding and artificially enhanced gravity.

Characters can meet with the station's governor, Mordren Tiris. She claims that the officers are guests in her residence and that the astropath's signals are due to them undergoing an augmetic installation and medical treatment after an incident during the vessel's last voyage through the Warp. Shortly after meeting, Tiris tries to arrange the characters' deaths through an industrial accident or by Purestrain Genestealers attacking by night.



In searching Calvus Station, characters can uncover that the vessel's officers have been killed and that the station is under the subtle control of a Genestealer Cult, comprising some forty percent of the workers, with Governor Tiris at its head. The cult operates from a shrine complex in the bowels of the asteroid, which they will sell their lives to defend. Here, a coven of Genestealer Cult psykers, commanded by Tiris, are holding the captured astropath, trying to reach some other entity through the tortured astropath's distorted psychic screaming.

The chamber of the psykers is host to a piece of information with potentially vital significance — a star chart is scrawled across the ceiling in a vile parody of a painted Imperial chapel, depicting a great monstrous wyrm strewn across the Macharian Sector. Five dozen star systems seem to have been picked out with some special embellished symbolism, but its meaning, their exact coordinates, and which systems they represent are uncertain, even to the Genestealer Cultists present — the artwork conveyed a raw psychic image from the Patriarch, with no further details to aid in its interpretation.

OUTCOME

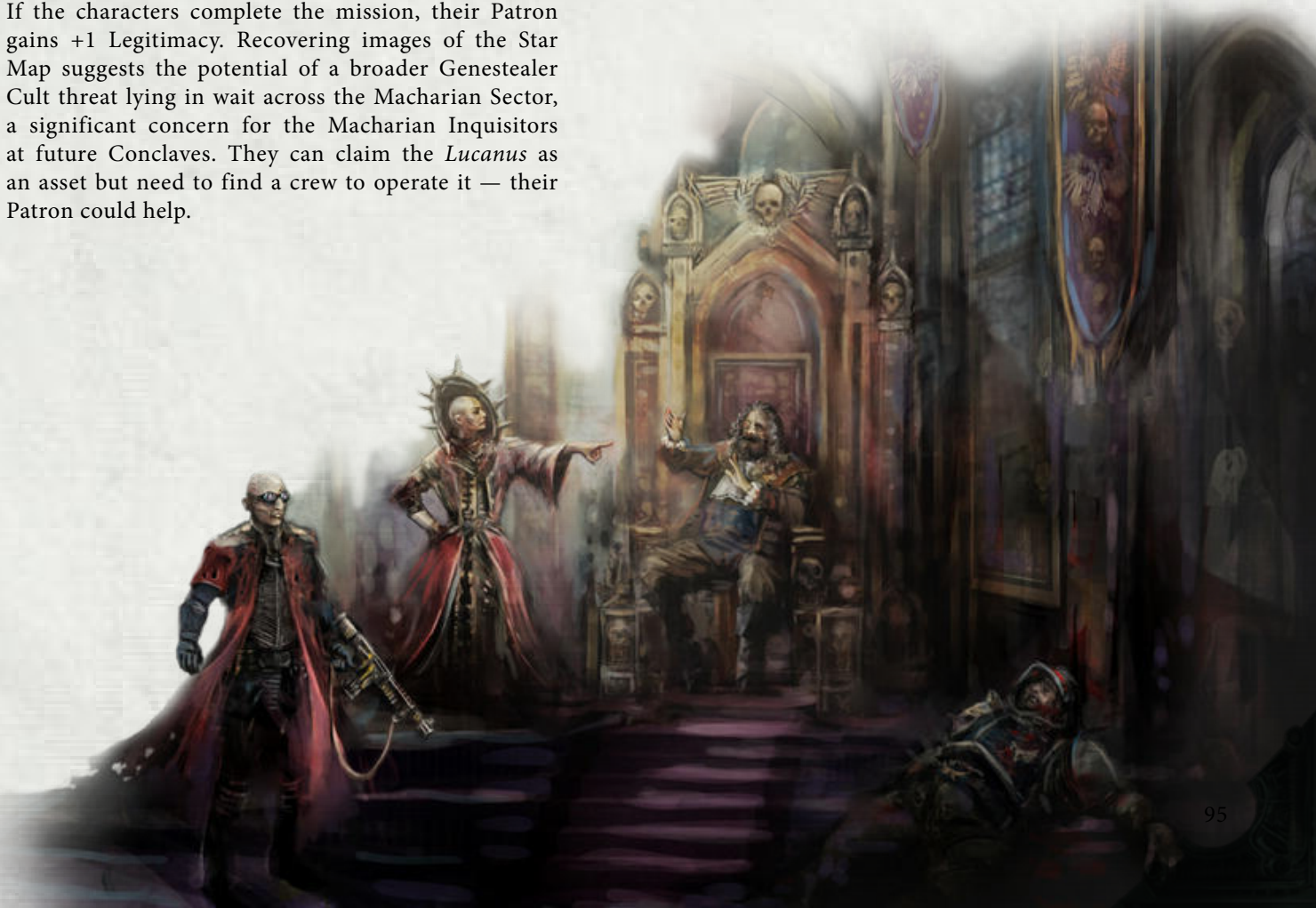
If the characters complete the mission, their Patron gains +1 Legitimacy. Recovering images of the Star Map suggests the potential of a broader Genestealer Cult threat lying in wait across the Macharian Sector, a significant concern for the Macharian Inquisitors at future Conclaves. They can claim the *Lucanus* as an asset but need to find a crew to operate it — their Patron could help.

If the characters fail to end the distorted psychic signal and the activities of the Genestealer Cult on Calvus Station, they complete their plan to hijack the *Lucanus*. They gain greater logistical interconnectivity in setting up the Herald's Howl.

If no others undertake this mission, **Ksenia Baek** sends her acolytes to complete the mission, granting her +1 Legitimacy. Her operatives recover pict recordings of the Star Map, as well as the astropath and a Genestealer Cult psyker.

CONCLAVE I CONCLUSION

The Inquisitors depart Mare Cinis with growing concern at the deaths of two Inquisitors in quick succession, particularly **Alis Raud**, who had already begun to suspect **Eskender Thracius** of heresy. Despite the large-scale chaos on Goros Pok, the fate of the *Lucanus* may have greater importance than anyone has yet realised.



CONCLAVE II

The second Conclave turns to corruption lying deeper beneath the surface. Of central concern is the fate of Inquisitor Lord Heironymo Drake. Multiple Inquisitors have pored over his notes left in Mare Cinis and discovered a personal archive, from which both his research and the information that led him to his death may be recovered.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

In attendance at the second Conclave are: **Sylvestrine Horst**, **Konstan Serranus**, **Alis Raud**, and **Aegidius Halikarn**. An agent of **Kai Varol** expresses that their Inquisitor is pursuing a lead relating to the cult discovered on Calvus Station. An astropath delivers a message on behalf of **Ksenia Baek**, who is busy elsewhere undertaking a joint operation with the Adeptus Astra Telepathica.

INTRIGUES

Both **Alis Raud** and **Kai Varol** have begun to suspect **Sylvestrine Horst's** involvement in the death of Inquisitor Lord Drake. **Raud** is making this suspicion known by her handling of the Drake Archive (page 97). **Kai Varol** is pursuing this investigation by ordering his acolytes to work from the Conclave's shadows. Characters may recognise multiple acolytes in service to **Kai Varol** around the facility, despite him having no formal presence at the Conclave.

Each Inquisitor claimed an area of the Mare Cinis base during the first Conclave, but as **Ksenia Baek** has not returned, nor have any of her retinue, characters with security and infiltration training could attempt to access the rooms that she claimed, including cogitators with communication records. **Baek's** communications have expressed particular concern about the incident on Calvus Station.

STRIFE II-A
The Fall of House Kition
On the mercantile hive world of Asterion, a House Tavol informant serving Alis Raud reports that a competing Highborn arms manufacturer, House Kition, is preparing a martial coup to take over the planet.

House Tavol have been stockpiling arms rather than contributing them to the Imperial Tithe and amassing a corps of heavily armed troops. Rumours circulating among the noble houses of Asterion claim a dozen origins for these troops, from Astra Militarum deserters and Infractionist mercenaries to abhumans and mutants. Merchants on Asterion are already under Inquisitorial observation for rumoured involvement in the so-called Silent Trade, but a potential coup backed by unknown forces warrants immediate scrutiny.

☠ Sylvestrine Horst is familiar with the political order on Asterion due to her Ordo Sororitas Famulous contacts among Asterion's Highborn families. She suggests that if the troops prove heretical, they be eliminated; House Kition would then surely collapse from its own subsequent economic weakness without threatening the stability of Asterion's trade network.

☠ Aegidius Halikarn is incensed at the possibility of allowing traitors to go unpunished by the Inquisition, suggesting instead that if House Kition is found guilty of heresy, both the house and its army should be eliminated entirely, regardless of the consequences to a political system that Halikarn sees as contemptibly corrupt.

OPERATION

The characters travel to Asterion. Time is of the essence; they must investigate House Kition and dismantle their coup before it begins and destabilises Imperial rule in the system.

Before they leave Mare Cinis, **Sylvestrine Horst** advises characters deployed to Asterion to make contact with Sister Famulous Lysara of the Order of the Hallowed Glass. She has worked closely with multiple Highborn houses of Asterion and can introduce characters to the Mavins, trade lord rulers of Asterion's noble houses. Characters will soon learn that the Mavins do not perceive House Kition as a threat — House Kition's apparent drop in production has led the Mavins to pay it little mind, allowing the house to gather its fighting force largely unobserved.

Through investigation, characters learn that House Kition's leader, Mavin Aloysius Kition, perceived the Noctis Aeterna as the death knell of Asterion's bickering Mavins. The crisis demonstrated the need for a new form of governance with greater stability, which House Kition is equipped to provide and enforce.

In truth, House Kition's planned coup is supported by forces beyond what they realise or understand. If the characters are able to remove the armour from a captured or slain Silent Guard, they encounter physiology resembling the cultists found or reported on Calvus Station (page 94).

The Silent Guard are a cell of the Herald's Howl that originally formed in Asterion's lower hives. Their leader, Primus Velten Zarn, made contact with House Kition during the chaos of the Noctis Aeterna.

Zarn suggested to Kition that a coup could save the crisis-stricken planet, sowing the seeds of ambition backed with an offer of troops allegedly from an Astra Militarum regiment whose vessel was unable to leave the planet. Zarn intends to kill Kition during the coup and claim the role of Governor for himself, impersonating the deceased Kition using a stolen supply of polymorphine. This will elevate the Genestealer Cult and allow them to spread their influence through the populace in preparation for their day of ascension.

If members of House Kition become aware that they or their troops are under threat, they feel forced to begin their play for the Planetary Governor. The Silent Guard is ordered to eradicate the Board Solar, the governing council of Mavins, a blow aimed at swiftly removing the leadership of all opponents to House Kition, then besiege the spire of the Planetary Governor.

OUTCOME

If characters successfully complete their operation on Asterion, their Patron gains +2 Legitimacy. Eliminating the Silent Guard brings House Kition into steep political decline, with rival houses buying out their manufactorums. Eliminating House Kition entirely sends shockwaves through the Mavins' already damaged trade networks. If the characters fail in their mission and House Kition's rise was not prevented, Velten Zarn uses his new position as Planetary Governor to begin proliferating arms to other cells of the Herald's Howl throughout the Macharian Sector. If the characters' Patron does not take action, **Aegidius Halikarn** leads a shadow war to destroy the Silent Guard and House Kition, earning +2 Legitimacy.

STRIFE II-B The Drake Archive

The Conclave investigates an archive of information that Inquisitor Lord Drake left behind, locked away in a vault on Mare Cinis. The information within drives them to chase down two Rogue Traders and travel to a planet quarantined by Inquisitorial decree.

The notes in Inquisitor Lord Drake's vault include multiple references to an archive hidden in the Cytheris Subsector, although even the Inquisitor Lord's former Interrogator, **Alis Raud**, is unaware of its location or what it might contain. What has been decyphered so far imparts the names of two Rogue Traders, Captain Ion Hawkscar and Captain Darius Klaskoloff, and a code phrase to be repeated to each of them: **'CUSTODIA. RECONDITUS. ADSTRUM. ASPECTUM'**.

Given that members of the Conclave suspect **Sylvestrine Horst** having some hand in the death of her mentor, **Alis Raud** expresses that it is imperative an impartial party access the archive and return its contents to the Conclave so that the Inquisitor Lord's records of Macharian heresies be put to continued use.

OPERATION

The characters begin their hunt for the two Rogue Traders; though the Captains are unaware, each holds information that can reveal the location of the archive.

Prior to the characters' departure, they are contacted by an agent of **Kai Varol**, who requests they return to him any information recovered that may implicate **Sylvestrine Horst** in the death of Inquisitor Lord Drake — **Varol** recognises that often the greatest threat to an Inquisitor comes from within their own retinue.



Additionally, **Sylvestrine Horst** reluctantly agrees to equip the characters with a Rosette simulacra that had belonged to the late Inquisitor Lord — it is almost certain that this will be required to access the archive.

Characters attempting to locate each Rogue Trader find that Captain Hawkscar is in the Cytheris Subsector, while Captain Klaskoloff is more difficult to locate, his vessel plying the edges of the Drimor Subsector. Neither of them ever remembers meeting Inquisitor Lord Drake. Characters looking into either Rogue Trader's history or flight logs discover they crossed paths in system ID-3421-G3 (in the Cytheris Subsector) decades ago, but neither remembers meeting the other.

Investigating ID-3421-G3, characters can learn that the planet Vitezovich, within the system, has been stricken from Astra Cartographica records. No records exist of this planet other than its name, location, and the fact that it was subject to *Exterminatus* four centuries ago and cordoned by Inquisitorial decree ever since.

If characters repeat the code phrase to either Rogue Trader, their eyes glaze over momentarily before seemingly returning to their senses. Upon activation, each is instinctively driven to gather an armed force and travel to Vitezovich, where they are to rendezvous and begin bombarding the planet, letting nothing stand in their way.

Investigating Vitezovich directly involves donning voidsuits, as little of the planet's atmosphere remains. The location of the archive is uncertain; only faint signs of life can be detected on the surface. They will find the archive being defended by a force of voidsmen acting on a subconscious imperative to prevent any save Inquisitor Lord Drake from entering the facility.

The archive is centred on a datavault, protected by automated defences, in the form of wall and floor mounted servitor turrets. They will not fire on the bearer of Inquisitor Drake's Rosette; others are automatically targeted by heavy stubber fire. The central datavault can be accessed by the bearer of Drake's Rosette, though everything within is heavily cyphered. Returning the data to Mare Cinis requires them to unplug massive arrays of hardware and transport it by voidship — a more complicated task if the activated Rogue Traders will soon arrive and once more bombard the planet.

OUTCOME

If the Inquisitor Lord's archive is returned to Mare Cinis, it provides information on the Inquisitor's concerns in the Macharian Sector. However, little of it will be decyphered until the start of the next Conclave. The most populous data in the archive is designated the 'Kryptman Protocol', detailing a failsafe procedure of mass extermination in the event of a Tyranid invasion of the Macharian Sector.

Characters recovering the Archive will earn the respect of **Alis Raud** and **Kai Varol** should their search for information regarding Inquisitor Lord Drake's death prove fruitful. Either way, their Patron gains +1 Legitimacy and access to the archive; therefore, they are the first to learn of the Kryptman Protocol.

If the characters' Patron does not take action or they fail to recover the archive, **Kai Varol** secretly launches the recovery operation. He retrieves Inquisitor Lord Drake's archive and becomes the first to learn of the Kryptman Protocol.

Characters may wish to aid in deprogramming the Rogue Trader captains, revealing more information on Drake's cyphers (to assist in their investigations later) and gain +1 Influence with their respective Dynasties.

STRIFE II-C

The Eskutchax Incongruity

As the long siege of Eskutchax continues, a recent victory by Black Templar forces has left behind a heretical artefact in dire need of investigation and disposal.

Arnaut Cisneros, Interrogator to **Konstan Serranus**, received a message from his Tech-Priest contact, Magos Tal-Theta 661, raising concern over an artefact left in the wake of retreating heretic forces. The Tech-Priests and Black Templar Space Marines are equally uncertain of what should be done with the artefact after attempts to destroy it proved ineffectual.

- ☛ Despite his ongoing relationship with the Tech-Priests of Eskutchax, **Konstan Serranus** recognises that the disposal of a Chaos artefact is outside his expertise, so he recommends that Ordo Hereticus forces investigate and dispose of the object.
- ☛ **Alis Raud** requests that the artefact be returned and taken into Inquisitorial custody, claiming to have a means of safely sealing away or disposing of it.

OPERATION

Characters are deployed to the beleaguered forge world Eskutchax, where the artefact lies in the shattered remains of a manufactorum under guard by the Adeptus Astartes.

Shortly after arrival, they are briefed by Magos Tal-Theta 661. The artefact, identified as the core of a shattered Daemon Engine, spreads a corrupting scrap code into nearby technology, poisoning the machine spirit with glitches and malfunctions.

Thus far, it has proved difficult to extract and has forced the Adeptus Mechanicus and Adeptus Astartes to hold their distance — the scrap code poses too significant a risk towards augmetics and power armour.

Magos Tal-Thera 661 hypothesises that the corruptive energies could be contained by a group of psykers creating a barrier around the artefact (such as *Psychic Barrier*, **Imperium Maledictum**, page 181). However, this is a challenging prospect to entertain in the presence of the zealous Black Templars.

The manufactorum surrounding the artefact's location has been affected by ongoing malfunctions and infestations of **Glitchlings**, diminutive daemons being called from the Warp by the machines' daemonic infection (use the **Nurgling** stat-block to represent them, **Imperium Maledictum**, page 351, except their Traits and Attacks inflict *Stunned* in addition to *Poisoned*). Should characters safely navigate the corrupted forge fane, they will discover that another problem has arisen — the artefact is now missing.

Furthering their investigation, characters learn from Magos Tal-Theta 661 or other Tech-Priests that the Warpsmith Omneros' attacks on Eskutchax (**Imperium Maledictum**, page 270) included the strategic binding of daemons into the engines of this conquered forge fane. Many Tech-Priests are keeping this quiet to spare their technology from the likelihood of destruction by the Black Templars. While the faithful of the Omnissiah have undertaken blessing upon blessing, the infection cannot be excised without the removal or destruction of the Daemon Engine core. As a result, the corruption has been left unchecked, and daemonic scrap code has possessed numerous augmented workers, servitors, and skitarii, who have moved the Daemon Engine core from its resting place. Driven by the Daemon Engine core, the possessed bear it on the first steps of what, if not stopped, will become a pilgrimage in the shadows, spreading the scrap code across every one of the planet's forge fanes.

To retrieve the core, characters will need to locate it by following a trail of malfunctions and error reports and eliminate its corrupted bearers. They travel by subterranean maintenance tunnels, in the direction of the equatorial forge fane from which the Consuls govern Eskutchax.

This process will demand discretion, as engaging in open battle will draw the attention of the Adeptus Astartes, alerting them to the deeper infestation of daemonic corruption, and likely leading them to undertake a purge of heresy that would devastate the industry and population of Eskutchax. Should the core be captured, the daemonic virus will fight to protect itself throughout the extraction process, overriding nearby machinery and summoning Glitchling swarms to prevent its excision.

OUTCOME

If the Daemon Engine core is successfully extracted, the scrap code can finally be purged from the forge fanes of Eskutchax. Upon returning the artefact to the Inquisition, the characters' Patron gains +2 Legitimacy and +1 Influence with the Adeptus Mechanicus. If they side with the Black Templars, they gain +1 Influence with them instead of any Legitimacy. Alis Raud departs with the Daemon Engine core to undertake a psychic ritual to nullify it. In secret, she does so by tearing the daemon from this vessel and binding it to an imprisoned Human host.

If characters fail to extract the Daemon Engine core, Magos Tal-Theta 661 reluctantly informs the Black Templars of the daemonic scrap code emanating from the core. The Adeptus Astartes exorcise the corruption with extreme prejudice, devastating the corrupted forge fane.

If no other Inquisitor undertakes this operation, it is left to **Alis Raud**, who gains +2 Legitimacy for retrieving and containing the Daemon Engine core.

CONCLAVE II CONCLUSION

With the recovery of the Drake Archive, a tool of dreadful power has been brought under Inquisitorial control, either that of the Conclave or **Eskender Thracius**. Meanwhile, the House Kition incident has heightened **Serranus'** existing concerns, for it suggests Genestealer Cult activity on a far larger scale than initially considered.

CONCLAVE III

Mare Cinis is in lockdown, and a botched attack by a rogue Interrogator is halted at the last minute. Servitors repair sections of the base marred by traces of explosives while Inquisitorial retinues stand vigil, their Patrons not yet confident that the threat has passed.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

In attendance at the third Conclave are: **Sylvestrine Horst**, **Konstan Serranus**, **Aegidius Halikarn**, **Kai Varol**, and **Ksenia Baek**. **Alis Raud** is absent but is represented by her Interrogator, **Damien Savantas**, who reports that **Inquisitor Raud** is occupied with an investigation in the Drimor Subsector.

INTRIGUES

In **Raud's** absence, **Kai Varol** (**Eskeder Thracius**) believes he has greater freedom to act. The Drake Archive has shed little light on **Sylvestrine Horst's** possible involvement in the Inquisitor Lord's death. **Varol** may contact the characters, requesting they infiltrate the section of the base occupied by **Sylvestrine Horst** to access her personal logs.

However, **Raud** is not unrepresented at the Conclave. The characters may be approached by **Damien Savantas**, who seeks to recruit their support in hunting **Eskeder Thracius**. He has been interrogating **Tarran Selvir** for many years (the acolyte who returned with news of **Thracius's** alleged death).

Raud has learned that **Thracius** was one of multiple identities attributed to the same individual and that he may not be dead after all. **Raud** has suspicions that **Thracius** is working within the Conclave under another false identity but remains uncertain who this imposter may be, asking the characters whether they have any suspicions and offering to meet again if they believe they have learned anything pertinent.

Sylvestrine Horst has appointed an Interrogator: **Yorin Veldir**, an inscrutable individual wearing a mask of Saint Macharius. The characters' Patron is eager to know what information can be gathered about them, as this Interrogator is currently an uncertain factor for the Conclave. Those who dig into Interrogator **Veldir's** past may learn that **Horst** recruited them from the Imperial Navy and that they served as an officer aboard one of the vessels that enacted *Exterminatus* upon **Belnshudha** (the planet where Inquisitor Lord Drake met his demise).

STRIFE III-A

The Rogue Interrogator

A rogue Interrogator has fled Mare Cinis after their botched attack on the Conclave, which, if successful, could have slain the entire Macharian Inquisition.

Arnaut Cisneros, Interrogator to **Konstan Serranus**, attempted to sabotage **Mare Cinis** but was caught in the act, detonating the explosives they had already planted to cover their escape, and fleeing to **Persepolis** below.

- ☠ To the gathered Conclave, **Serranus** declares **Cisneros Excommunicate Traitoris**, with the full support of each other Inquisitor present.
- ☠ **Serranus** is infuriated, particularly as he was already preparing to undertake a key operation when the attack occurred; this setback may cost him valuable time in his investigations of a Genestealer Cult bearing striking resemblance to that found on **Calvus Station**.
- ☠ **Serranus** asserts that his current investigation is of such importance that it cannot wait for him to recover the heretic Interrogator, a claim supported by **Kai Varol**, who first uncovered the lead that **Serranus** is pursuing. While he is reluctant to shift the responsibility of eliminating **Cisneros** to another, his hand is forced, and he requests the aid of the Conclave.

OPERATION

The characters begin their chase across Persepolis, plumbing the depths of Hive Valios to find the escaped Interrogator and catch them before they can do anything worse.

Characters pursuing **Cisneros** may wish to examine **Mare Cinis's** voidship flight records. Shortly after the attack, a small transport departed the base; the tracking data suggests it crashed on the planet below, on the outskirts of **Hive Valios**. Given **Cisneros's** status as *Excommunicate Traitoris*, their movements will be severely limited. However, locating **Cisneros** may become a near-insurmountable task if they entered the decaying industrial labyrinth of **Valios's** lower hive levels.



On the surface, a trail of malfunctioning machinery on the hive edge leads characters into the lower hive. Limited enforcer presence and the endless winding tunnels require the characters to work with local guides and bounty hunters. They must track the rogue Interrogator's movements across decaying zones and industrial complexes filled with desperate, impoverished wretches.

The trail left by Cisneros suggests a link between their treachery and the Daemon Engine core found on Eskutchax (page 99). Cisneros, infected with daemonic scrap code, first reported this incident at the second Conclave after returning from Eskutchax. Due to Inquisitor **Serranus**' practice of augmenting his acolytes, the daemon was able to inhabit Cisneros' augmetics and wrest control of what flesh remained. Cisneros remains conscious, trapped in their own body.

The daemon seeks to infect the hive's cogitator network with scrap code. The few Cisneros sightings reported by lower hive citizens have been at cogitator arrays, servitor colonies, and datavaults. However, as the daemon finds these systems disused or disconnected from the hive's wider cogitator network, its actions have become increasingly erratic. The characters learn from the hive's Tech-Priests that Cisneros found a tech reliquary containing **Servitors** and **Servo-skulls** (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 323), infecting them all.

If located, the first instinct of the possessed Cisneros is to flee. If cornered, the daemon fights to the death — its hosts, rather than its own — dominating any nearby industrial machinery to defend itself.

OUTCOME

Characters who destroy Cisneros demonstrate the capability of their Patron to resolve other Inquisitors' problems, earning them +1 Legitimacy. **Konstan Serranus** is greatly appreciative and more willing to work with the characters' Patron, particularly concerning the Herald's Howl. If recovered alive, Cisneros provides valuable information on **Serranus**' actions. However, Cisneros has been declared *Excommunicate Traitoris*, putting the characters and their Patron under suspicion as possible traitors themselves if they provide shelter.

If his hand is forced, **Konstan Serranus** sends his own acolytes to destroy Arnaut Cisneros, losing both a potentially valuable lead in investigating the Herald's Howl and multiple operatives, whose augmetics make them ill-equipped to face the scrap code-infected Interrogator (he gains no Legitimacy).

STRIFE III-B The Return of Knight Commander Justinian

The Inquisition is urged to investigate strange occurrences on Xenophon after the disappearance and subsequent reappearance of one of their most distinguished officers.

A Castellan from the Astra Militarum, Jak Greiss, comes before the Conclave to petition aid from the Inquisition. The famous Knight Commander Justinian was found clinging to driftwood by Astra Militarum troops, allegedly having escaped tortuous captivity beneath the oceans of Xenophon. The Commander's mind and body have both suffered horrendously from the torture inflicted upon him by his captors; he has only been able to recount being dragged into the oceans by a group of Xenophonians. However, he struggles to remember what transpired after that and who kept him captive after being thrown, weighted, into the sublime green ocean.

- ☠ Xenophon is designated a garden world, with more water than landmass. It presents hazards in its marine flora and fauna, which have claimed the lives of many careless officers taking leave on the planet over the years. However, these recent events shed light on potential heretic or xenos activity on the planet.
- ☠ Given that what exactly befell Knight Commander Justinian in the oceans of Xenophon remains uncertain, **Aegidius Halikarn** suggests a decoy operation — send an acolyte with a false identity to bait the heretics, tricking them into kidnapping another supposed Astra Militarum officer, thereby revealing their identification, and path to elimination.
- ☠ **Kai Varol's** concerns lie with sending acolytes to investigate what occurred after the cultists left the Commander to sink beneath the waves, for indeed, whatever shadow has hold over Xenophon originates in those dark waters.

OPERATION

Characters depart to Xenophon to begin their investigation, soon to plunge into a worldwide conspiracy involving a cult of Drukhari-worshipping locals.

Characters can talk to Castellan Greiss before they depart to gain more insight into Justinian. He is a tank commander who survived countless battles fighting heretics at the edge of the sector. He has a phobia of deep water and was reluctant to take leave on Xenophon.



GARDEN WORLDS

Garden worlds are among the rarest planets in the galaxy — those few naturally suited to sustaining Human life with no terraforming required. These veritable paradises are often protected to retain their natural beauty and atmosphere; even the boot of the Imperium knows to tread lightly on them. As such, populations are kept relatively low, and these planets are used as training bases or for recreational use. Experiencing life on such a world is a rare blessing for anyone who can.

He is in a near catatonic state, under heavy guard in his leave-housing on Xenophon. If questioned as to why the Castellan has requested the Inquisition's aid, he claims that the locals are challenging to deal with, and due to the planet's draw as a shore leave destination, its governing bodies hold too much sway with the Astra Militarum and might interfere with an internal investigation.

If characters choose to masquerade as Astra Militarum officers or observe other officers taking leave on Xenophon, they will find that isolated officers are sometimes kidnapped at night by a group that throws their victims into the ocean, sacrifices to beings they call the Pearl-eyed Ones. Unaware of Justinian's status, the cultists kidnapped and subsequently released him in an attempt to avoid scrutiny. This cost the cultists dearly in the eyes of their masters.

Characters may investigate beneath the waves by diving or submersible, though the latter will arouse suspicion among the cultists. Diving below the coral reefs, characters find ancient Aeldari structures centred around an inactive Webway portal. The Drukhari are using it to collect victims offered to them by the Xenophonian cultists.

The cult has ritually sacrificed people to the Drukhari since before the Macharian Crusade. It is deeply ingrained into local culture, and even the Planetary Governor works with the Drukhari. Many locals know of the practice, a tradition they carefully conceal. This relationship is built on generations of ritual and maintained by both sides, with the Drukhari eliminating any threats to this supply of victims. If the cultists become aware they are under investigation, **Drukhari Kabalite Warriors** (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 348) move to eliminate the investigators.

With a captured or slain Drukhari in hand, characters may be able to call military support from their Patron's allies, as well as mobilise visiting Astra Militarum forces against the xenos-allied cultists and Drukhari. Should their Webway portal come under attack, the Drukhari withdraw from Xenophon entirely, offering the cultists safety from the Imperial forces if they follow them — a final cruel ploy for one last batch of victims.

OUTCOME

Ending the cultic activity on Xenophon by eliminating the cultists or breaking the Drukhari hold over the world earns the characters' Patron +1 Legitimacy and +1 Influence with the Astra Militarum.

Failing to identify the cultists or the Drukhari influencing them from beneath the waves will allow the killings to continue, gradually eroding the Astra Militarum's body of officers in the Macharian Sector.

If no other Inquisitor undertakes this operation, it falls to **Kai Varol (Eskender Thracius)**, who gains +1 Legitimacy on completion of the mission. In discovering xenos involvement, Varol acquires further understanding of the Webway. It eventually benefits his experiments with Aeldari technology, developing into a means of covert travel and access to Aeldari sites.

STRIFE III-C The Ghost of Luna

The Black Ship, Ghost of Luna, has stalled above Jotungarth. The psykers aboard exhibit the same unnerving behaviour — each is emitting a beautiful and inscrutable psychic song blocking the light of the Astronomican from the ship's navigator.

An Adeptus Astra Telepathica voidship has been cordoned off by the Imperial Fleet. Psykers aboard continue to deteriorate, their condition threatening to end all navigation to and from Jotungarth.

- ☠ **Ksenia Baek** sees investigating the vessel and planet as imperative. Given her connections to the Adeptus Astra Telepathica, she is concerned that the corruption of these psykers may spread to others. However, psykers lead **Baek's** acolytes and are at considerable risk of corruption if they investigate.
- ☠ **Konstan Serranus** suggests the ship be immediately destroyed; what is the loss of a few psykers when the whole sector is already rife with them? Let the debris fall into the frozen waters of Jotungarth and be forgotten. Navigators on nearby vessels have already begun to notice the discordant song.

OPERATION

Characters depart for Jotungarth to investigate the stranded Black Ship. They will soon discover the consequences of Inquisitor Lord Hieronymo Drake's actions and learn more about the dead Inquisitor's past.

Before departure, **Ksenia Baek** suggests that the characters contact Knight-Centura Augustina aboard the *Ghost of Luna*. If the players or their Patron are in good standing with **Baek**, she also offers the services of a **Sister of Silence** (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 320) from her retinue to accompany them.

Aboard the Black Ship, the characters' first experience boarding the vessel will be the singing echoing through the decks, both audible in realspace and their minds, unless in the presence of a blank. If characters meet Knight-Centura Augustina, she informs them that the psychic song began when the Black Ship arrived in orbit around Jotungarth. The characters can investigate the ship and conclude that nothing is amiss mechanically. A psyker who risks exposure to the song can tell it originates on Jotungarth itself.

Deploying to the surface of Jotungarth, characters discover widespread psychic awakenings, unnatural phenomena, and even minor daemonic activity throughout the planet's city-vessels. These all originate with those who have heard the same psychic song, and any psychically attuned members of the party will be aware of it too. As they aid city-vessel authorities in tackling these events, they must find a way to track and pinpoint the psychic song. Quelling enough psychic activity will 'clear the air' and lead them to the source. Additionally, Jotungarth has an abundance of master seers and oracles that could aid in pinpointing the phenomena; many will be distressed by this psychic signal and eager to help. The characters could work with local astropath choirs to attempt to overcome the daemonic song with a hymn of their own, or assemble enough sanctioned psykers to divine the location of the source through a dangerous psychic ritual.

Characters can track the ultimate source of the psychic song to a remote and hidden bastion, buried within a massive iceberg bearing Inquisition insignia. Automated defences guard the facility but will surrender and open itself to anyone with vermillion-level clearance. It soon becomes apparent that the facility belonged to Inquisitor Lord Hieronymo Drake. He was using the facility to study the **Daemonhost** (page 172) he captured within. Since Drake's death, the solitary daemon has loosened its bonds, freeing its psychic voice to reach others nearby.



BLACK SHIPS

The Black Ships of the Adeptus Astra Telepathica travel the Imperium, charged with collecting and transporting psykers back to Terra to fulfil the God-Emperor's Tithe. These massive dread galleons are effectively prison vessels. Their cavernous holds are filled with psyker containment units and other tools to combat Warp manifestations, an oppressive backdrop to the screams of the lost and the damned that echo their halls. Each crew member must be capable of withstanding psychic influence — whether by extensive mental augmetics, the Pariah Gene, or being a powerful psyker in their own right.

Several parts of Drake's research point to cults on Belnshudha, suggesting that he allowed their heretical activities to thrive for some time. Also, it indicates that Drake extracted the daemonhost from Belnshudha some time ago. Other aspects of his research here point to the Kryptman Protocol, seeking ways to turn the daemonhost's power into a weapon of *Exterminatus*. Characters find more cyphers and keys; they can return them to Mare Cinis to further research on the Drake Archive.

OUTCOME

Characters must decide what to do with the daemonhost. Return with it to Mare Cinis, hand it over to Alis Raud, or destroy it. Whatever outcome here, their Patron earns +1 Legitimacy and +1 Influence with the Adeptus Astra Telepathica. The Ghost of Luna is free to continue on the long way back to Holy Terra.

If no other Inquisitor takes action in this Strife, **Ksenia Baek** locates and destroys the daemonhost gaining +1 Legitimacy for her efforts.

CONCLAVE III CONCLUSION

In the wake of Cisneros' attack, the Inquisitors hesitate to attend the following Conclave, particularly **Konstan Serranus**, although his desire to be elsewhere is driven by growing Genestealer Cult activity. With the deaths of acolytes in multiple operations, trust between the Inquisitors is diminishing; each suspects the others of some measure of sabotage.

CONCLAVE IV

House Taval has mistakenly dealt with traitors and risks the scrutiny of the Inquisition. A strange Imperial voidship is haunting the Gallosque Nebula. Inquisitor Raud reveals the fate of Halikarn's undercover agent.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

In attendance at the fourth Conclave are: **Sylvestrine Horst**, **Aegidius Halikarn**, **Alis Raud**, **Kai Varol**, and **Ksenia Baek**. **Konstan Serranus** is noticeably absent.

INTRIGUES

If the characters seek information on the black market and arms movements, particularly in the Drimor Subsector, they could approach Antonius Tavnir, a House Taval agent. In return, Tavnir seeks protection and assurances from the Conclave that he will live to see the end of his problems (see **Strive IV-A: Traitors in Taval** below). But Tavnir is loyal first to **Inquisitor Raud**; the Inquisitor will learn about anything the characters gain from Tavnir.

Inquisitor Kai Varol (Eskender Thracius) is keen to talk directly to the characters. Depending on his relationship with the players' Patron, he may reach out directly or through a proxy, such as one of his acolytes. He will happily entertain them personally if they seek information on any xenos entities in the sector, especially anything Aeldari-related. Varol hopes to find a suitable candidate to become a double agent in his service. He will approach them privately before the Conclave adjourns, sowing seeds of dissent and offering protections whilst potentially holding some form of blackmail against them.

Inquisitor Varol also speaks openly about gathering more information about Genestealer Cult activity across the sector, imploring the other Inquisitors to talk to their contacts after finding more strange correlations in his own gathered datasets.

STRIFE IV-A Traitors in Taval

Noble House politics has spilled over into the Inquisition's Conclave. House Taval fights within itself, split between purity and profits. The nobles have stoked the fires of heresy, and now the Inquisition must serve them justice.

Antonius Tavnir, a House Taval agent (**Imperium Maledictum**, page 256), has been brought before the Conclave by **Inquisitor Raud**. The agent has evidence that others within House Taval have mistakenly supplied arms to Traitor Guard regiments, thought loyal, across planets in the Drimor Subsector.

Tavnir is taking a significant risk in revealing this information to the Inquisition, so much so that **Inquisitor Raud** was forced to extract him. He and many facets of his house are now woefully at the mercy of the Inquisition.

- ☛ **Alis Raud** has ordered the Adeptus Ministorum and Astra Militarum to deal with the Traitor Guard. She believes Tavnir and House Taval should be left to continue operating as they were (fruitful branches of her existing spy network for some time) and requires a team to re-insert the agent into the house's hierarchy.
- ☛ But **Sylvestrine Horst** opposes her, calling for the house to be fiercely investigated to uncover any further 'mistakes' and then summarily dismantled.

OPERATION

Characters depart to investigate House Taval, dragging Antonius Tavnir with them. Each day they tarry, the traitor regiments grow in power, and heresy within House Taval digs in deeper.

Either outcome requires the party to escort Tavnir. They must track down and silence the other house traders who know Tavnir is a double agent, allowing him to retake his position. Otherwise, they can use Tavnir to dig deeper into the house's records to find further signs of heretical trade. While investigating various Taval holdings and NPCs around Drimor, new heresies come to light:

One of the Traitor Guard regiments, stationed on the mining world of Krakau, contains hidden worshippers of Nurgle. In response to increased Genestealer Cult activity opposing them, they sought weaponry from Taval. The two heretic organisations secretly vie for control of the planet under the noses of the ruling nobility. Without intervention, their conflict threatens to spill into the local populace and overthrow the local rulers.

A second regiment is stationed on the feral world of Barbarosk. The traitor regiments have been bolstering their numbers, recruiting from the local populace by preaching twisted narratives of the God-Emperor's truths. They paint the people of Kharmin, a nearby system, as heretics. They have been moving troops to Kharmin under the guise of material supplies from the feral world, planning to assault the capital hive.

The characters can discover that Tavnir set up the original deals to incriminate his competition in the house and elevate his position, abusing his agency under **Inquisitor Raud**. If found out, **Raud** is not kind in her retribution and orders the characters to execute Tavnir once their operation is complete.

OUTCOME

If the characters follow **Inquisitor Raud's** proposition and succeed, they and their Patron gain favour with **Raud** and House Taval, influential contacts and allies for future operations. Additionally, their Patron gains +1 Legitimacy.

If the characters favour **Sylvestrine Horst's** opposing plan, **Horst** cuts through House Taval viciously, gaining +1 Legitimacy. Many cunning nobles receive warnings from Tavnir and scatter to the void. House Taval becomes a troublesome enemy of the Inquisition, working deeper in the shadows.

STRIFE IV-B

The Lost Recongregator

Inquisitor Raud announces to the Conclave that Mordo Talut, one of Inquisitor Halikarn's long-standing acolytes, has been arrested for treason on Jenesse. A surprised Halikarn scrambles to investigate.

Local authorities in Hive Nostra have arrested a long-serving deep-cover acolyte named Mordo Talut. He is currently being held and charged with treason against the Planetary Governor. **Halikarn** is surprised by this development; Mordo has always been an exceedingly cautious Interrogator.

- ☠ **Alis Raud** strongly suggests that **Halikarn** cleans up his mess by silencing this acolyte before any of the Inquisition's secrets are spilt or extract him before his execution. Mordo invoked **Halikarn's** name, which has stayed in his captor's hand for now.
- ☠ **Sylvestrine Horst** offers her aid in **Halikarn's** stead, claiming that a number of her Faceless operatives are already working in the subsector; she hopes to gain **Halikarn's** favour.
- ☠ Furthermore, the other Inquisitors present now acutely suspect that **Raud** has informants in all of their networks.

OPERATION

Characters depart for Jenesse, aiming to find Mordo Talut and investigate the Nostrafax nobility. Hive Nostra is rife with hidden heresies, and signs point to other ancient troubles in the system.

Characters sent to investigate Mordo Talut's arrest meet with **Inquisitor Halikarn** before they depart. **Halikarn** would prefer Mordo Talut be extracted safely, seeming almost sentimental towards this acolyte, but understands if they have no choice except to eliminate him. He reveals that Mordo was digging into the legitimacy of noble houses in the Cytheris Subsector, believing they might be harbouring descendants of General Lysander, one of Macharius' generals who betrayed the Imperium after the Lord Solar's death. General Lysander's betrayal (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 251) was so dire that all titles and rights granted to his household were stripped away. Nevertheless, a few of his more ambitious descendants still lay claim to the traitor's name and privileges, which, by Imperial Lex, burdens them with his guilt as well.

Investigating Hive Nostra, the capital hive of Jenesse, characters can discover that Mordo Talut was taken into custody by the Planetary Governor's personal guard. Strangely, these guards are present at positions of power all across the hive and stave off the characters' investigation as best they can. Infiltrating House Nostrafax, they can learn that Governor Nostrafax disappeared some time ago with Mordo in tow. The officers in his personal guard (also appointed members of the Nostrafax family) have taken control of the local government, enacting an underhanded martial law meant to hold Nostrafax's place until his eventual return.

Characters can learn from the Vigilites or Nostrafax's staff that the Governor and Mordo left Jenesse aboard the *Sorrow of Juun*, an Imperial frigate. They can track the *Sorrow* by securing local contacts in the Adeptus Mechanicus and Imperial Fleet, as both factions monitor the movements of voidships through the system. Mechanicus agents see the opportunity to wrest plentiful favours and influence from the characters. Meanwhile, by securing and analysing data from the Imperial Fleet, characters can discover evidence of scrubbed star charts and records, indicating potential traitors within the local fleet.

The *Sorrow's* trail leads to Aegos, a world hidden within the nearby Argent Zone, one forbidden approach by Inquisitorial decree. This apparent feudal world is home to settled remnants of the traitor Lysander's family and forces. Living and plotting from their secluded fiefdom, they have been slowly seeding their lineage back into Imperial nobility and the Imperial Fleet via Jenesse's houses for some time, seeking to re-emerge once they have gathered enough influence. Nostrafax is a high-ranking member of this lineage.

Mordo Talut is trapped on Aegos. Nostrafax and his family ponder what to do with him whilst seeking to extract information — what does Halikarn know of their plans? The characters could infiltrate the feudal planet and quietly extract Mordo, as Halikarn desires. Alternatively, they could seek a greater Inquisitorial force to bear upon Aegos to cleanse it of traitors. Houses on Jenesse that oppose Nostrafax's rule may be able to back them in this endeavour.

OUTCOME

If the characters are successful, they gain **Halikarn's** favour and +1 Legitimacy for their Patron. **Halikarn** now knows that an Inquisitor was once involved with the sector's re-written histories, someone who initially saved Lysander's remnants but is unsure who it may have been. Otherwise, **Horst's** Faceless agents make a mess of the situation on Jenesse and Aegos. They manage to dispose of Mordo and scrub the records of the operative's presence, earning **Horst** +1 Legitimacy. Many of the traitor Lysander's descendants escape and their heresies linger to resurface in the future.

STRIFE IV-C *The Vice of Eternan*

The Vice of Eternan, after having wrecked a voidport in the Paleon system, is now blinking in and out of realspace. This rogue voidship moves across the sector in fits and spurts, astray in the Warp for reasons unknown.

In the preceding year, *The Vice of Eternan*, an Imperial Fleet transport ship, suffered a catastrophe whilst taking on cargo at a Paleon-orbiting port. Still moored to the station, the voidship suddenly dove into the Warp, wrecking much of the port and killing thousands of crew, travellers, and dock workers.

Such an event would not usually interest the Inquisition, but since the *Vice's* disappearance, the voidship has been blinking in and out of realspace, detected at different coordinates throughout the Gallosque Nebula. Whenever it resurfaces, local vox networks have recorded unholy screaming across their channels, and its presence seems to disturb astropath choirs in the Gallosque Subsector.

- ☠ **Kharket Graan**, an astropath in the service of **Inquisitor Ksenia Baek**, claims they have visions of the ship's future appearances.
- ☠ **Inquisitor Baek** seeks to hunt the voidship and simply wipe it out before it causes any more issues, but she is reticent to deal with it, claiming to be heavily occupied with other matters.
- ☠ **Inquisitor Raud** wishes to investigate the events surrounding the disaster carefully and unravel the mystery rather than destroy the ship outright.



OPERATION

The characters begin their hunt for the Vice of Eternan, hoping to investigate its mysteries or ensure its destruction before it causes another wide-scale disaster in the sector.

The first task for any group of characters to tackle this issue is to gather a battlegroup of Imperial voidships to travel to the *Vice's* next emergence point. The astropath, Kharket Graan, projects they have some time to get into position within a strait of the Gallosque Nebula (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 299). That's where the voidship will appear next, but all must depart immediately. Their Patron has acquired a Gellar Field stabilisation array from **Inquisitor Baek**, a rare and precious device reluctantly provided by the Adeptus Mechanicus. Such a powerful device could keep the *Vice* anchored long enough to investigate.

As soon as the *Vice* appears, the party are sent aboard, along with the stabilisation array's attendant Tech-Priests, and backed up by a security team of Navy Breachers to protect them. Installing the stabilisation array is no simple task; emitters must be placed at different points across the ship and then protected against interference.

Aboard, it becomes apparent that Genestealer Cultists attacked the ship as the *Vice* was taking on cargo. The cultists have been locked in skirmishes with the remaining crew since the incident occurred. Currently, the cultists have control over the ship's engine room, desperately trying to hold their ground and wrestle control of the ship's damaged engines to prevent the next Warp transition.

The Cult's Magus learned that the ship was secretly transporting a complement of incarcerated psykers to a holding facility elsewhere in the sector — to be later picked up by a Black Ship en route to Terra. The Magus needs the psykers to fuel their experiments towards forming the Herald's Howl (page 89). Their keeper, Ulena Cadavore (**Black Ship Crewmember**, *Imperium Maledictum*, page 321), has been doing her best to keep her volatile cargo out of their hands, though most of her fellow guards are now dead. The psychic screams felt in the sector result from the incarcerated psykers' containment failing, tortured by the rapid Warp transitions and presence of the malignant Broodmind.

The remaining crew are protecting themselves in pockets all over the ship. Very few of them are left, having been picked off gradually by a **Purestrain Genestealer** (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 349). The Magus believes that the Genestealer will single-handedly win their war of attrition, allowing them total control of the ship.

OUTCOME

If the characters can secure the *Vice of Eternan* and purge it of xenos taint, their Patron gains the *Voidship Boon* (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 36) and +1 Legitimacy. If the *Vice* escapes back to the Warp, rumours of it grow every year as it continues to haunt space within the Gallosque Nebula — where it appears next could cause further disaster.

If **Inquisitor Baek** deals with this Operation alone, she gains +1 Legitimacy but secretly extracts the psykers on board to further her experiments (initially unaware that some have received the 'Genestealer's Kiss'). She destroys *The Vice of Eternan* to cover her tracks, ultimately dooming anyone else aboard.



MATTER OF TIME

The Warp has not been kind to the *Vice* and its crew — characters learn that events on the ship have only occurred within a week of the initial attack, and each transition seems to break even more of the voidship's functions and integrity. Consider the possibility that the *Vice* threatens to make a Warp transition before the stabilisation array is put in place and what that could mean for the characters to be trapped aboard.

CONCLAVE IV CONCLUSION

The fourth Conclave ends with the Inquisitors finding little satisfaction in their dealings. Of all those present, only **Inquisitor Raud** seems pleased with how things have gone, rattling the cages of the other Inquisitors. **Inquisitor Varol** departs early, his warnings of growing Genestealer Cult activity in the sector ringing in the ears of all those present. Despite these misgivings, most agree to meet again.

CONCLAVE V

Inquisitor Raud's investigation into Eskender Thracius has led her to a terrible truth: there is a definitive traitor in the Conclave. Eskender Thracius, however, has one card yet to play that may cover his escape...

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

In attendance at the fifth Conclave are: **Ksenia Baek**, **Aegidius Halikarn**, **Sylvestrine Horst**, **Alis Raud**, and **Kai Varol** (**Eskender Thrasius**). **Konstan Serranus'** continued absence without communication has become a concern among the Inquisitors.

INTRIGUES

If characters or other operatives returned the daemonhost from Jotungarth to Mare Cinis (**Strife III-C: The Ghost of Luna**, page 102), they learn it was subsequently claimed by **Alis Raud** and moved to her chambers in Mare Cinis.

Sylvestrine Horst may confide in the characters that she finds **Raud's** handling of daemons deplorable; keeping them contained as daemonhosts only serves to anchor their corruption in realspace — a criticism she also held of her mentor, the late Inquisitor Lord Drake. She claims that members of the Ordo Malleus often believe they have much firmer control over daemonkind than in reality. She encourages characters to inform her of any of **Raud's** activities they learn of if daemonhosts are involved.

Characters may notice that **Kai Varol** and **Alis Raud** have gathered larger retinues than usual. Aside from the usual **Acolytes** (**Imperium Maledictum**, page 334) in both retinues, **Kai Varol's** forces include a trio of **Death Cult Assassins** (**Imperium Maledictum**, page 334), who appear armed with weapons that do not match any Imperial STC. Characters who have interacted with Aeldari technology (such as in **Strife I-A: The Void Stalker**, page 91) may recognise similarities to the xenos design.

STRIFE V-A

Excommunicate Traitoris

The revelation of a traitor in the Conclave's midst has everyone place their hands on their weapons. Tensions rise in the Conclave hall, putting a hold on further proceedings until the traitor can be dealt with.

Alis Raud reveals to the Conclave the results of her investigation into **Eskender Thracius** — through interrogation, observation, and missions undergone by her spy network — she has learned that **Thracius** yet lives under one of numerous false identities, each maintained through extensive use of polymorphine.

She declares that his capture is vital. **Raud** lists the false identities **Thracius** operates under (page 72), ending with an accusation that **Kai Varol** is the most recent.

- ☛ **Kai Varol**, or rather, **Eskender Thracius**, reveals the truth of these allegations but argues that his loyalty to the Inquisition is absolute. In turn, he reveals that the Herald's Howl has captured **Konstan Serranus**, a situation he seeks to leverage (see **Strife V-B: An Inquisitor Compromised**, page 110).
- ☛ The assembled Inquisitors call a vote on whether **Thracius** is declared *Excommunicate Traitoris* or whether such decisions should be delayed until **Konstan Serranus** is secured. The characters may discuss this vote with their Patron, and the players' choice should be reflected in the final decision).

OPERATION

With Alis Raud's revelations out in the open and the Inquisitors present having picked a side, the fate of Eskender Thracius must be dealt with.

Eskender Thracius will not be taken without a struggle. If he is declared *Excommunicate Traitoris*, a battle erupts in the Conclave hall. **Thracius** makes a fighting retreat to his section of Mare Cinis under covering fire from his **Acolytes** (**Imperium Maledictum**, page 334), armed with Aeldari weaponry. His quarters have been rigged with automated and servitor-controlled defences in anticipation of the day his cover is blown, including an emergency launch bay. From there, he escapes on a Valkyrie and commandeers an Imperial Fleet voidship in orbit around the moon. His acolytes are swiftly defeated following his departure, but the characters, the Inquisitors, and their retinues may have been badly wounded by the traps **Thracius** set.

If **Eskender Thracius** is left to continue as part of the Macharian Inquisition, the characters' Patron suggests uncovering the depths of **Thracius's** heresy is a worthwhile goal. Their Patron seeks irrefutable leverage over the Radical Inquisitor, believing it is only a matter of time before **Thracius** must be taken down. In this, the characters pursue the clues below but know that **Thracius** is still lurking within the Macharian Inquisition, so they must tread carefully.

Clues left behind by **Eskender Thracius** point characters to his false identities. These leads may be pursued through the contacts he made through each still-active alias:

Valerius Nabopalassar (*Ordo Xenos Aeldari specialist*): Records indicate a base of operations for this identity on Proteus Secundus in the Drimor Subsector. The Planetary Governor, the matriarch Gulya, hesitates to allow unauthorised access to an Inquisitorial laboratory. Inquisitors of the Ordo Xenos are held in particular reverence in the Proteus System after xenos meddling drove the inhabitants to war with one another.

Bayezid Karvonan (*Long-lost scion to the nobility of Harjus*): House Karvonan of Harjus holds little record of Bayezid Karvonan, having appeared seemingly from nowhere to claim title and land. Taikos is under guard by House Karvonan troops, who will attempt to kill any interlopers. Highborn politicking is cutthroat enough that Bayezid's guards will see the allegation that their employer is the alias of a heretical Inquisitor as an obvious lie — doubtless part of a plot by another noble.

Selim Iaysus (*Semi-legitimate scion of the Iaysus Rogue Trader Dynasty*): Characters involved with **Strife I-A: The Void Stalker** (page 91) may already have contacts in House Iaysus. The most recent sighting of Captain Selim Iaysus' vessel was purportedly plying the outer reaches of the Drimor Subsector, where it is currently docked to a voidstation above a feral world. Characters attempting to board the vessel to investigate its captain's quarters may try to do so either under false identities or wielding Inquisitorial authority.

Each of these leads reveals another of **Thracius's** many bases of operation. Investigating them may reveal information on his current whereabouts, the depths of heretical research on Aeldari technologies that **Thracius** has engaged in, as well as stockpiles of Aeldari weaponry. If nothing else, securing them robs the Radical Inquisitor of another hiding place.





OUTCOME

If characters pursue all known leads and return with information that may lead to **Eskender Thracius'** whereabouts, their Patron gains +1 Legitimacy. However, before they can act on this information to pursue **Thracius**, a more significant problem arises from the Herald's Howl (see **Conclave VI**, page 112).

If the characters do not pursue **Thracius**, **Alis Raud** undertakes this investigation, gaining +1 Legitimacy and gathering information that may be vital for **Thracius'** later capture (see **Conclave VII**, page 116).

STRIFE V-B

An Inquisitor Compromised

Eskender Thracius has prepared a gambit to delay the Conclave from declaring him Excommunicate Traitoris, staying their hands for enough time to allow his escape. He has lured Konstan Serranus into a trap, ransoming the Inquisitor's life to secure his escape.

Eskender Thracius may be able to distract the Conclave with the fate of **Konstan Serranus**. He uses the cover that the rescue operation provides to escape for the time being, slipping out of the hands of the Conclave. From this position, **Thracius** moves to cover his tracks and plot new identities to continue what he perceives as his duties to the God-Emperor.

Shortly before the previous Conclave, **Thracius** orchestrated the capture of **Konstan Serranus**, who, acting on a tipoff from **Kai Varol**, was taken prisoner while investigating a cell of the Herald's Howl.

- ☠ When the vote against **Thracius** is suggested, he reveals that he knows the location of **Serranus'** imprisonment.
- ☠ He claims to also have been investigating the same cell, from which he gave the tipoff to **Serranus**, and is willing to orchestrate **Serranus'** rescue to demonstrate his loyalty.
- ☠ If the Conclave accepts his bargain, **Thracius** asks for a cell of acolytes to be deployed to Kallastin, in the Andosk Subsector — he will guide them remotely to secure the Inquisitor's release.

OPERATION

The party departs for Kallastin to retrieve Serranus. They soon become embroiled in a planetary takeover, and more of the Howl's machinations are revealed.

Sylvestrine Horst makes contact with the characters before their deployment — she has ties to the Planetary Governor, and can arrange military support on the surface. However, this is offered with the stipulation that characters and their Patron support her motions in future Conclaves.

On Kallastin, **Thracius** makes contact with the characters. They learn that the recently appointed Planetary Governor Phytian de Kallastin has increased the planet's industrial output considerably, although many of the residents of industrial habs note an increase in mutations among them as a result of excess industrial byproducts, overworked schedules, and lax safety protocols.

In reality, the heightened production has been used by the planet's sect of the Herald's Howl as cover for a population boom, allowing Genestealer Cultists to spread through the populace of the planet's industrial underclass unnoticed; characters who have faced these cultists before will recognise both their mutations, and the insurmountable threat their numbers pose to Kallastin. Given the cover that the heightened production has provided them, characters may suspect the cult has the support of the Planetary Governor.

Serranus is imprisoned in the Cathedral of the Star Children, a disused subterranean manufactory that serves as a high temple of the Herald's Howl, replete with ornate star maps resembling the one found on Calvus Station. His imprisonment is overseen by a circle of five psykers, who are debating what should be done with him once they squeeze every vermillion-level secret out of him. Their plans range from using the Inquisitor as a bargaining chip to attempting to merge Genestealer genetics with his own — thereby welcoming him into the fold as an asset with which to infiltrate the Inquisition and deflect their investigations.

Characters attempting to recover **Konstan Serranus** find that the Cathedral is lightly defended, considering its importance, suggesting that the Genestealer Cultists are not expecting an attack.

There is little initial resistance to attempts to rescue **Serranus**, but forces muster and converge swiftly upon the Cathedral once word spreads that it is under attack. The Genestealer Cults' forces are practically innumerable, forcing characters into a fighting retreat despite **Serranus'** misgivings about leaving the xenos-corrupted heretics alive. If any psykers survive the initial attack, they order the cultists to prioritise slaying **Serranus**.

OUTCOME

Rescuing **Konstan Serranus** grants the characters' Patron +1 Legitimacy and the staunch support of the Ordo Xenos Inquisitor. If informed of the events at the Conclave, **Serranus** deepens his hatred for **Eskender Thracius**, both for setting him up to be captured, and his willingness to work alongside xenos to achieve his aims.

Attempting the rescue of **Serranus** separates the Conclave for long enough that **Thracius** is able to make his escape before a vote can be called to declare him *Excommunicate Traitoris*.

If the Party and their Patron pursue **Thracius** instead (**Strife V-A**, page 108), **Ksenia Baek** leads the operation to recover **Konstan Serranus**. She recovers **Serranus** without bloodshed, negotiating with the cultists and offering them future support in exchange for the prisoner. On the surface, she believes that the Herald's Howl should be allowed to continue its work, drawing the Hive Fleet away from Segmentum Solar — sacrificing the Macharian Sector instead to buy Holy Terra more time.

CONCLAVE V CONCLUSION

With **Eskender Thracius'** treachery revealed, the Conclave's decision has halted one heresy but allowed another to prosper. If **Serranus** returns alive, he immediately moves to take the reins of pursuing **Thracius**, having already been in pursuit of one of his false identities. The Herald's Howl, however, will soon prove an obstacle to any standing Inquisitorial plans.

CONCLAVE VI

The Conclave begins amid reports of Genestealer Cult insurgencies rising up throughout the Macharian Sector. As characters arrive at Mare Cinis, they find the Inquisitors already in the Conclave chamber, gazing through its glass dome ceiling at Persepolis far below, the unmistakable fires of war cast as faint flickering lights on the planet's surface. The day of ascension has come.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

In attendance at the sixth Conclave are: **Ksenia Baek**, **Aegidius Halikarn**, **Sylvestrine Horst**, and **Alis Raud**. After his time as a captive of the Herald's Howl Cult, **Konstan Serranus** returns to the Conclave with a visible increase of augmetic enhancements — among limbs, he has replaced both his eyes with augmetic sensors. Naturally, **Eskender Thracius** has fled since the last Conclave, his whereabouts remains uncertain. Each present Inquisitor is accompanied by extensive retinues and their Interrogators.



INTRIGUES

Konstan Serranus divulges to the Conclave the full extent of the knowledge he has gathered regarding the Herald's Howl — the vile cultists' primary aim is to draw the Tyranid Hive Fleets towards the Macharian Sector through the use of multiple psychic beacons, with each system marked on their Star Map iconography being the location of one such beacon.

If the Kryptman Protocol was not already known to the Conclave, whichever Inquisitors are aware of it will reveal it as a potential tool against the Genestealer Cultists and Hive Fleet.

If the characters have begun to suspect Inquisitor **Ksenia Baek** of Radical behaviour, they could approach Kharket Graan for more information. The astropath has worked for **Baek** for most of their deployment and fears what **Baek** ultimately has in store for her and that the Inquisitor is sliding towards the Radical, allowing them to plant a double agent in **Baek's** retinue. Graan fears **Baek** will use the Herald's Howl with the Kryptman Protocol to sacrifice the Macharian Sector and stall Leviathan in the name of Holy Terra and Segmentum Solar.

STRIFE VI-A The Fall of Persepolis

On the planet below, a battle rages that may determine the fate of the Macharian Sector. As the administrative centre for the sector, the loss of Persepolis, either to the Genestealer Cultists or through their destruction by Exterminatus, would be unacceptable.

The Conclave is divided. Someone must deal with Persepolis, the sector's capital world, as the rest of the Macharian Inquisition scatter to quash the Herald's Howl elsewhere — the Inquisition will be spread thin like it was during the Noctis Aeterna.

- ☠ **Sylvestrine Horst** has been observing the battlelines of the revolt on Persepolis from the moment it began. She has discerned a pattern of troop movements, with the Genestealer Cultists prioritising the capture of any major communications hubs. She suspects they are communicating with other cells in the sector.
- ☠ **Sylvestrine Horst**, **Konstan Serranus**, and **Aegidius Halikarn** all argue in favour of deploying forces to Persepolis to undertake scouting and assassination missions to locate and destroy cult leadership, prioritising the presumed Genestealer Patriarch.
- ☠ **Alis Raud** and **Ksenia Baek** advocate supporting the cult's rise and destroying it only before it can claim total victory on Persepolis. This would allow the cultists to use the communications networks to rouse the wider Herald's Howl, tricking the cult into revealing itself across the sector.

If the characters seek to resolve this Strife, their Patron has enough sway with the Conclave to approach this mission in whichever manner the players advise.

OPERATION

The characters deploy to Persepolis, finding the planet wracked by the spreading conflict. Even if they manage to quell the Genestealer's Cultists' initial strikes and their part in the Herald's Howl, it could take them years to track down and purge the last of them.

Note that any missions the characters undertake on the surface will inevitably bear the risk of engaging in combat, and their Patron advises they bring the greatest complement of weaponry they can gather. If there is anything the characters need or have been asking for a long time, the stockpiles at Mare Cinis should be open to them.

Fighting to quash the Herald's Howl: The Conclave arranges for the characters to have access to Sector Lord Aulus Sejanus's war room in the spire of Hive Skarthus. Sejanus recognises their involvement as a vital means of tipping the scales of this revolt in his favour and shares any information with them that could prove helpful in determining where to strike. With access to a wing of Valkyries for swift deployment and extraction, missions to defeat the uprising may include:

- ☠ Surveillance missions to root out and detect priority targets.
- ☠ Hunts for Genestealer Cultist Maguses, tacticians, and field commanders.
- ☠ Investigating organisations who may have aided in the Cult's rise to power.

These missions will likely culminate in a strike to destroy the Genestealer Patriarch, located deep in the lower levels of Hive Skarthus, orchestrating the cult's revolt from below ground. By now, their insurgency is so deeply rooted that purging them could be a ripe task for the Deathwatch.

Fighting to see the Cults rise: The characters deploy to an Inquisitorial safehouse in hive Skarthus. The Inquisition will not undertake military actions themselves, as any direct engagement would put characters into a battle on two fronts — the Genestealer Cultists would not recognise them as allies, and those defending the planet would treat them as part of the revolt. If captured, execution is near certain, although characters may be able to level Inquisitorial authority or their support of the revolt to buy their escape. Their missions to aid the Genestealer Cultists may include:

- ☠ Sabotaging Imperial supply lines and transport links.
- ☠ Luring defenders away from Genestealer Cultist activity.
- ☠ Ensuring Genestealer Cultists capture communication arrays across the planet.

Once the Genestealer Cultists capture the planet's hive cities, the operation is deemed a success. The characters will be extracted while arrangements are made to begin a counteroffensive. Again, this task would suit Deathwatch involvement, but the characters may have difficulty hiding their underhanded motives from these stalwart Marines.

OUTCOME

Completing their operation on Persepolis earns the characters' Patron +2 Legitimacy. Otherwise, it is undertaken by another Inquisitor, one who sided with their Patron (**Sylvestrine Horst** for defending Persepolis, **Ksenia Baek** for supporting the uprising), who gains +2 Legitimacy.

If the uprising is defeated: The wider Herald's Howl is roused to war in a piecemeal manner, with many smaller cells remaining in the shadows, unaware of the wider uprising. Persepolis is, however, able to function as the fulcrum of the Imperium's counteroffensive, and the cults that do emerge face swift retribution from Macharian Astra Militarum regiments, although a few are able to annihilate initial Imperial attacks in ambushes and guerilla engagements.

If the uprising is successful: The Herald's Howl emerge from their hidden places across the Macharian Sector, a united force that wreaks havoc in its emergence, but loses its element of surprise against Imperial reinforcements, having wasted their advantage against local forces. The loss of Persepolis, however, causes catastrophic logistical problems for the Imperial Forces, losing their central hub of authority over the sector.



STRIFE VI-B

Doom of the Border Worlds

Amid the reports of the sector-spanning Genestealer Cult uprising, six planets that correlate with the recovered Star Map have drawn the attention of the Conclave: Ctesias, Opis, Faustina IV, Cyzicus, Vantaer, and Telekar.

These planets on the edge of the Macharian Sector each have significant strategic importance in the form of resources that could supply the Herald's Howl for an extended campaign, including the forge and hive worlds of Ctesias, Opis, and Faustina IV for manufacturing and the agri worlds Cyzicus and Vantaer for provisioning.

On each affected planet, the defenders have been pushed to a tipping point and will be overwhelmed without concentrated immediate action from the Inquisitors on all six planets. Inquisitorial strike forces would have to be deployed in a protracted campaign to destroy the Patriarchs on each planet — potentially robbing the Conclave of the capability to defend Persepolis. Such a campaign would have to begin with strikes to disable anti-air defences, already controlled by Genestealer Cultists on each affected planet, repelling any attempts to undertake orbital strikes against the cultists.

The only other option is to activate the Kryptman Protocol. While fleet captains may be hesitant to enact *Exterminatus* with their vessels at risk from planetary defences, the sleeper agents conditioned by Inquisitor Lord Drake will follow such orders with little concern for their safety. Sacrificing the border worlds is no decision made lightly — many of the worlds that the Kryptman Protocol would destroy are unaffected by these uprisings and are home to vital resources for the Imperium, including agri worlds, hive worlds, and forge worlds. Their loss will have dreadful long-term effects for the sector's capacity to defend itself. Collectively, they are also home to hundreds of billions.

- ☛ **Konstan Serranus** is the leading proponent of using the Kryptman Protocol. In his eyes, the worlds that have already become infested by Genestealer Cults are damned, while those left untouched will merely be the next to fall in a disaster that will damn the entire Macharian Sector unless swift, bold action is taken.
- ☛ **Sylvestrine Horst** is **Serranus'** greatest opposition, considering the long-term costs of using the Kryptman Protocol too extreme for its use to benefit the Macharian Sector.
- ☛ **Aegidius Halikarn** sees aiding the border worlds as an opportunity to rebuild their political order to align with his Recongregationist philosophy in the wake of the conflict.

Whether characters choose to undertake this operation or favour activating the Kryptman Protocol so that their attention may be focused on Persepolis, it should be their Patron who makes the deciding argument for or against using the Kryptman Protocol.

OPERATION

As the Conclave scatters to save the sector, Characters race to deploy on the world of Telekar and begin their campaign of resistance against the occupying Genestealer Cult.

The characters must undertake a series of covert missions if they undertake an operation to recapture the border worlds. This includes scouting, sabotaging planetary defences, and assassinating the Genestealer Cultists' chain of command. Time is of the essence, but discretion is essential on these enemy-occupied planets. Several of the captured planets are still home to loyalists holding out or waging guerilla war against the Genestealer Cultists, and characters who discover and rendezvous with such cells of resistance may find the loyalists to have vital local knowledge or intel on the Genestealer Cult forces.

Once anti-air defences are disabled and the Genestealer Cults are in disarray, Navis Imperialis and Astra Militarum forces can move to undertake orbital strikes and ground invasions, but with each reclaimed world, paranoia among the Herald's Howl only increases on those yet to fall — warnings of the characters' operations passed between the cultists lead to heightened security. Elite Genestealer Cultists and Purestrain Genestealers are deployed to hunt the characters progressively as the operation continues.

Finally, they must deal with the psychic beacon at the heart of each cult's operation and likely the most well-defended structure under cultist control. Total purgation is likely the best method to ensure the Howl is ceased, but any Inquisitor seeking to study the Herald's Howl further may attempt to contain the horror through a greater psychic force, technology, or using blanks. Most would consider it heresy to meddle with such monstrosities; any failures to contain it may result in Warp breaches and daemonic activity rising in the area.

OUTCOME

If characters successfully undertake the operation to destroy the Herald's Howl on the border worlds, their Patron gains +2 Legitimacy. If the border worlds are saved, it is accomplished at a terrible cost to the affected planets, with many functionally refounded during the conquest following the characters' operations.

If the characters do not undertake this operation, it falls to **Aegidius Halikarn** or **Konstan Serranus**, depending on the decision made regarding the Kryptman Protocol.

Aegidius Halikarn undertakes the operation to liberate the border worlds, losing many acolytes in intense skirmishes, clearing a path for Imperial forces to reclaim the lost planets, earning +2 Legitimacy.

Konstan Serranus activates the Kryptman protocols, destroying the border worlds and, with them, the logistical strength of the Herald's Howl, earning +2 Legitimacy, but at atrocious cost.

THE CONCLAVE AT WAR

Beyond Conclave VI's Strifes, each Inquisitor undertakes dozens of missions with their acolytes to stem the tide of Genestealer Cult uprisings and end the Herald's Howl.

INQUISITOR KSENIA BAEK

Ksenia Baek aids Imperial forces on numerous battlelines; she takes more dangerous and sacrificial actions to contain the Herald's Howl rather than destroy their psychic beacons. The characters may already have an informant in her retinue (perhaps in the form of Kharket Graan). The informant relays that **Baek** has been negotiating with some cells of the Herald's Howl, albeit for seemingly loyalist aims, and sending related messages to her Thorian peers back on Holy Terra about the Herald's Howl and the Kryptman Protocol.

INQUISITOR AEGIDIUS HALIKARN

The wrath of **Aegidius Halikarn** falls upon Voll, on which a Genestealer Cult uprising had largely already succeeded, declaring their commanding Magus the hive world's new planetary governor. **Halikarn** arms and orchestrates a counter-revolution of Imperial loyalists against the Herald's Howl, culminating in the Inquisitor personally slaying the usurper planetary governor.

INQUISITOR SYLVESTRINE HORST

Sylvestrine Horst strikes where the fighting is thickest, focusing her defensive efforts on worlds of the most significant strategic importance. On a dozen battlefronts, the tide turns for Imperial forces when reinforcements arrive in the form of the Inquisitor's saint-masked acolytes. Her greatest triumph is the defence of Dao Teyras. Still, her forces see deployment across the sector, defending Imperial command from the hive spires of Macharia to the city ships of Jotungarth.

INQUISITOR ALIS RAUD

Alis Raud personally engages Genestealer Cult-controlled voidships in the Drimor Subsector, drawing them into a void battle in the turbulent depths of the Ayzinith Abyss, a largely uncharted region of space that she deftly navigates with such success as to suggest a more profound knowledge of the area. In truth, Raud helps the defence from the sidelines, as a lead on the disappeared heretic General Cyrus has come to light — a threat she deems even more pressing than the Herald's Howl.

INQUISITOR KONSTAN SERRANUS

Konstan Serranus is a vengeful man, and his wrath falls upon the Genestealer Cultists on Kallastin. Aware of their numbers and tactics after his captivity, **Serranus** mobilises an army of the Machine God, gathered from his Adeptus Mechanicus allies on Eskutchax. The augmented Inquisitor, his acolytes, and an army of skitarii and battle servitors fall upon the Genestealer Cults with mechanical fury, and **Serranus** is thorough in his purging of any among the Highborn of Kallastin that he believes may be allied to the cultists.

INQUISITOR ESKENDER THRACIUS

Despite being a traitor in the eyes of several Inquisitors of the Conclave, **Eskender Thracius** believes he is loyal to the Imperium and fights against the Herald's Howl with a zeal to match any other Inquisitor. **Thracius'** acolytes, armed with esoteric Aeldari weaponry, come to the beleaguered Imperial forces on Proteus Secundus, arriving disguised as the Rogue Trader Selim Iaysus. He will be remembered by the people of the Proteus system for his heroism, personally leading his crew to board a Genestealer Cult-controlled battleship and slay their Patriarch with the strange technology gathered on his travels.

CONCLAVE VI CONCLUSION

As the last fires of the Herald's Howl uprising die across the Macharian Sector, the forces of the Inquisition, instrumental in the Imperial victory, fade back into the shadows. With the greatest threat to the Macharian Sector seemingly defeated, Inquisitorial machinations are once again in motion, both loyalist and heretical...

CONCLAVE VII

With the defeat of the Herald's Howl, the Conclave gathers once more on Mare Cinis, gazing down upon the wounded Persepolis. Each Inquisitor returns bearing fresh scars. The Conclave vie for reinforcement as three loose ends persist: the remnants of the Herald's Howl, Raud's hunt for an ostensibly dead heretic, and the escape of Eskender Thracius.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

In attendance at the seventh Conclave are: **Ksenia Baek**, **Aegidius Halikarn**, **Sylvestrine Horst**, **Alis Raud**, and **Konstan Serranus**. Characters should note each Inquisitor has a significantly diminished retinue present. Despite their great victories during the Herald's Howl, tensions between Inquisitors are high.

INTRIGUES

Characters who suspect **Ksenia Baek** of treachery may investigate her section of Mare Cinis to discern her actions during the war against the Herald's Howl. The information confirms that she had negotiated with several cells of the Herald's Howl, bargaining their survival to maintain their psychic beacons. Bringing this information to their Patron or the Conclave may result in a second battle erupting in Mare Cinis. **Konstan Serranus** and **Alis Raud** will swiftly move to declare **Baek Excommunicate Traitoris**. If this does occur, and Baek is apprehended, she cannot support the Herald's Howl in **Strife VII-A: The Star Map**.

If **Konstan Serranus** still lives, he is joined by Magos Tal-Theta 661 of the Adeptus Mechanicus, whose skitarii forces joined Serranus in battle on Kallastin. Characters with a history with the Adeptus Mechanicus or who undertook the operation to cleanse the daemonic corruption from Eskutchax may be able to requisition Adeptus Mechanicus support on whatever Strife they undertake.

STRIFE VII-A The Star Map

The Herald's Howl suffered severe losses across the Macharian Sector, its remnants withdrawing back into the shadowed corners of the sector from which the cult was first spawned. Yet a point of concern remains for the Conclave, as some cells may still be waiting to activate.

The star chart first found on the Calvus Station (**Strife I-C**, page 94) held record of nearly every world where the Herald's Howl arose — a symbol of faith, a logistical network, the shape of a doom that could have overwhelmed the Macharian Sector. Yet the Herald's Howl did not fall upon all of the Star Map's worlds, leading the Conclave to conclude that they dwell in the shadows of numerous worlds.

☠ Among them, Eskutchax, Harjus, Res Vilissima, Paleon, and, most perverse of all, Macharia itself. The Howl's inactivity on these worlds begs the question whether some parts of the Genestealer Cult threat continue to gather strength, preparing for another sector-wide offensive when their leaders deem the time right.

☠ **Sylvestrine Horst** and **Aegidius Halikarn** urge the Conclave to engage in a joint assault: swift, simultaneous strikes against each remaining cell to bring a final silence to the Herald's Howl.

☠ If these cells can communicate with each other, anything short of total eradication would mean one or more cells receiving an early warning, allowing them to scatter and spread their foul mutation to different worlds.

☠ None are opposed to acting against this Strife, everyone having seen first-hand the damage these organised Genestealer Cults can do — it is simply a matter of allocating the Inquisition's dwindling resources after the Howl's last uprising and managing other dire issues about to come to light in the Conclave's chambers (see **Strife VII-B** and **VII-C**).

OPERATION

In bringing the light of the God-Emperor to the final shadows concealing the Herald's Howl, the characters are entrusted with destroying the final cell of the Genestealer Cult, embedded on Macharia, shrine world of Saint Macharius, the spiritual heart of the Macharian Sector.

The dense and ever-shifting population of Macharia proves the most significant challenge for locating the Genestealer Cult. The number of pilgrims means that even local Ministorum priests have little recollection of the faces and names of those who pass by. However, some priests have noted small mutations among the pilgrims and others who have gone to lengths to hide their facial features entirely with wraps and bandages.

Characters may discover that Macharia has served as a node from which the cult has spread, moving freely aboard pilgrim ships under the guise of the faithful. Through interrogating or shadowing the movements of false pilgrims, characters learn that the cult operates from a network of catacombs beneath the Lord Solar's Palace, centred on a cleared tomb turned cult hub, named the Sanctuary of the Four-armed Emperor.



Once this location is discovered, the characters' Inquisitorial Patron organises a rendezvous, meeting the characters to prepare and join them to destroy what remains of the Herald's Howl.

As the characters and their Patron reach the Sanctuary of the Four-armed Emperor, they are confronted by another Inquisitorial force. **Ksenia Baek** and her acolytes do not allow them to assault the sanctuary, holding that the survival of the Herald's Howl is vital for the survival of the Imperium, as they will split the advance of the Tyranids, lessening the threat directed towards Holy Terra. **Inquisitor Baek** is willing to kill any characters who do not stand down. If combat ensues, the Genestealer Cult's forces emerge to join the fray, instinctually supporting **Ksenia Baek**. While the characters' Patron engages the heretic Inquisitor, they are ordered to locate and destroy the Genestealer Patriarch, without whose synaptic influence the cult will surely crumble.

OUTCOME

If the characters succeed in destroying the final Patriarch of the Herald's Howl, their Patron earns +1 Legitimacy. They gain the full support of **Sylvestrine Horst** and **Aegidius Halikarn** in claiming the title of Inquisitor Lord. Regardless of whether she survived the engagement, **Inquisitor Baek** is declared *Excommunicate Traitoris*.

If the Conclave does not pursue this Strife, **Ksenia Baek** warns the surviving Herald's Howl cells of the approaching danger. **Aegidius Halikarn** finds many supposed dens of heresy empty, with little trace of their presence, save for the Star Map motif left as an almost mocking final trace. The Herald's Howl fractures further: small cells flee across the sector in the bowels of voidships, spreading to other worlds where their twisted faith may be reborn in forgotten shadowed places, beginning their generational cycles once more.

STRIFE VII-B

Fate of the Daemon-keepers

Under the Conclave chamber's bright lights, dark and brutal truths are uncovered for all to see. This moment could spell the end for many Inquisitors and shake the Macharian Inquisition to its core.

The Conclave erupts in uproar as **Sylvestrine Horst** motions that **Alis Raud** be declared *Excommunicate Traitoris*. **Horst's** spies have observed **Raud's** actions when facing daemons and noted that **Raud** seems more interested in their containment than their banishment.

- ☛ Depending on the events of previous Conclaves, **Horst** may cite the Daemon Engine core from Eskutchax (**Strife II-C**, page 98) or the daemonhost extracted from Jotungarth (**Strife III-C**, page 102), depending on the outcome of those Strifes. **Horst** accuses **Raud** of Radicalism, that keeping a collection of daemons bound into Human bodies is a heresy, for indeed she is using them for some fell purpose, aligning herself with the very abominations that she must eradicate.
- ☛ **Alis Raud** responds by levelling an accusation at **Horst**, claiming she has evidence that implicates **Horst** in the death of Inquisitor Lord Heironymo Drake — logs that her acolytes extracted from the Drake archive show that the Inquisitor Lord was acting on the information provided by **Horst** when he departed for his disastrous final operation.
- ☛ **Horst** wilfully admits involvement in her mentor's death, claiming that it was her duty to the Ordo Hereticus to bring about the downfall of the Inquisitor Lord she believed was a heretic cut from the same cloth as **Raud** — the Inquisitor Lord was himself a keeper of daemonhosts, as evidenced by the discovery on Jotungarth (**Strife III-C**). **Horst** further claims that Drake should be posthumously declared *Excommunicate Traitoris*.

As these Inquisitors hurl accusations at each other, the characters' Patron can decide which, if any, Inquisitor is declared a traitor (they will take the characters' council). If the characters do not choose, their Patron may abstain if they deem other Strifes of greater importance, leaving the debate in a stalemate.

OPERATION

Tensions rise. Sides are picked. Hands hover over holstered weapons. Unless cooler heads prevail, another Inquisitor will be named a traitor this day.

If either Inquisitor is declared *Excommunicate Traitoris*, the Mare Cinis base erupts into conflict as rival fireteams of **Acolytes** (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 334) fight to apprehend the traitor or defend their respective Inquisitor.

If **Sylvestrine Horst** is declared a traitor and pursued, she falls back under a guard of her gold-masked acolytes to her shuttle and flees to the surface of Persepolis. Characters hunting her find that she has used her Adepta Sororitas Famulous allies to embed herself in the court of Sector Lord Aulus Sejanus.

Those who apprehend her may attempt to prove her treachery to the Order of the Hallowed Glass and break this alliance. Alternatively, a rogue group of **Horst's** former acolytes now in service of **Aegidius Halikarn** may know how to enter the hive spire covertly. If cornered, **Horst** holds out to the end. She declares that she is a true loyalist and that **Raud** and **Drake** were both heretics for their consorting with daemons.

Alis Raud will likewise fall back to her transport if pursued, her prayer scroll-adorned acolytes providing supporting fire. The Conclave know that **Raud** is active in the Drimor Subsector, where they suspect she likely keeps a base of operations. If characters can access records left at Mare Cynis by **Raud**, they may learn that her headquarters are on a void fortress at the edge of the Ayzinith Abyss.

Her void fortress is heavily armed to defend against unauthorised incoming voidships, demanding that the Conclave commandeer Navis Imperialis vessels destroy it at long distances or undertake a near-suicidal boarding run. A deck at the station's core is the prison of twelve **Daemonhosts** (page 172), captured by **Raud** across years of operations. They serve in part as bait, which she believes may draw General Cyrus into the open for the power they may offer if the traitor general still lives. If backed into a corner by an assault that overwhelms her force of acolytes, **Raud**, galvanised by her Xanthite philosophy, will unleash daemonhosts, which she attempts to control and drive against the attackers — the damage they cause to the voidstation risks dooming all aboard.

OUTCOME

If the characters succeed in either operation, their Patron earns +1 Legitimacy and the full support of either **Sylvestrine Horst** or **Alis Raud** in claiming the title of Inquisitor Lord (whoever is the most appropriate ally).

If the characters' Patron refuses to denounce **Horst** or **Raud** as a traitor and can defuse the tense situation, the two Inquisitors secretly develop a bitter enmity and begin waging a shadow war with their acolytes.

STRIFE VII-C *Eskender Thracius*

The rise of the Herald's Howl forced the Conclave to halt their pursuit of Eskender Thracius. The Inquisitors all agree that Thracius has been privy to the inner workings of the Macharian Inquisition for too long. Now, he must be terminated for good.

Information gathered following **Thracius'** revelations has allowed the Conclave to investigate his likely movements and whereabouts further. He operates primarily from the Cytheris Subsector, with each of his aliases traced to activity on Macharia. Thus, **Thracius'** corruption is placed within the spiritual heart of the Macharian Sector.

Konstan Serranus is the first to demand this hunt be completed. After being captured due to **Thracius'** actions and learning that **Thracius** has flaunted the use of not only xenos technology but also that of the Aeldari, his hatred for the rogue Inquisitor now knows no bounds. Serranus believes they should purge **Thracius's** entire organisation to ensure no hidden traitors or aliases remain.

Aegidius Halikarn agrees with **Serranus** for the most part. **Thracius's** sector-spanning web of contacts and anti-xenos resources still proves a boon to the Inquisition. A suitable acolyte or Interrogator could be found to take over, with oversight from the rest of the Conclave.

OPERATION

Characters begin their pursuit of Thracius by heading to Macharia, now suspected to be the planetary base of his entire operation. As they pull at threads, they discover Thracius has woven his way into influencing many of the planet's ruling organisations to push his Isstvanist goals.

Characters can begin investigating within the Adeptus Ministorum for any Inquisitorial links that may lead them to **Eskender Thracius**. The Planetary Governor, Arch-Confessor Evaristus Heliacal, is little help, age clouding whatever memories they may have had of past cooperation with the Inquisition. Arch-Cardinal Molinair, however, has a history of regular contact with multiple Inquisitors, including **Alis Raud** and **Kai Varol**, one of **Thracius'** discarded identities, and the late Inquisitor Lord Heironymo Drake.



Upon learning of **Varol's** betrayal, the Arch-Cardinal cannot reveal any further information about their dealing with Inquisitors, suggesting a total lack of memory of these past engagements. The reality of this inability results from Inquisitor Lord Drake's psychic conditioning — Molinair cannot discuss their service to the Inquisition other than in direct conversation with the Inquisitor in question. Without the physical presence of **Kai Varol**, the characters can learn nothing more from him. Savvy players may recognise the opportunity to impersonate **Kai Varol** using polymorphine and extract the needed information that way.

Characters seeking to pursue Molinair's links with **Thracius** may also learn more through meetings with other leading powers of the Ecclesiarchy, Imperial Fleet, and Astra Militarum on Macharia. Many of these leaders have the same psychic conditioning. Through further investigation, characters discover that Molinair oversaw the construction of an Inquisitorial sanctum under orders from **Kai Varol**.

While the characters undertake this investigation, **Eskender Thracius** orders a strike force of his acolytes to shadow the characters, reporting their movements, and attempt to undertake covert assassinations if an opportunity presents itself, in part by stoking rumours among pilgrims that the characters are heretics, in the hope that they may be killed in mob violence.

If the characters prove capable of fending them off, **Thracius** may approach the characters personally. He will offer them a last chance to join his retinue — which they could do if they earnestly believe in his Isstvanist ideals or as an underhanded means to infiltrate his innermost circle.

Thracius' stronghold lies buried beneath the Tomb of Macharius, sheltered by the resting places of ten thousand martyrs, and accessed through the Mausoleum of Saint Crassus, one of Saint Macharius' generals. **Konstan Serranus** and their Patron join the characters to undertake a raid on **Thracius'** stronghold. They find it heavily defended by his remaining acolytes, armed with powerful Aeldari weaponry. Characters who reach the stronghold's heart find **Eskender Thracius**, defended by a salvaged **Wraithguard** (page 174), making his last heretical stand.

OUTCOME

If the characters capture or kill **Inquisitor Eskender Thracius**, their Patron earns +1 Legitimacy and the full support of **Konstan Serranus** in claiming the title of Inquisitor Lord.

If unapprehended, **Eskender Thracius** acts quickly to cover his tracks and produce new identities, allowing him to continue his duties to the God-Emperor secretly. Perhaps one or more of his new identities find places among the Macharian Inquisition, allowing him to observe their movements and shield his holy work from the traitors and fools who would threaten to destroy it.

CONCLAVE VII CONCLUSION

With a final, decisive action, one Inquisitor has demonstrated to the Conclave their worthiness as a successor to Inquisitor Lord Heironymo Drake. But two threats still grow in the Macharian Sector, and the number of active Inquisitors has dwindled — they must gather new allies, train new operatives, and fill empty seats in their ranks. The Inquisition cannot rest.



EPILOGUE

Heresies of all kinds have wracked the Macharian Sector, but it is no stranger to turbulent times. In the wake of disaster, the great machine of the Imperium will dust off the corpses and do its best to pick up where it left off. Holy Terra demands its tithe, and those in power will see it delivered once more.

The outcome of your Heresies Macharia campaign and the fate of its Inquisitors will no doubt differ from any other. The following are some examples of where aspects of the campaign may lead, including some plots and intrigues left lingering in the wake of yet another sector-wide upheaval.

The sector's newly endorsed **Inquisitor Lord** bears the burden of getting the Inquisition back on track. There are no doubt seats to fill, power vacuums to tend to, and stringent cells and resources across the sector to bring back into the fold. The Macharian Inquisition is indeed in a weakened state, and it will take the efforts of its most esteemed Inquisitor to build it back up.

Aspects of the **Kryptman Protocol** remain active across the sector. The remaining Inquisitors must decide whether to investigate its protocols further and wield it as the weapon **Inquisitor Drake** intended it to be or dismantle and deprogram its components so that they may never be used again. Regardless of **Ksenia Baek's** fate, she contacted her peers in Segmentum Solar. These agents of the Adeptus Terra may take an interest in finishing what she considered a viable option — combining the Herald's Howl and Kryptman Protocols to sacrifice the Macharian Sector in the name of Holy Terra, buying time against Hive Fleet Leviathan.

The last remnants of the **Herald's Howl** have gone into hiding. Genestealer Cultists are accustomed to playing a long game; many seek new spaces to spend generations rebuilding their hidden armies. Though characters are likely to see a decrease in Genestealer Cult activity across the sector, plentiful cells still need rooting out — they are a threat that should not be forgotten.

Eskender Thracius may be defeated or on the run, but the results of his Isstvanian plotting are yet to come to fruition — what of the Aeldari craftworld he once sought to draw into the sector to spark conflict.

Would a wounded Imperium be able to come out on top against such a powerful alien foe? What secrets has **Thracius** uncovered that could aid the Inquisition in cleaning up his mess?

Alis Raud's obsession with the heretic General Cyrus — that he still somehow lives and plots from the shadows — may warrant further investigation. What pieces she has gathered indicate a plot more secretive and existentially dangerous to the Imperium, yet just as widespread and troublesome as the Herald's Howl.

WHAT IS NEXT?

The outcome of the Heresies Macharia may leave many issues in the sector unresolved that characters can pick up and continue to investigate, especially those relating to their Patron's Philosophy. What remains of their Inquisitor's plans that they can fulfil? With many threats quelled across the sector, now may be the perfect time for their Patron to make their move.

Consider the options available in **Chapter VII: Sector Threats** (page 135) and advice in **Chapter II: Running Inquisition Adventures** (page 34) to build brand new sector-spanning missions and campaigns. Now may be the chance for characters to focus on a new threat, one better fitting their Ordo's mission.

Your characters' actions in the Heresies Macharia may have elevated them to a higher position in their Patron's retinue. This improved position comes with greater responsibility and autonomy — they will be expected to solve more problems without their Patron's oversight and utilising their own accumulated resources. For completing the campaign, consider granting them their own prominent base of operations or personal voidship to traverse the sector and continue their adventures.

Finally, keep an eye out for future **Imperium Maledictum** supplements. More thrilling adventures and ways to play the game are coming for Inquisition characters and those from other Factions.

VI

INQUISITION CONTACTS

No Inquisitor or Interrogator is without a web of contacts to feed them information or provide easier access to their faction's resources and knowledge. In the field, most acolytes quickly learn to follow their superior's example and cultivate a local network of spies and informants. An acolyte's contacts can feed them valuable information and useful resources to further their mission or uncover the heresies hidden around them. Despite outward appearances, the Imperium is a turbulent sea of competing agendas and ruinous intrigue, where who you know and how credible a threat you pose are often far more important considerations than what is right or expedient.

Contacts (see *Imperium Maledictum*, pages 193–194) are valuable tools for players. They are often a more expedient, not to mention interesting, way to get what they want from a Faction without going through the front door. For GMs, Contacts can begin as simple NPCs, a means of conveying information about a specific mission, who can later evolve into significant characters who their players care about. Contacts like these can generate twists and turns in the plot, come to player characters with problems that honour demands they solve, and be a reliable source of drama. A Contact going underground or disappearing entirely is a clear plot point for characters to investigate around their missions. Some might have perished in a player's service, but others might backstab them and become a new enemy.

USING CONTACTS

Factions within the Adeptus Terra should provide Inquisitors and their acolytes with the services they need upfront. But often, bureaucracy and politicking behind the scenes can slow requests or stall them outright, particularly in situations such as:

- ☠ The Patron's or characters' Influence with a Faction is too low or negative.
- ☠ Something the characters need from the Faction has highly restricted access.
- ☠ Publicly interacting with the Faction could negatively affect the mission's security or the party's Subtlety.
- ☠ Someone with significant regional authority inside the Faction is actively working against the characters or the Inquisition.

However, gathering individual Contacts within the Adeptus Terra and Factions beyond can help parties avoid these blockades or overbearing official procedures. They can get what they need faster, without undue oversight, potentially revealing more information than they would have received otherwise.



The following list represents what Contacts can provide to the characters and, the reasons for seeking them out:

- ☛ **Access:** Entrance to restricted facilities or off-limits areas, often without supervision
- ☛ **Equipment:** Faster requisition of restricted equipment or supplies (greater than *Common Availability*)
- ☛ **Information:** Specialist or forbidden knowledge, intelligence regarding movements and rumours within the Contact's Faction
- ☛ **Protection:** Asylum within a Faction's facilities or security granted by their agents
- ☛ **Services:** Faster or discrete access to services the Contact's Faction provides (such as medicae care, guidance, hirelings, or transportation)

Additionally, Faction Contacts listed in the rest of this chapter show examples of unique Rewards they can provide when players go above and beyond in dealing with them. Do not forget that some Contacts may be actively seeking the aid of the Inquisition; they may bring something to the table with their request or begin cooperating with a higher initial Loyalty.

FINDING CONTACTS

During a mission, characters can search for Contacts using an appropriate social or investigative Skill, such as *Intuition (Group or Human)*, *Logic (Investigation)*, *Lore (Adeptus Terra)*, or *Rapport (Inquiry)*.

The GM will determine the Difficulty of the Test, considering any associated problems present in the world. For example, the Test could have a lower Difficulty if their Influence with the Contact's related Faction is in good standing or a higher Difficulty if the party's Subtlety rating is low and the Contact may wish to avoid interacting with Inquisition acolytes.

Outside of a mission, characters can encounter Contacts using the *Consult Savant (Imperium Maledictum, page 234)*, *Cultivate Network*, and *Secure Information Network* Endeavours (*Inquisition Player's Guide*, pages 129 and 132) or simply by spending time making the Tests described above.

The Influence characters have over their Contacts is recorded personally between the Contact and the characters. However, any Influence from related Factions is calculated with the Contact's Influence, both positively and negatively.

Example: *The characters have been working directly with Hogarth Drevet, a Ministorum preacher, for some time and garnered +2 Influence with him personally. However, the characters have -1 Influence with the Adeptus Ministorum, meaning they have a total of +1 Influence with Drevet. Due to his ties with the Ministorum, he must consider the Faction's standing with the characters and act appropriately.*

When approaching a new Contact from an existing Faction, the Contact's baseline Influence begins at the same level (or their Patron's Influence, if they can reveal such information safely). Outside known Factions, the GM should choose the initial level of Influence based on the Contact's first impressions of the characters, which could easily be negative. The GM should secretly track their level of Influence, revealing it to the characters only if they investigate the Contact's background or behaviours directly.

Characters who pursue the *Consolidate Influence* Endeavour (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 232) can negatively affect their Contact's behaviour towards them. While their overall Influence with the related Faction improves, and any loss with their Contact's personal Influence effectively balances out, the personal Influence decrease must be considered. The Contact may feel the characters have blatantly abused their Influence over them or unduly tied their reputation to any future actions the characters take — many believe Inquisition acolytes take foolish risks. The Contact may have witnessed this type of behaviour from the characters in the past.

MANAGING CONTACTS

Characters need to provide a means of secure communication with their Contacts. This could be as simple as setting up an established meeting place (perhaps their place of work or worship, away from prying eyes), building a communication network of cyphers and vox channels, or choosing a dead-drop location to pass letters.

Players should meet regularly with their Contacts, whether they have new information or not. Most Contacts feel safer and more reciprocal if a character appears to care about their well-being. Characters can do this during their downtime (GMs are encouraged to give this time freely outside other Endeavours). Contacts left idle for too long might grow complacent or detached, causing their loyalty to degrade.

A Contact's attitude towards the characters aligns with the **Influence** Table (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 192), from the viewpoint of 'This Contact Will Typically...' instead of 'Faction'.



YOU HAVE PROVEN YOURSELF...

Actions that can improve Influence with a Contact:

- ☠ The characters act to protect the Contact from enemies within their Faction.
- ☠ The characters act to protect the Contact from enemies outside their Faction or in the broader world (including the rest of the Inquisition).
- ☠ The characters work to fulfil the Contact's personal requests.
- ☠ The characters aid the Contact with their Influence over other Factions or NPCs.
- ☠ The characters raise the Contact's station in life, professionally or personally.

Improving Influence with a Contact is more complicated than causing it to degrade — but definitely more manageable than changing the opinion of their entire Faction.

CREATING & MAKING CONTACTS

While Contacts can arise out of existing or incidental NPCs, GMs can prepare a handful of Contacts before their sessions. Consider what Factions the players are likely to interact with and choose or create suitable Contacts that have ties to these Factions. For example, if they need to gain access to an Administratum datavault to follow a lead, an Administratum scribe would be an ideal Contact to make. But you could also consider an Adeptus Mechanicus Tech-Priest who regularly maintains aspects of the datavault or an Infractionist thief who claims to know of a secret or unsecured entranceway.

Often, characters encounter NPCs that the players come to adore or perhaps revile. These make excellent candidates for Contacts since they are already present in the world, have an established personality, and players may care deeply about what happens to them (for better or worse). Consider giving them a higher or lower initial Influence, depending on how their previous interactions with the characters went.

As with the examples in the rest of this chapter, Contacts have a few key aspects you should consider when making your own:



YOU ASK TOO MUCH...

Actions that can degrade Influence with a Contact:

- ☠ Asking the Contact to risk their own standing with their Faction
- ☠ Asking the Contact to do something unlawful or go against the Lex Imperialis
- ☠ Asking the Contact for something more than their level of Influence can provide
- ☠ Taking actions that place the Contact in danger
- ☠ The Contact suspects the characters are lying to them or hiding pertinent information
- ☠ Consider how the Contact feels about the Inquisition and whether the characters have revealed who their true master is to the Contact
- ☠ The characters have blackmailed the Contact to work for them (this may cause their Influence to be locked in place, rather than degrade — until the Contact finds a way to free themselves from the characters)

Contacts that are mistreated or feel betrayed will make themselves hard to find or communicate with. Some within the Adeptus Terra may throw themselves upon the mercy of their Faction's leaders, who may snub the party and their Patron by extension (possibly affecting their Influence). More radical elements may seek retaliation against the players' betrayal, becoming new enemies with their Faction's backing behind them.

- ☠ What base-level information or services can the Contact provide (often tied to their representative Faction)?
- ☠ What special rewards can the Contact provide players if they are treated well?
- ☠ What big favours might the Contact ask of the players, presented as small adventure hooks or things for the players to pursue during their downtime?
- ☠ What secrets does the Contact have that, if learned, the players could hold over them?
- ☠ Who or what is the Contact's true master? Who are they more afraid of versus the players? Does the Contact have any privileged or dangerous information about them?
- ☠ Find an existing stat-block in *Imperium Maledictum* or another supplement that closely matches the type of Contact you are creating. What other Skills, Traits, or Equipment does the character need?

AGIRA CHERNOV, ADMINISTRATUM CLERK

“Please don’t touch that. There is a system to all of this. Now, what do you need? I’m very busy. The data is not wrong. 10,000 units. Delivery within the decade. What is it you said? I’m very busy. Collation is underway. Please don’t touch that.”

Born and trained on Macharia, Agira Chernov is nearly the perfect Administratum clerk: armed with a photographic memory and a mind for sticking to bureaucratic procedure. Agira has the aptitude to rise higher within the Administratum, but in her years of service, she has sworn away from moving beyond the rank of clerk. She tried it once and found it infuriating and understimulating. Her brusque demeanour tends to push others away, so she shuffled from post to post as higher officials tired of her lack of decorum. Eventually, she found her way back to the datavaults.

Her natural eidetic memory has filled her head with incalculable amounts of data, facts, and jumbles of cyphers and numbers. But her photographic memory does not work on people. She recognises faces, but putting names to them is often challenging if she does not see them in a dataslate or voxcaster. She can recall precisely how many tonnes of recaf were delivered to the hive over the past six months, but recalling the name of an assistant clerk she saw earlier that day would be a significant challenge to her.

Not all information Agira has stored within her photographic memory is something she rightfully should have seen. After digging through datavaults and pulling on hidden threads, she encountered many forbidden lores. Naturally, she could not help but commit it to memory before it was too late. Despite destroying all traces of what she found, she is haunted by nightmares of what is now etched into her memory for good. So far, she has managed to evade any sort of Inquisitorial investigation but fears it is only a matter of time before someone comes digging around in her head for her darkest secrets.

She is terrified of psykers, knowing that her memory contains heretical texts they might be able to read with their unnatural abilities. She fears being mind-wiped, a fate for her almost worse than death — the decades of information gathered in her head represent her identity and the only thing she truly knows and loves.

To overcome the noise of her brain and all the information rattling within it, Agira medicates herself to sleep each night with the hardest amasec she can afford. This behaviour leaves her vulnerable and less effective outside her work. At nearly fifty years old, her age is starting to show on her gaunt face. The years have been kind, but she makes no attempts to care for her looks — they do not matter to the books, scrolls, and dataslates, so neither do they matter to her.

Use the **Administratum Adept** stat-block to represent Clerk Agira Chernov (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 325). Remove her *Intuition (People)* Skill and give her *Linguistics (Cyphers)* 60 and *Lore (Forbidden)* 70, *Adeptus Terra* 70). Agira can be placed in any large Administratum facility or datavault across the Macharian Sector.

REQUESTS

- ☛ It is by no means a formal request, but Agira appreciates a quality bottle of amasec from time to time, especially one better than she can typically afford.
- ☛ Agira recently requested some logs from a datavault related to something she should not have seen, but her access was denied. She needs someone to gain access and strike her request from the record, paranoid that someone has noticed her snooping around.
- ☛ A Tech-Priest recently visited her datavault, and Agira believes they altered some existing records. What is on paper does not match what is in her head. She asks the characters to track this Tech-Priest down and discover what they have been up to.

REWARDS

- ☛ At a basic level of trust, Agira gives the characters access to search the records of her assigned datavault and anything legitimate she holds in her head.
- ☛ Agira knows that data is valuable, and so is its destruction. At a high level of trust, she offers to destroy information or alter records for the characters or their Patron.
- ☛ With her greatest trust, Agira shares the horrific information she holds in her head, the secrets she should not know.

CELESTINA VISCONTI, SOCIALITE

“*Fine work, wouldn’t you say? Such graceful lines and splendid angles on a sculpture meant to show the God-Emperor at His most human... no wonder the sculptor who made it turned out to be a daemon-worshipping heretic. Now, did I ever mention to you that this was just the first one in a matched set of three?*”



Celestina Visconti is the assumed name of a Highborn socialite who has a taste for the arts. She is famous for her wit, charm, and beauty and is a constant presence in high society. With her luminary status among the wealthy and the elite, few suspect she is a Progena, a graduate of a Schola Progenium. Her noble title is a fabrication — instead, she has been specially trained to serve as the Adeptus Ministorum’s eyes and ears among the gilded halls of hive city nobility.

Celestina is a petite lady who has been the beneficiary of countless cosmetic and rejuvenat procedures intended to keep her appearance youthful. Her face is stretched and fastened by various hooks while gilded tubes and wires snake through a gap between her face and the rest of her visage. Most notable, however, is that her face moves like an animatronic puppet as her eyebrows, lips, and chin shift until they form her intended expression — a process that lags a second or two longer than it naturally would.

Celestina is never without Modesta, her assistant servo-skull. Modesta’s chassis was made from the skull of a former peer, one who Celestina had to kill to ensure her graduation. It is covered in brass shell casings beaten flat, punctuated with a dagger embedded in Modesta’s forehead. The glass eye of the blade’s former wielder, a heretic who discovered Celestina’s true allegiance, sits in one of Modesta’s eye sockets, a steadfast reminder to her that she is always being watched.

Celestina revels in the lifestyle afforded by her role as a covert operative among the Imperium’s upper class. Given years to cultivate her assumed identity, Celestina can grant favoured characters access to exclusive hive spire locations to assist their investigations. Yet despite the love for her lifestyle, Celestina knows she must constantly prove her worth as a spy to the Adeptus Ministorum. As such, she is not above planting evidence to throw a scapegoat or two at her handlers to remain in their good graces.

Use the **Ministorum Priest** stat-block to represent Celestina Visconti (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 332). Use the **Servo-skull** stat-block to represent Modesta (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 323). The blade sheathed in its forehead is a Knife with the *Inflict (Poisoned)* Trait and Mono-edge Modification. It can only be drawn by Celestina’s hand or with her permission.

REQUESTS

- ☠ Celestina’s charms have attracted the wrong kind of attention... again. She discreetly tells the characters to convince a rather aggressive suitor from a notable Rogue Trader Dynasty (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 261) to leave her well alone.
- ☠ A local Adeptus Administratum official is threatening Celestina’s cover. Their audit of the various nobility in the hive city means they will be able to trace her funding back to a dark corner of the Ministorum and, thereby, her patron. She requests the characters dig up something she can use as blackmail on the official so that she can counter his audit with some dirt of her own.

REWARDS

- ☠ Celestina’s word is enough to open a host of doors in exclusive locations and the homes of the elite in the hive city. As long as the players keep up appearances as part of her entourage, she can drag them to almost any social function.
- ☠ As an agent of the Adeptus Ministorum, Celestina can pass on information to her handlers at the top of the Ministorum hierarchy and vice versa. Beneficial, if the players require Ministorum support at a moment’s notice.

DARIUS DAUPHINE, PRISON WARDEN

“Welcome to Void’s Hold. Keep your hands to yourself and try not to think too hard; some of the inmates might hear you.”

On the penal world of Jriak V, in the Cytheris Subsector, lies a secluded island chain home to a holding facility for captured psykers. Officially noted in Administratum record as Managruut prison, after the island where it is based, the facility was dubbed ‘Void’s Hold’ by those who toil there. Among the facility’s many overworked staff is Warden Darius Dauphine.

Quiet and contemplative, Warden Dauphine almost seems slow to the casual observer, but the traumas he has faced in his years of service to the Emperor have made a steel cage around his mind. Fear, joy, and pleasure are as foreign to Dauphine as sunlight is to inmates in the lowest levels of Managruut. Once an Astra Militarum soldier, he served his time on the front lines but was taken captive by Drukhari pirates. Darius was eventually rescued during a Deathwatch operation against the pirates, his near-lifeless body pulled from beneath a pile of corpses less fortunate than he. In the years after, he was interrogated by an Ordo Xenos Inquisitor and received a host of augmetic implants to stitch his mind back together and fortify it.

Darius owes his continued career to the same Ordo Xenos Inquisitor, who saw fit to install him as Warden of Void’s Hold, but not without further debt or duty. Occasionally, the lowest reaches of the facility are used to hold xenos captives, typically Aeldari or Drukhari, which Dauphine is sworn to keep secret. The psykers held in the upper levels are said to obscure any detection of the xenos held below by their sovereign affiliates, acting as a shroud. Dauphine is uncomfortable with this aspect of their arrangement, especially when the Inquisitor requests that he extract information from these prisoners and keep them alive. He would have difficulty holding back if it were not for his mental augments; his desire for vengeance is deep-seated.

Use the **Commissar** stat-block to represent Darius Dauphine (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 330). Remove the *Summary Execution* Trait and add the *Blasting Charge* Weapon Specialist Attack (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 329), representing his service as a sapper in the ranks of the Astra Militarum. The Ordo Xenos Inquisitor he is sworn to could be Konstan Serranus (page 70), Eskender Thracius (page 72), one of his many aliases, or another of your own invention.



REQUESTS

- ☠ Darius passes a handwritten message to the characters; letters scrawled like he was not looking at what he was writing. Decoding the scribbles, Darius fears his Inquisitor patron put a monitoring device inside his mental augments. He wants them removed without the Inquisitor’s knowing but lacks the agency to inspect them without getting caught.
- ☠ Managruut Prison is running out of cell space. Warden Dauphine would be grateful if the characters could petition the Adeptus Astra Telepathica or use their influence with the organisation to divert or hasten the arrival of a Black Ship to Jriak V.

REWARDS

- ☠ Warden Dauphine has many contacts across the penal world of Jriak V and other facilities beyond the system. Characters seeking to locate a particular inmate (including those obscured by redacted records) may be able to do so with Dauphine’s help.
- ☠ Warden Dauphine could make space in Void’s Hold for the characters to hold captured psykers or xenos entities they apprehend. Though without significant Influence over him, Darius’ patron would be informed about what the characters aim to secure.

HOGARTH DREVET, IMPERIAL CULTIST

“In my long years, I see that the Imperial Creed has been riddled with bullet holes. Countless ages and crusades have punctured its edifice, chapters torn like limbs severed; we brothers are its dutiful surgeons.”

Brother Hogarth Drevet is a devoted member of the Adeptus Ministorum living in Hive Skarthius, Persepolis. He is an amiable attendant of a well-tended, modest, and largely forgotten shrine located in the mid-levels of the hive and has worked there for as long as anyone can remember. His current rank and station are often misleading; Drevet has a protracted and war-torn past and, despite appearances, carries considerable influence. He has the ear of many high-ranking officials in Persopolis and is a front-line survivor of many battlefields.

Drevet has been gifted extensive augments and rejuvenat treatments to extend his life; he is currently around one hundred and fifty years old. He crusaded with the Frateris Militia in his early years alongside the Black Templars in the Cytheris Subsector. He charged headfirst into the fray side-by-side with the angels of the Emperor against heretics who strayed far from the Imperial Creed. One fateful day, he was struck down in single combat against a traitor guardsman, suffering wounds that he spent the next decade recovering from. He was told by the surgeon who revived him that an unnamed Space Marine personally carried him from the frontlines to the reserves to ensure he survived.

His shrine, the Cenotaph of Anamnesis, is more of a library than a traditional place of worship, and Drevet is as much a fixture as the shrine's collection of historical tomes — he became a scholar during his recovery period, filling his mind with all aspects of the Imperial Creed and tasked with complex research tasks. High-ranking nobles and servants of the Adeptus Terra visit the shrine regularly to converse with Drevet and hear his long-lived words of wisdom or hear a story from his time on the battlefield.

Drevet has refused promotion many times; superiors within the Ministorum see him as the perfect example of a war hero, but Drevet is not a man who turns away from an incomplete duty. His current commitment keeps him bound to the library. He is reconciling the Imperial Creed against the tenets and potential revisions uttered by the now-retired Lord Commander and Imperial Regent Roboute Guilliman and how it pertains to the turbulent histories of the Macharian Sector.

Hogarth is conflicted by this work and challenged by it — what his contacts in Terra provide him often fails to align with delicate aspects of the Creed. He knows that failing to complete his work here could result in civil war across the sector, so he works in secret despite the prying eyes of his superiors and to maintain outward appearances.



Use the **Devout** stat-block to represent Brother Hogarth Drevet (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 331). He is also armed with a Chainsword (Melee (One-handed) 25, 5 + SL difference Damage. *Loud, Rend* (2)), which he often fiddles the trigger of when nervous, and even carries about his library with him at all times. Regardless of his former injuries, Drevet can still hold himself in a fight, and sometimes, he yearns to return to the battlefield.

REQUESTS

- ☠ The local Administratum lacks sympathy for Hogarth's cause and refuses him entry to certain records and datavaults in the hive to further his research. Hogarth would have greater trust in the characters if they could use their influence to get him access, above or below board.
- ☠ Brother Drevet recently attended a service in the depths of Hive Skarthius in a ruined cathedral. The preacher alluded to the existence of divine beings other than the God-Emperor. Drevet believes the preacher is a heretic and requests the characters find out who else is associated with them before their vile doctrine spreads further through the hive.

REWARDS

- ☠ Brother Drevet may be persuaded to grant the characters access to some of his library if they need it to investigate local cults further. His wizened advice, he gives freely.
- ☠ He maintains secure, hidden places in the lower levels of the hive where he stores volatile texts and conducts sacred rites. Drevet can provide access to trusted characters if they need to rest, recover, or hide from heretics.

VESTA LORRAINE, ART DEALER

“ You have a fine eye to recognise a remarkable piece of art, but we both know that is not why you're here. ”

Vesta Lorraine runs a sculpture gallery on Proteus Secundus, located in the upper levels of Hive Raghul. It features pieces from across the Imperium, some of which predate the founding of the Macharian Sector. Most of the pieces are abstract, and their meanings have been lost to antiquity. All are in remarkably well-preserved condition. Everything is for sale, though only those who dwell in the spire's highest levels have the resources or influence to acquire such works.

When meeting with clients, Vesta delivers an anecdote about each piece. Some deal with the speculated meaning of the sculpture, while others discuss the materials used or the world of origin. In some cases, they explain how the sculpture entered their gallery. In most cases, the stories mention how she first encountered the work while serving as seneschal to the Klaskoloff Dynasty (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 261). Vesta loves to name-drop, and any time the story can include a prominent member of spire society, she makes it a point to include the name or at least allude to it.

The art gallery is not Vesta's only source of income. It works well to grow her client base and allay the Vigilites' interest in her business, however Vesta also participates in the Silent Trade, acting as a broker for illicit xenos goods between interested parties. She has a variety of xenotech artefacts hidden in stashes across the hive and her gallery. She suggests that these were acquired during their service to the Klaskoloff Dynasty but never explicitly stated as much. Notably, new items continue to enter this collection, suggesting that Vesta maintains active connections with Silent Trade suppliers. This collection seldom includes weaponry. Instead, it features a range of more esoteric devices, many of which she claims are merely convenience items from different xenos cultures.

If asked, Vesta refuses to explain how or when she left the service of the Klaskoloff Dynasty. If the characters follow up or investigate the Rogue Trader's affiliates, they deny any knowledge of Vesta. However, they do so with a wink and a smile.

Use the **Merchant Trader** stat-block to represent Vesta Lorraine (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 338). She also has the following Skills: *Lore (Silent Trade)* 70 and *Tech (Engineering)* 60.



REQUESTS

- ☠ A noble attempted to sell a sculpture to Vesta. While the piece was exceptional, she believes it is a dangerous xenos artefact. Vesta refused to buy the cursed thing but wants the seller tracked down and the piece destroyed before it does any damage and outs her operations.
- ☠ Vesta acquired a spiralling sculpture that resembles chitinous armour plates. After displaying it for only a few days, she believes she can hear faint whispers emanating from the object and has not slept properly since. She hopes the characters take it off her hands and adequately dispose of it.

REWARDS

- ☠ Vesta is familiar with many xenotech artefacts. She can often identify their origins and sometimes a general understanding of their functions in exchange for service.
- ☠ Becoming significantly indebted to the characters, Vesta may invite them to a Silent Trade secret auction. These auctions include many sculptures and works of art, among them xenos artefacts in disguise that fall under the Inquisition's purview.
- ☠ If the characters do seek xenos weaponry, Vesta has several contacts in the Silent Trade with whom she can arrange meetings. However, the characters need a high level of influence before she entertains this idea.

JERITHIN HAMMER, BOUNTY HUNTER

“Don't worry sire, my boys and I will get you to across the hive, straight to the voidport, no interference from the gangs. But of course, there is the matter of payment. Tell me, what have the cogfolk been cooking up over in Sector Seven-Theta?”

Jerithin Hammer is a retired gunslinger who runs a small network of informants and enforcers who scuttle through the reaches of the lower levels of Hive Oberyll on Leonova. He spent his youth protecting nobles and hunting down outlaws, making a name for his efficiency with a pistol and deadly accuracy. Now he leans on his substantial roster of former contacts to drive his enterprise.

Jerithin appears to be in his mid-forties, with rugged, well-worn features and short dark hair. He shows some signs of having rejuvenat treatments — his life experiences certainly cover more than one ordinary lifespan. He wears a long coat and always has a las pistol holstered on his thigh. Outwardly, he appears to spend his days drinking and gambling. From his corner seat in local watering holes, where he deals in games of chance all day long, he meets with contacts, peddles information between them, and wiles away his boredom with risky bets and watered-down drinks. It is where he has become comfortable doing business, down in the muck with his agents, and never too far from a full glass of amasec.

Hammer began his career as a decorated Macharian Vigilite. When he became embroiled in an Ordo Hereticus Inquisitor's investigation and informed on several of his former comrades, Hammer quickly left their ranks and fell to the underbelly of the hive. There, Hammer turned a hand at bounty hunting and protector for hire, which went hand in hand with a new lifestyle of drinking, gambling, and gossip-mongering. From time to time, the Inquisitor's agents still call upon him for information or to act as a local guide — Jerithin knows he cannot refuse their call. Otherwise, he wishes to survive as long as possible and keep doing what he deems honourable.

His informants include people in hive society's upper and lower echelons. The nobles he has worked for are happy to inform the man who saved their lives. Conversely, on the lower levels, his contacts garnered through bounty hunting include enemies and allies, former competitors, and retired gangers who know he honours his agreed prices.

Use the **Bounty Hunter** stat-block to represent Jerithin Hammer (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 342). Use the **Ganger** and **Dreg** stat-blocks (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 340) to represent his network of informants and runners. Jerithin can be placed in any hive city or relatively large Imperial settlement with a history of infractionist activity.

REQUESTS

- ☠ Hammer needs a local gang ousted from one of his favourite watering holes. There are just too many of them for him to deal with alone, and he is not as fast as he once was. They should think he is not involved.
- ☠ A former employer of Hammer, a noblewoman from the hive spires, has been accused of heresy by someone in the Ministorum. Hammer knows this is false and wants the characters to look into it, thinking someone is framing her for political gain.
- ☠ An outlaw Hammer brought to justice long ago, thought dead, has resurfaced in the hive. Hammer is paranoid that this man will seek revenge upon him. He fears using his agents might draw undue attention to himself. He requests that the characters investigate on his behalf.

REWARDS

- ☠ Hammer prefers to reward people with information, or if something needs investigating, he can deploy members of his network to dig it up. His contacts include local dealers and low-hive artisans, who can source equipment for the characters under the table.
- ☠ Though it has been a long time since he put a hole in someone, Hammer would serve those he truly trusts by personally following them into battle, convincing those within his enterprise to join him.



LETHIC ARANDIR, ROGUE PSYKER

“It is not lost, it just has not been found yet. Nothing is ever lost unless it is destroyed. That I can do nothing about, unfortunately.”

Lethic Arandir is a finder. People pay her good money to find lost things or lost people. Some call her a bounty hunter, but she never really gets her hands dirty; she identifies accurately where said bounty is holed up, but never goes as far as actually trying to claim it herself. In truth, Arandir is a rogue psyker who does everything she can to hide her powers. She uses them to make money through finding but intends never to use her powers in front of witnesses.

Gaunt and hollow-faced, with sunken eyes and stringy brown hair, Lethic is constantly bundled up in robes and clothes and always seems cold, no matter the temperature. Her thin fingers fidget with the edge of her long coat, and her eyes constantly move about as she sees wisps of the Warp gathering around her. Born into a merchant family, Lethic never took to the family business. She continually wandered away from her duties and often returned with some lost oddity or another. Soon she realised that her ability to find lost items and people could get her paid by those desperately looking for them.

So far, Arandir has been lucky enough to avoid the Inquisition's notice. She is preternaturally conscious of those looking for her and aims to keep her head down. However, she is savvy (or foolhardy) enough to recognise that befriending a few low-level acolytes and Inquisitorial minions might warn her if the eyes of the Inquisition were about to fall upon her. If she learns who they are, Arandir will be eager to initiate contact with the characters, perhaps approaching them before they even know about her services.

Use the **Rogue Psyker** stat-block to represent Lethic Arandir (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 346). She primarily uses the Minor and Divination Psychic Powers listed in the Rogue Psyker stat-block. Lethic can be encountered on any sufficiently populated Imperium world or voidstation.

REQUESTS

- ☠ Lethic is careful when using her psychic powers, but recently, there was a witness. Lethic asks the characters to silence this witness. She knows exactly where they are, naturally, but they are on the staff of a local noble and stay within their estate. Lethic cannot get close without rousing suspicions.
- ☠ A customer has hired Lethic to find an exceedingly rare artefact. Unfortunately, she has tracked the artefact to a Macharian Vigilite lockup. She needs someone with sufficient authority to access the lockup and retrieve the artefact.
- ☠ Naturally, if the characters figure out that Lethic is a rogue psyker, they would gain significant trust if they did not hand her over to the authorities or the Astra Telepathica. However, if she sees the characters exploiting her with this information, she will aim to disappear and has plentiful plans to do so without them catching her.

REWARDS

- ☠ The primary reward for gaining Lethic's trust is her 'finding' abilities, which are handy for finding items relevant to their investigations or *Rare* or *Exotic* equipment or items. Until she gains significant confidence in the characters, she will prefer to work alone (to better preserve her secrets). She can accompany the characters in person when greater trust is established, speeding up their findings.
- ☠ If she trusts the characters well enough to keep her secret, Lethic is happy to use her powers in front of them or aid them in psychic rituals or related endeavours. (She gains access to the remaining Divination Psychic Powers from *Imperium Maledictum*, pages 174–176).



MIZO LESKAR, ASTROPATH

“ *What you ask of me, challenges my oaths to the choir and this damnable house. But I cannot ignore the things I’ve seen here. Nethecaré thinks I’m disposable. They’ll consider it a betrayal if they find out I’ve been talking to you. If that happens, I know what fate awaits me at the Emperor’s table. So, I will assuredly take you down with me.* ”

Mizo Leskar is an exceptional psyker and former choir member of Hive Rokarth’s Crystalline Reflectory. At the behest of House Castyx, they were seconded to House Nethecaré as the personal astropath of the house’s inner circle. Whilst Mizo enjoys the sense of individuality and newfound relative peace operating outside the psychic choir, they detest the house they are now bound to. Never have they been privy to so many terrible secrets all at once.

Yet Mizo is duty-bound to comply with the house’s requests. The psyker is caught between representing the Adeptus Astra Telepathica, the direct orders of Planetary Governor Castyx, and the most influential members of House Nethecaré. Mizo spends their time between Hive Dalal and the Brass Hive on Rokarth, carted about unceremoniously at the house’s behest. The chorister knows this position is impossible to escape but wishes dearly to serve a more pious master.

Use the **Astropath** stat-block to represent Mizo Leskar (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 320). They also have the *Discern Falsehoods*, *Pathfinder*, and *Piercing Sight* Psychic Powers (*Inquisition Player’s Guide*, pages 71–72). Mizo is a flexible contact; should the characters require an astropath Contact on a planet other than Voll, Mizo can be placed in another planetary governor’s court. With their Divination powers, it is plausible for Mizo to seek the characters out on Voll and make contact on their own.



REQUESTS

- ☠ Mizo has learned that a member of House Nethecaré’s inner circle, Brynna Molsk, is secretly a rogue psyker. Not as powerful as Leskar by any means, Brynna has avoided detection by authorities for her entire life, yet she suspects that Mizo now knows of her hidden curse. Her presence disrupts Mizo’s abilities, like a constant buzzing in their ears. Mizo wants to get rid of her but is unable to do so.
- ☠ Mizo believes that someone is plotting to assassinate Planetary Governor Castyx. They catch fleeting images in their visions of a strange spined snake coiling around the Governor’s neck and dark figures taking over the Governor’s court. Mizo is unsure what to do with this information. If they were to report this to superiors in House Nethecaré, they are sure these warnings would land on deaf ears; Mizo thinks they could be involved.

REWARDS

- ☠ Mizo has snippets of House Nethecaré’s most profound secrets in their mind and has slowly been piecing them together. The house goes against Lord Castyx’s decree to share all the research they find in Voll’s acid wastes and their experimentations into psychic abilities go far beyond their remit. They are secretly working with an Ordo Xenos Inquisitor. They have detected a hidden psychic presence on Voll and kept it a secret (this could point to the Herald’s Howl being present on Voll or psychic-capable strains of the acynadi they harvest).
- ☠ It is rare for anyone in the Imperium to have a personal astropath in their pocket. If the characters gain the heights of Mizo’s trust, they will find the time to send psychic messages on behalf of the party — significantly reducing the time it takes them to contact entities outside the system.

ORHYS-PHI-07ET, STRANDED EXPLORATOR

“ We do not have time for... Wait! I need to examine your sidearm immediately. ”

The *Essential Revolutions* was due to depart from the Macharian Sector shortly after the onset of the Noctis Aeterna and examine worlds along the sector's barely explored borders. But, due to resource reallocation issues, extensive breakdowns, and tangled Administratum bureaucracy, the voidship is moored at a void port above Eskutchax for the next few decades. Until then, Explorator Orhys-Phi-07et is effectively stranded with idle mechadendrites and minimal resources to continue his research.

Orhys-Phi-07et believes he was built to be an Explorator, as any blessed machine is built for a specific purpose. Unlike his brothers, who appear content to wait for their ship's departure, Orhys-Phi-07et believes he can get a head start on his Quest for Knowledge and has a hunger for travel. He is particularly interested in the Imperium's lost technology and believes that during the Macharian Crusade, experimental weapons were fielded and never properly recovered. His ultimate goal, though farfetched, would be to discover a lost STC, thereby cementing his name in the annals of the Cult Mechanicus.

Though he keeps these feelings to himself, Orhys-Phi-07et does not believe in the Adeptus Mechanicus' philosophy of insularity from the rest of the Adeptus Terra. He thinks the Explorator Fleet could be more agile and further their knowledge if they worked more closely with other factions, members of the Inquisition chief among them. He is eager to push the boundaries of where he can operate and investigate, but he does so with extreme caution. He knows that if his fellow Tech-Priests knew what he wanted to achieve, he would lose his station on the *Essential Revolutions* and be reassigned elsewhere by the Magos in charge.

Use the **Tech-Priest** stat-block to represent Explorator Orhys-Phi-07 (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 324). He has garnered an extensive communication network across the sector for sharing information with other Explorators, Tech-Priests, and datavaults within the Mechanicus. This allows him to communicate with the characters at any significant port of call.



REQUESTS

- Until the *Essential Revolutions* is ready to depart (decades from now), Orhys-Phi-07et would jump at the chance to accompany the party if they were to set out to any barely explored worlds. At the very least, he is hungry for any information they can retrieve from nearby Mechanicus facilities to aid his quest.
- Orhys-Phi-07et feels that something more than bureaucratic failures is holding back the *Essential Revolutions* from departing, but he lacks the authority to investigate the delays and thinks that his fellow Tech-Priests would not want him poking around. He would be incredibly grateful if the characters could investigate in his stead and share what they discover.

REWARDS

- The Explorator can access many archives and datavaults that typical Mechanicus agents do not — including classified analysis of xenos and heretical technology and the Explorator Fleet's world surveys.
- As an Explorator, Orhys-Phi-07 can recognise and analyse xenotech and archaeotech. If the characters recover a device of unknown purpose and origin, he may be able to help them discern both points. In many cases, he can demonstrate its function.

ZARIN VARUNA, LOGISTICS OFFICER

“Did you hear what happened on Somrot? No? Well, what if I told you the local Mechanicus found an Aeldari artefact buried underground? Hand over those solars and I’ll tell you the rest...”

Zarin Varuna is a dutiful servant of the Hawkscar Dynasty (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 261) and a logistics officer aboard the *Innocent*, the voidship of the infamous Captain Ion Hawkscar. He is a cheerful yet wary man who has made careful, but largely successful, contact with individuals from a number of xenos species and works as an information broker for his captain. Zarin has a long roster of contacts throughout the sector due to the nature of his vocation and the vast distances plied by his captain.

Some think Zarin is simply a scapegoat for Captain Hawkscar, allowing his captain a measure of plausible deniability if he were ever discovered to be making contact with xenos entities. Zarin knows this is true, but does the hard work regardless, rewarded with sufficient autonomy to make his own deals and decisions. That said, he only trades in information and strictly stays away from the Silent Trade, striving never to be caught red-handed with any heretical xenos technology.

The true worth of Zarin’s work is his contact with certain Craftworld Aeldari and elements of the Leagues of Votann within the Macharian Sector and along its borders. He primarily made contact at Hawkscar’s behest to ensure the Dynasty was steering clear of any problematic xenos claims or traps at the reaches of the sector. He found that the xenos were eager to trade for similar information on Imperial movements and holdings in the sector, which he provided, but Zarin has never relinquished information that could interfere with Hawkscar’s interests. Furthermore, Zarin often arranges for xenos guides and mercenaries to complete missions without his captain’s knowledge, occasionally trading the service of his personnel (including himself) to xenos forces.

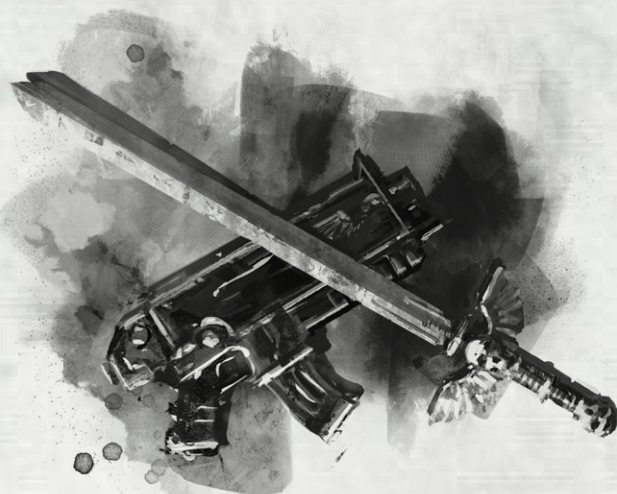
Use the **Smuggler** stat-block to represent Zarin Varuna (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 341). He also has the following Skills: *Intuition (Aeldari)* 70, *Intuition (Votann)* 70, *Linguistics (Aeldari)* 60, *Linguistics (Votann)* 60, *Lore (Aeldari)* 70, *Lore (Votann)* 70. Zarin is a versatile Contact; he travels wherever the *Innocent* goes in the sector and can travel freely from orbit to planet with his own Arvus Lighter. He is often accompanied by three **Armsmen** (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 337) named Nila Lensk, Laskor Rausch, and Ekhter Viers, who protect him and the Lighter.

REQUESTS

- ☠ Zarin declares that he will never work with the Drukhari again. In one particularly disastrous deal with them, Zarin believes he became marked for assassination (or ‘consumption’, he is not exactly sure) by a Kabalite Warrior named Vivithrax Vhrex. He knows of the abandoned Imperial void station in the Drimor Subsector the Kabal often uses and would feel greater peace of mind if the Kabal, or at least Vhrex, were no more.
- ☠ Zarin believes that one of the armsmen assigned to him is informing captain Hawkscar of his various deals and actions. Effectively, someone to replace Zarin if the captain tires of him. He would appreciate it if someone could figure out who it is without the armsmen knowing they are being investigated. If Zarin knew, he could better control the information flow and ensure his essential position within the *Innocent*’s crew.

REWARDS

- ☠ Zarin has a significant portion of xenos presence in the Drimor Subsector mapped out — many parts he is sure the Inquisition know nothing about. He would only pass on such volatile information to those he truly trusted.
- ☠ With sufficient influence, Zarin can arrange face-to-face meetings with local xenos entities and broker the employ of xenos mercenaries among the Aeldari and Votann factions he maintains contact with.



SECTOR THREATS

The Emperor's realm is glorious in its expanse and power, united in faith, maintained by the might of its armies and the blood shed by its devoted servants. Wherever the Emperor's gaze falls, the Imperium is renewed, scoured clean of any tarnish and made afresh in His image. And yet, there are places where the Emperor's sight cannot reach, warrens of darkness and despair where heresy festers, the loyal suffer, and the vile go unpunished for the crimes. This is as true of the Macharian Sector as it is of any region of the galaxy, and so is the work of the Inquisition set before them — to venture into the darkness and bring with them the Emperor's cleansing light.

What follows is a selection of Threats to the Macharian Sector worthy of the Inquisition's wrath. These may serve as useful inclusions for an ongoing adventure or the makings of an entire campaign by themselves. See page 160 for further advice on using Threats in your game.

Each Threat featured in this chapter presents the following information:

- ☛ **Introduction:** Covering the Threat's general backstory, where they might operate in the sector, and most importantly, what they seek to achieve
- ☛ **Resources:** The powers, influence or forces the Threat has on hand to achieve their goals
- ☛ **Methods:** The typical means of how they go about achieving their goals
- ☛ **Secrets:** The secrets that could unravel the Threat's plans, what could give the players the upper hand in combatting them

Stat-blocks related to each threat are included with their entry, in the Appendix (page 174), or found in the *Imperium Maledictum Core Book*. Each Threat's area of operations has been designed to be flexible, so you may move them to wherever you wish to suit your campaign simply by changing the named locations mentioned throughout their text.



THREATS BY ORDO TARGET

HERETICS

- ☛ Company of the Twisted Sickle (page 136)
- ☛ Momas the Murmururer (page 144)
- ☛ The Storm's Eye (page 150)
- ☛ Xandro Cosmar & Ankhet (page 158)

DAEMONS

- ☛ Gaazrek Weavemaster (page 138)
- ☛ Mizrax Tallian, the Herald of Blood (page 140)
- ☛ The Reaper (page 148)
- ☛ Valastra of the Endless Whisper (page 154)

XENOS

- ☛ Nar'itor's Kinband (page 142)
- ☛ The Pilgrim's Path (page 146)
- ☛ Tök's Firestorm Kindred (page 152)
- ☛ Varon Vipersong (page 156)



COMPANY OF THE TWISTED SICKLE

“As you consume, you transform into its reflection.”



THREAT OVERVIEW

- ☠ The Company of the Twisted Sickle is a Traitor Guard regiment in league with Nurgle cultists who occupy sectors on the agri world of Goros Pok.
- ☠ They purport to believe they are liberating the planet's labourers from the Imperium's oppressive machinations.
- ☠ Their ambition is simple: continue to spread across Goros Pok and exploit the Imperium's supply chains to infect other worlds.

An Astra Militarum company, the 203rd Quannus-V regiment, were dispatched to quell an insurrection on Goros Pok (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 286). The company had to depend upon local resources to function during the occupation. Their quartermasters requisitioned supplies from local farms and manufactorums to ensure the troopers remained well-fed and ready for action. A hidden Nurgle cult saw an opportunity and intercepted the supplies, contaminating them before they reached the company, allowing them to spread their blight among the newly arrived troopers.

The resulting pox spread quickly among their ranks, culling their numbers substantially, leaving the work of pacifying Goros Pok to other units. The regiment's field surgeons were helpless, their diagnostors unable to offer any useful information on infection, which saw stinking red welts erupt from skin of the face and arms, rendering strong soldiers helpless in a matter of hours. The 203rd were quarantined to prevent the spread of the disease and a supply of broad-spectrum medicae tonics was requested from Voll, though there seemed little hope of aid arriving soon enough to be useful. As a final insult, the regiment's command elements evacuated just hours before the order to quarantine arrived.

Despairing and abandoned, the soldiers of the 203rd expected little more than to suffer and die having never sighted the enemy, until cultists of the Twisted Sickle arrived with offers of another path.

To the suffering soldiery they made a simple proposal — abandon their loyalty to the Emperor, who had so clearly abandoned them, and instead choose to serve a god who could offer them something tangible — relief from their suffering. Had not the illness been so greivous and their suffering so great, doubtless the soldiers would have refused. As it was, many loyalists rose from their deathbed, lasguns in hand, to make a final stand, but they were too few and too ill to resist.

The surviving soldiers swore themselves to the Plague God, and though the pox remained, their suffering ended. Indeed, it seems that the fetid welts became a source of strength, a mark of their god's favour. Where once stood an entire regiment, only a company's worth of soldiers remained, but they were remade, and the Company of the Twisted Sickle was born. They discarded their Imperial iconography, drawing new marks onto their uniforms — three black sickles arranged to form a triangle, for it seems a pleasing symbol for their new master.

The Company's ranks have since swelled, new recruits drawn from other regiments or recruited directly from the planet's populace. Together, they have undertaken numerous missions to corrupt the planet's harvests and storage facilities, spreading the same pox that made them what they are. They have spread Nurgle's contagion to several outposts and destabilised critical agricultural and processing facilities. Now, the Company seeks to expand, securing more of Goros Pok and spreading like a virus across the entire sector.

RESOURCES

After shifting their loyalties, the traitors' first actions were to seize what arms and armoured assets they could before local authorities recognised their change in allegiance. They now sit on a sizeable stockpile of standard Astra Militarum equipment, everything from lasguns to ground vehicles.

In addition, many of the Company's support elements have become Poxwalkers. These contaminated individuals follow the main ranks like a swarm of flies, creating more of their ilk from those who survive the Company's assaults. Fully trained members of the Company have only undergone this transformation after suffering egregious wounds in combat — a final 'reward' for those of proven loyalty.

METHODS

As the Company of the Twisted Sickle spreads across Goros Pok, they have dispatched a handful of squads of traitorous soldiers aboard vessels purportedly carrying agricultural exports. They use the guise of guards assigned to the shipments to infiltrate new worlds and contaminate food and water stockpiles with Nurgle's plague. The troopers only confront local powers once contamination has taken hold of some of the populace, adding these people to their ranks with the promise of relief. So far, they have met with only isolated greater success, but they have established minor footholds on at least a half dozen worlds. Should they meet with greater success, their next step is often to take over supply depots to arm their new recruits and lead assaults on fortified targets with waves of new Poxwalkers.

Among the megafarms on Goros Pok taken over by the host of plagues and poxes unleashed by Nurgle's servants are a small clade of corrupted **Administratum Adepts** and **Arbitrators** (*Imperium Maledictum*, pages 325–327). The Twisted Sickle rely upon them to set up the export orders and manifests they need to secretly spread their plague across the sector. Under the thumb of the **Traitor Enforcers** (page 174), and **Traitor Guardsmen** (page 174) they work round the clock and are always under watch, holed up in a seized Administratum field office.

SECRETS

Though few members suspect it possible, a daemon known as 'The Reaper' (page 148) was instrumental in swaying the Company's loyalty. This daemon has directly blessed the Twisted Sickle's ranking officers, but few recognise or remember their interactions with it.

Some survivors of the original 203rd Quannus-V regiment still exist on Goros Pok, having evaded capture by the traitors. Most still bear the mark of the pox, deep scars where the welts appeared upon their skin. They lie in wait among the populace and desperately seek to contact the Inquisition. Making contact with these troopers would be instrumental in dismantling the Company.



GM ADVICE

The Company of the Twisted Sickle are a good match for a party that enjoys combat, as the mix of armed soldiers, Poxwalkers, and a potential daemonic encounter will provide plenty of action. Their presence on Goros Pok will be relatively easy to reveal — they are widespread and, though successful so far, not well-trained infiltrators. The assistance of a Chamber Militant is almost certainly called for, but most Patrons will be at least somewhat reluctant to unleash a war upon one of the sector's most vital agri worlds. They will expect their acolytes to assess the geographical spread of the threat, identify any enemy strongholds, and eliminate key enemy figureheads in an effort to constrain the scale of the conflict.

POXWALKER

Medium (Chaos), Troop

WS	BS	STR	TGH	AG	INT	PER	WIL	FEL
25	25	35	40	25	25	20	20	45
ARMOUR			WOUNDS			CRITICAL WOUNDS		
0			13			0		
INITIATIVE			SPEED			RESOLVE		
4			Slow			2		

Skills: Fortitude 50, Melee 40.

TRAITS

Curse of the Walking Pox: Characters who die due to Damage inflicted by a Poxwalker's melee attacks return to life after 1d100 minutes as a Poxwalker with Wounds equal to their Corruption.

Source of Corruption: Witnessing a Poxwalker is Minor Exposure. Make a **Challenging (+0) Discipline (Psychic)** Test to resist 1 Corruption Point. Every SL reduces the number of Corruption Points gained by 1. Additionally, physical contact with a Poxwalker is Moderate Exposure. Make a **Challenging (+0) Fortitude (Endurance)** Test to resist 2 Corruption Points. Every SL reduces the number of Corruption Points gained by 1.

ATTACKS

Improvised Weapons: Melee (One-handed) 40, 3 + SL difference Damage. *Inflict (Poisoned)*.

Possessions: None.

GAAZREK WEAVERMASTER

“Of course I can provide the training and knowledge you seek, but what can you provide me in return?”



THREAT OVERVIEW

- Gaazrek Weavemaster is a Tzeentchian daemon.
- Through the Immaterium, it seeks out rogue psykers, typically novices, and barter with them to increase their powers and teach them new abilities.
- It seeks to raise an army of supremely powerful psykers and begin a campaign to unite all Psykers in the sector under their rule — join them or die.

Gaazrek Weavemaster has tempted emergent psykers and trained them in the ways of the Dark Gods for thousands of years. The first whispers of its existence appear in Inquisitorial records around M37, but the daemon professes to be genuinely ancient. It proclaims to its students that it watched primordial Humanity emerge from caves on ancient Terra to begin worship of barbaric gods, Gaazrek among them. Its words ring true, but lies are like water to daemons, flowing freely down the surest path.

Gaazrek is believed to have interacted with Humans in the Macharian Sector for generations, during which time it revealed forbidden truths of the Warp to hundreds of rogue psykers. Many of them were later found by the League of Black Ships, while a few acquired followers and became the centre of substantial Chaos cults. Some remain active today, and the Inquisition has encountered at least three in the past. In all cases, the cults were purged, but the similarity in practices and references to the Weavemaster showed a common connection between all, despite the long centuries and vast distances that separated them. Thus the existence of the daemon was inferred as much as it was discovered, and no agent of the Inquisition has yet encountered the entity directly.

Gaazrek marks its students with a stylised icon, a symbol of a nine-eyed spider resting on its web. It is a tattoo-like marking that grows in prominence as the cultist earns its master's favour, often moving painfully across the cultist's skin to avoid detection.

Gaazrek reaches out to promising psykers at a moment of weakness, just as they fear losing control of their powers. The daemon helps them to regain this control, using its presence in the Immaterium to quash the swelling Warp energies, a practice which earns it few allies among its cursed kin.

The psyker, however, is usually grateful beyond words, and so does Gaazrek first ingratiate itself to its chosen pupils.

To provide further instruction, Gaazrek lures the psyker to a natural cave or similar secluded, dark space, and directs them to light a fire fuelled, in part, by various arcane substances. In the shadows cast on the cave wall by this flickering flame, Gaazrek appears and offers further instruction. At first, this is freely given, but soon enough the daemon makes demands, encouraging the promising psyker to give over their tightly held secrets. Gaazrek uses this information to manipulate them and spur their studies towards more dangerous subjects.

Over the millennia, some especially savvy students have tried to use this strategy against Gaazrek — many seek the daemon's true name in order to control it. Gaazrek knows well what they are trying to achieve and may tell them the true name of a rival daemon in place of its own. This usually results in either a deadly lesson or a daemonic rival being bound to a mortal's will, much to Gaazrek's pleasure.

Gaazrek ultimately expects those under its tutelage to spread the worship of Tzeentch — offered by means of Gaazrek itself — and presses its apprentices to find promising new adepts, either as backups or practical future sacrifices. These new apprentices are sometimes sent on dangerous missions to acquire forbidden knowledge locked away by the Adeptus Terra. This act is a common rite of initiation and a means to test the limits of their soul and sanity. The daemon presses its will into them, manifesting this task as a hunger or maddening obsession, ensuring they will do anything to complete their task. Few of these unfortunate souls return, but those that do bring with them useful and dangerous lore.

RESOURCES

Gaazrek can draw upon other daemons of Tzeentch to undertake tasks and support its students when needed. On rare occasions, Tzeentchian daemons (**Blue Horrors** and **Brimstone Horrors**, *Imperium Maledictum*, page 354) have been ushered into realspace to support rogue psykers against Imperial authorities. However, their mischief and viciousness often test the psyker they have been sent to aid, even if they do aid in achieving victory.

Gaazrek is a daemon of Tzeentch, obsessed with knowledge and sorcery. Its followers benefit from this sorcerous acumen and are often possessed of forbidden knowledge and powerful psychic abilities. These are powerful tools that can be used against characters who do not have access to countermeasures, such as a blank.

METHODS

Gaazrek haunts the places where the barrier with the Immaterium is thinnest and has ensured dark rituals have created such spaces in the secluded caves it prefers. In these places, it can help emergent psykers recognise their potential, taking credit for every new success, preferring to let its apprentices grow in power rather than merely ravage the minds of a vulnerable psyker as many other daemons do. The daemon avoids sanctioned psykers, thinking them more inflexible, indoctrinated, and rigid. As an exception to this rule, they keep an eye on psykers who work with the Inquisition, particularly Radical Inquisitors, who inevitably become corrupted to the point of malleability. Though it has yet to find success, Gaazrek would like nothing more than to corrupt an Inquisitorial agent.

Among those it instructs, Gaazrek searches for mortals bearing true potential, hoping to elevate nine — a favoured number of Tzeentch — to be his personal apprentices. To these, it teaches the method of summoning a **Disc of Tzeentch** (page 172). This is both a great honour and a final test, for these are daemoniac beasts in their own right and brook no meagre masters. Those apprentices who fail to fully bind the Disc to their will are ultimately devoured by it. It may be some time before Gaazrek has assembled a cabal of nine psykers, but it cares little for how many die in the effort.

SECRETS

The daemon has connections with rogue psykers hidden in numerous positions of power. Gaazrek has trained these people to keep their abilities hidden until called upon or implemented so subtly to avoid detection. Its agents could be anywhere, though more likely within institutions outside the Adeptus Terra.

'Gaazrek Weavemaster' is a false name fabricated to appease the mortals they deal with, as knowing a daemon's true name gives one great power over it. However, Gaazrek is not quite so clever as it believes, and long ago one of its pupils won the name. Gaazrek ultimately fed the unfortunate psyker to a Disc of Tzeentch, but not before a record was made. The name now lies written upon a cave wall hidden in a remote region of a death world. Were it ever found, Gaazrek would be truly undone.

GAAZREK WEAVEMASTER

Medium (Daemon), Leader

WS	BS	STR	TGH	AG	INT	PER	WIL	FEL
45	40	30	30	35	75	30	70	30
ARMOUR			WOUNDS			CRITICAL WOUNDS		
1d5+2			16			3		
INITIATIVE			SPEED			RESOLVE		
6			Normal			4		

Skills: Awareness 50, Intuition 40, Linguistics 80, Lore 90, Melee 50, Psychic Mastery 85, Ranged 50.

TRAITS

Deny the Witch: When a psyker within Medium Range of Gaazrek Weavemaster manifests a Psychic Power, it may use its Reaction to attempt to disrupt it. Gaazrek Weavemaster makes a Willpower Test with the same Difficulty as the Psychic Power. If it succeeds, subtract its SL from the psyker's SL. This may reduce their SL below 1 and cause the Psychic Power to fail.

Ephemeral Form: Gaazrek Weavemaster is immune to the *Penetrating* and *Rend* Weapon Traits.

Energy of Change: If Gaazrek Weavemaster's Coruscating Flames inflict a Critical Wound, the target must immediately make a **Challenging (+0) Willpower** Test. On failure, they are transformed into a Chaos Spawn.

Lesser Daemon: Whenever Gaazrek Weavemaster is attacked, roll 1d5 + 2 to determine its Armour.

Psyker: Gaazrek Weavemaster knows the *Smite* Psychic Power. As a daemon, it has no limit to its Warp Threshold.

Source of Corruption: Witnessing Gaazrek Weavemaster is Minor Exposure. Make a **Challenging (+0) Discipline (Psychic)** Test to resist 1 Corruption Point. Every SL reduces the number of Corruption Points gained by 1. Additionally, physical contact with Gaazrek Weavemaster is Moderate Exposure. Make a **Challenging (+0) Fortitude** Test to resist 2 Corruption Points. Every SL reduces the number of Corruption Points gained by 1.

ATTACKS

Coruscating Flames: Ranged (Thrown) 50, 6 + SL Damage, Medium Range. *Inflict (Ablaze)*.

Daemonic Claws: Melee (Brawling) 50, 3 + SL difference Damage.

Smite: Psychic Mastery 85, Warp Rating 2, Medium Range, 9 + SL Damage. Ignores Armour.

Possessions: None.



MIZRAX TALLIAN, THE HERALD OF BLOOD

“The skies are full of Ork roks, and the trenches already full of the dead and dying. Blood flows freely in the habways. You never lived before this day, Sergeant, so why now fear death? There is a better way...”



THREAT OVERVIEW

- **Mizrax Tallian** is a mortal servant of Khorne.
- He is drawn to places on the eve of terrible battles, somehow able to sense the bloodshed to come.
- He fosters Khornate blood cults among the soldiery, bolstering their martial prowess for the battle to come in exchange for allegiance to the Skull Throne.

Among many regiments of the Astra Militarum, there are rumours of a figure known to appear on the eve of battle, a warrior whose threadbare robes hide crimson armour, and who bears an axe of gleaming brass. Some claim he is one of the Emperor's own sons, who comes to bolster His righteous warriors before a great battle. Others say he is an omen of doom, a portent of the endless slaughter to come, and death to any who lay eyes upon him.

In truth, he is Mizrax Tallian, a warrior and an orator, a swearer of dread oaths and a tool of Khorne, Lord of Slaughter. Mizrax is an anomaly, for he is often subtle in his ways and unpredictable in his appearances. This is a far cry from most servants of Khorne, who typically favour direct assault over every other approach, and who revile trickery in all its forms. Mizrax is no stranger to slaughter, and his axe has claimed a respectable number of skulls for his master, but his strength lies elsewhere.

Mizrax has a sense for impending conflict that borders on the peternatural. He knows when bloodshed is coming, and precisely where he should be to expand and inflame it. In the weeks before a mighty battle, Mizrax will appear, arriving by means known only to himself. He will then find a means to ensconce himself among the soldiers to take part in the coming battle, taking on whatever guise is best to do so. He may appear as a Ministorum preacher, a minor officer just recently transferred, or a simple mercenary offering his services to those in need of them.

Once he is firmly entrenched, he will begin to spread the worship of Khorne, at first organising training bouts between soldiers, then assuaging the fear that naturally arises in the days before combat by instilling a lust for battle and bloodshed that most naive commanders see as quite commendable.

Once battle is joined, the truth often reveals itself — those who have given themselves over to Mizrak's teachings are mighty warriors, but they know neither restraint nor temperance in their pursuit of blood. Orders are ignored, allies are ruthlessly overrun, and every chance at a tactical advantage or strategic gain is ignored in favour of endless slaughter. His duty done, Mizrax inevitably disappears, on his way to the next battleground. Among those few of his proteges who survive, a nascent blood cult forms, often subsuming whole regiments in worship of the Blood God. Thus has he earned the title, Herald of Blood.

Mizrax's very existence is a question that has riven Inquisitorial Conclaves, and indeed any discussion of him seems to lead to disagreement and often violent conflict. Though sightings would suggest he is a mortal man, his presence has been recorded at battles as far back as the Macharian Heresy itself, suggesting he is centuries old. Many Inquisitors have claimed to have slain Mizrak, only for him to appear once more on the eve of a great battle, years later and a dozen worlds away. Some suggest that his identity may be a title rather than that of a single individual, while others think him a daemon rather than a mortal servant of the Ruinous Powers.

RESOURCES

Mizrax arrives on worlds bearing little more than an axe and a thirst for bloodshed, but he quickly builds a band of devoted followers. He is unusually charismatic and considered for a follower of the Blood God, able to talk his way out of difficult questions as to his identity, drawing the fearful and the violent to him with ease. Any who would confront Mizrax should do so quickly, for otherwise they may quickly find themselves facing a well-armed, capable group of warriors. He is also unusually skilled at finding his way to the site of a coming battle, slipping into voidships unseen or stowing away amidst ordinary soldiers on their way to the fight.

Mizrax undoubtedly has the favour of Khorne and is a fine warrior by any mortal standard. More unusual is his gift for sowing strife and discord among his enemies — any discussion of Mizrax quickly descends into disagreement. Some within the Inquisition have guessed at this dark gift, but it is naturally difficult to discuss it in any reasonable way. Only blanks or powerfully gifted psykers are immune to this effect, and characters discussing Mizrak should make a **Challenging (+0) Discipline (Composure) Test** to avoid finding everything being said about him by others to be intensely disagreeable.

METHODS

Mizrax moves often, travelling from battlefield to battlefield, sowing the word of Khorne among common soldiers wherever he can. He usually begins by offering useful training and advice — he is a skilful warrior and well-versed in combat — and reassurance to the fearful. He preaches of the glory of combat, the joy of overcoming one's foes, and the simple purity of slaughter in the name of... Well, Mizrax rarely lies, but he does allow people to draw their own conclusions from his words. Many take him for a particularly devout and militant follower of the Imperial Creed, and this is a guise he has worn often.

Once he has established a loyal band of followers among the rank-and-file, Mizrak will begin to turn his attention to the officer corp, targetting those with the authority to change battlefield plans. He encourages close engagement and brutal melee over all else, and artillery crews will often find themselves reassigned to front-line combat, aircraft will be grounded, and all other considerations ignored within the corrupted officer's zone area of responsibility. Though Mizrak's influence has surely won some battles, it has doubtless lost a great many wars.

SECRETS

Mizrak is indeed a mortal man, one whose life has been inexplicably prolonged during his service to Khorne. In fact, he was once an advisor to General Borgan Crassus, and commander of the 26th regiment of the Harakoni Warhawks. On Adrantis V, during brutal attritional warfare, Mizrak proved his valour over and over again, leaving a wake of victories — and bodies — behind him. When morale appeared to falter, it was Mizrak who bolstered it, speaking of the glory of war and the mighty victory that they would inevitably win once the planet was liberated. When, appalled at the losses suffered during the Adrantis Campaign, Lord Solar Macharius ordered the world all but shattered by a diverted comet, Mizrak was left a broken man. Every sacrifice, every victory, every death was rendered meaningless by unthinking megatons of ice and rock. Into his broken soul poured the fury and bloodlust of Khorne. Of all of Crassus' closest advisors, only Mizrak turned traitor during the Macharian Heresy that followed Macharius' death. Facing death, Mizrak chose to serve his new-found master in other ways and has been doing so ever since.

Though all this occurred centuries ago, there remains something of that honourable soldier in Mizrak's heart. If the Herald of Blood could be reminded of this, though it would not change his dedication to Khorne, it may well cause him to falter just long enough to land a killing blow.

MIZRAX TALLIAN

Medium Mortal (Khorne), Leader

WS	BS	STR	TGH	AG	INT	PER	WIL	FEL
70	30	80	60	50	50	50	50	50
ARMOUR			WOUNDS			CRITICAL WOUNDS		
2			25			6		
INITIATIVE			SPEED			RESOLVE		
10			Normal			3		

Skills: Athletics 75, Awareness 65, Dexterity 65, Discipline 60, Fortitude 75, Melee 90, Presence (Intimidation) 75, Reflexes 65.

TRAITS

Blood Fervour: When a Critical Wound is dealt within Long Range of Mizrax, he can pick a Zone within Long Range and cause characters in that Zone to enter a frenzied state. They must make a **Difficult (-10) Discipline (Composure)** Test at the start of their next turn. If they fail, their StrB increases by +1, and they are immune to the *Frightened* Condition, but they must attempt to engage the nearest enemy in melee combat.

Favoured by Khorne: A **Difficult (-10) Awareness (Psyniscience)** Test at Immediate Range can detect ripples and imperfections in realspace that surround Mizrax. If Mizrax is defeated without being reminded of his past honours, a rift opens, unleashing 1d10 **Bloodletters** (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 351).

ATTACKS

Chainaxe: Melee (One-handed) 75, 11 + SL difference Damage. *Loud, Rend* (3).

Possessions: 200 Solars.

MIZRAX'S FAITHFUL

Medium Human (Heretic), Elite

WS	BS	STR	TGH	AG	INT	PER	WIL	FEL
60	30	60	60	40	30	30	50	40
ARMOUR			WOUNDS			CRITICAL WOUNDS		
0			24			1		
INITIATIVE			SPEED			RESOLVE		
7			Normal			3		

Skills: Athletics 75, Awareness 35, Dexterity 45, Discipline 55, Fortitude 70, Melee 70, Presence 55, Reflexes 45.

TRAITS

Mark of Khorne: +10 Weapon Skill and Strength. The +10 Strength increases Wounds by +1 (already included above).

Raging Onslaught: If one of Mizrax's Faithful takes a Wound, they have Advantage on their next Melee Attack Test.

ATTACKS

Gladiatorial Blade: Melee (One-handed) 70, 8 + SL difference Damage. *Rend* (1).

Possessions: None.

NAR'ITOR'S KINBAND

“We fought for their Greater Good, saw the benefit, and saw the cost. Now we are stuck here, surrounded by malignance and darkness. The only good left is for us to survive and return home, whatever the cost.”



THREAT OVERVIEW

- **Nar'itor's Kinband** are a group of Kroot stranded in the Macharian Sector.
- They are luring voidships into traps, ambushing them, killing everyone on board, and salvaging what tech and supplies they can.
- Their goal is to survive and repair their warsphere. Then, leave the Macharian Sector behind for good and return to T'au Empire space.

Note: The kinband's crash site can be tucked away on a frontier or feral world, but could just as easily be hiding within debris fields and wreckage belts in a place like Arrian's Wrath or the Sargassum Reaches.

In the Macharian Sector's salvage fields, strewn with destroyed voidships and orbiting junk, prospectors and salvage crews are disappearing. The culprits are a substantial kinband of Kroot from a crashed warsphere known as the *Rawk Klikaw*. Led by the flesh shaper Nar'itor, the kinband is stealing salvage, spare parts, and supplies from those they lure and ambush before disappearing quickly into the wilds, leaving none alive to tell the tale.

After being struck down by Drukhari pirates while scouting the Macharian Sector, they aim to survive and get the *Rawk Klikaw* void-worthy again. But the pace of their repairs has been slow, their supplies are dwindling every day, and the kinband continues to take heavy losses. Each raid costs them more warriors, who were already thinned dramatically by the crash of the warsphere.

The longer they linger, the more likely they are to be discovered. Recently, Ordo Hereticus acolytes were investigating the area, looking for an escaped rogue psyker. Both fell afoul of the kinband and were consumed, their voidships stripped for parts and scuttled, left as hulks waiting to lure the next group of investigators.

Nar'itor is cunning, like most shapers. He will not press his luck and attack a much larger force than he has prepared to face. Nor will he give away the location of the crashed warsphere and the rest of the kinband if he can help it.

His losses are weighing on him, though, and with each new raid, he carefully weighs their options. He prefers to outnumber his enemies two to one at a minimum; he will not throw away precious Kroot lives for an obvious lost cause.

But he would push the kinband further if the opportunity arose to harvest parts from a Warp travel-capable voidship. He knows that if he can salvage from such a vessel instead of the shuttles and other smaller craft they regularly trap, the chances of finding what they need to complete the repairs to the *Rawk Klikaw* go up dramatically.

Nar'itor is also not beyond talking to achieve what he needs. He prefers to be the first to strike in any conflict, but if someone attempts to engage him in dialogue, he will take a moment to listen. He is not above doing mercenary work for Imperial assets if it means avoiding punishment for the damage the kinband has already done and the parts they need fix to their warsphere.

RESOURCES

Nar'itors kinband are down to a few dozen **Kroot Carnivores** (page 172) and **Kroot Mercenaries** (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 349). He is the last remaining flesh shaper among them. They have plenty of salvaged weapons, their own Kroot weaponry, and nearly three scores of **Kroot Hounds** (page 173). Their ship can be powered up, though it generally remains dormant so that it is not detected. Within the crashed ship, the decks are a mishmash of Kroot construction, with Imperial machinery used to repair the superstructure and most vital systems. Though there is no guarantee the two technological systems can be made compatible, Kroot philosophy encourages taking the strength of others and making it one's own. They have a pair of salvaged shuttles they use to travel to nearby areas and hunting grounds.

Besides the weapons they carry, the kinband has gathered a lot of useless salvage. They aim to barter it, especially for more materials to fix the warsphere. Initiating a bargain with them will be difficult for any characters since the kinband's first reaction will be to try and eat them. A Silent Trader has made this work, but they have no exclusive deal. While the trader is only interested in xenos tech, the kinband has quite a stockpile of Imperial tech in which they have very little interest.



NAR'ITOR, FLESH SHAPER

Medium Kroot (Kroot), Leader

WS	BS	STR	TGH	AG	INT	PER	WIL	FEL
50	40	40	50	60	60	60	60	60
ARMOUR		WOUNDS		CRITICAL WOUNDS				
2		20		5				
INITIATIVE		SPEED		RESOLVE				
12		Normal		3				

Skills: Athletics 50, Awareness 70, Discipline 70, Fortitude 60, Intuition 70, Linguistics 70, Melee 60, Navigation (Surface) 70, Presence 70, Ranged 50, Rapport 70, Stealth 70, Tech 65.

TRAITS

Ambusher: Nar'itor can attempt to make a Stealth Test as part of his Movement if his Zone has Cover.

Rites of Feasting: All Kroot within Long Range of Nar'itor gain +1 Resolve. Any Kroot in the same Zone gain +1 Armour. If Nar'itor leads his warriors to stop and eat a downed foe, they gain an additional +1 Armour until the end of the encounter.

Stealthy Hunter: Nar'itor gains +1 Armour from Cover.

Twin Blades: Nar'itor can attack with both his ritual blades without Disadvantage.

ATTACKS

Kroot Scattergun: Ranged (Long Guns) 50, 6 + SL Damage, Medium Range. *Inflict (Prone), Loud, Spread, Two-handed.*

Twin Ritual Blades: Melee (One-handed) 60, 6 + SL difference Damage.

Possessions: Combi-tool, ragged Light Leathers.

METHODS

Nar'itor's plan has worked well so far, so the kinband sees little need to deviate from it. The kinband attacks vessels that arrive to salvage the existing debris. They consume the crew, salvage what they can, and then use the new wreckage to draw in others to try and attack them. Sometimes they set off a distress signal to ensure another ship arrives but are sure to leave only the most recent signal running.

SHAPED WAR BAND

Members of Nar'itor's Kinband have consumed the flesh of Imperial citizens and some Drukhari. They have gained the following modification:

Hypersensitive Quills: The Kroot have consumed hyper-aware creatures, allowing them to detect movements within Medium Range with Advantage and potentially reveal hidden creatures.

SECRETS

A Silent Trader is feeding Nar'itor information on happenings in the system in return for scraps of xenotech the kinband has salvaged. The trader refuses to provide them direct aid to fix the warsphere. If the warsphere is repaired, the kinband will leave the system for good, which does the trader no good. However, the trader is weak-willed, and if Inquisitorial agents press them, giving up the kinband's location may be their best leverage.

Nar'itor is concerned about some of the modifications a few of his band have started to exhibit. It is subtle, but he fears that some of the flesh they have consumed is beginning to lead their strand toward an evolutionary dead end. The last thing he wants is for them to finally be freed, only to discover he has guided the kinband into extinction.



MOMAS THE MURMURER

“ You can hand me that parcel, or I can reach into your mind and make the hands holding the parcel my own. Either way, I leave here with what I want. ”



THREAT OVERVIEW

- ☛ **Momas the Murmur** is a mysterious psychic entity that coerces and influences individuals throughout the sector for its own mysterious ends.
- ☛ In truth, this psychic monster is a rogue psyker named **Balen Kho**, his powers amplified by a powerful machine built during the Macharian Heresy.
- ☛ Kho's will is no longer entirely his own, and for reasons he no longer fully understands, he seeks to build a network of influence across the sector, shuttling odd components and construction materials to the world on which the machine is based.

Note: The Emanation Engine's underground facility can be located on any relatively populated world in the Macharian Sector. The Inquisitor, Kho's nemesis, could be any operating in the Macharian Sector or the characters' Patron.

For decades now, a whispered fear has passed among citizens on worlds across the Macharian Sector — that of Momas the Murmur. Though details vary, the rumours concern an entity that can possess anyone anywhere at any time, commandeering their bodies like puppets before vacating without a trace. None are sure of its exact nature — or if it is anything more than a myth. Some believe the Murmur to be a xenos bent on disrupting the sector. Others suspect it may be the work of a heretic cult with access to an astropathic choir. Those aware of the Empyrean fear it could be a daemon reaching across the veil to meddle in realspace.

The Murmur is — at least in part — a rogue psyker, a Human telepath named Balen Kho. Though powerful in his own right, Kho's powers are amplified and extended through his link to a device called the Emanation Engine, located deep below the surface of a forge world. Xenarite Tech-Priests, now all long dead, built this machine in league with a Radical Ordo Hereticus Inquisitor during the Macharian Crusade, using blasphemous technology and forbidden lore. Its original intent was to amplify a psyker's powers, allowing them to spy upon the Imperium's populace from a great distance without traditional surveillance devices.

Ultimately, the Emanation Engine exceeded expectations, allowing psykers to not only extend their psyniscience throughout the sector, but also project their powers and potentially dominate (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 182) the minds they sought to observe. In a rare moment of insight, the Xenarites recognised their creation was too dangerous, especially in the hands of a Radical Inquisitor. They clashed with the Inquisitor's forces and ultimately succeeded, leaving the Emanation Engine abandoned and buried deep below the planet's crust.

Kho discovered the machine, he believes, quite by accident. Little more than a manufactory overseer troubled by occasional flashes of psychic insight, one particularly vivid vision led him through the deep tunnels beneath the forge world. He seemed to already know the path, the long-forgotten binharic access codes for bulkhead doors coming unbidden to his lips. Deep below the planet's crust, Kho found an empty seat amidst conduits thrumming with energy. Drawn by his visions, Kho stepped within and opened his mind to the arcane machine. It amplified his powers immensely, allowing him from that moment to reach across interstellar distances to tamper with minds throughout the sector.

The power the device granted Kho was intoxicating. He began by taking petty revenge on those who had troubled him — a strict supervisor, a rival overseer, a wayward friend — but was quickly intoxicated by the power he now held. It was not absolute — strong minds could still resist him, other psykers could sense his presence, and he could hold only the weakest minds in thrall for any substantial length of time — but nevertheless, he has become extremely formidable. His ambitions have grown, and indeed are no longer entirely his own.

The strange phenomena of unusual behaviour and periods of amnesia — all signs of Kho's possession of an individual — have given rise to the myth of Momas the Murmur, due to the mutterings his victims are prone to. These soft utterances are Kho's own thoughts, bleeding through to his victim's mind. Oddly, if listened to carefully, the words spoken are almost entirely pleas for help — or death.

RESOURCES

The Murmurur has manipulated the Macharian Sector for decades, building a vast network of informants, minions, and accomplices. Though this power base has no formal structure, virtually every faction and organisation within the sector has at least a few members at various levels working for the Murmurur. Even without his psychic panoply, the Murmurur's vast reach and access allow him and his representatives to use conventional motivators like bribes, blackmail, and threats to compel people into serving the cause. Through this network, the Murmurur can access virtually any resource or information. Should the need arise, the Murmurur can possess any of these agents at any time, their minds made especially pliant by careful psychic preparations.

METHODS

Though the Murmurur wields incredible power, his will remains singular and can only direct his attention to one subject at a time. He is in no way omnipotent. He focuses on overseeing crucial activities, leaving the day-to-day operations of his shadow empire to his subordinates.

When dealing with situations directly, the Murmurur operates almost exclusively through dominated proxies, hijacking their bodies to physically interact, abandoning them once they no longer serve his purposes. Enamoured with the Murmurur persona's ephemeral nature, Kho loves to boast. He taunts witnesses through his proxies, informing them they have been graced by his presence, reminding them that anyone they meet could be him, sometimes dominating a series of bystanders to speak a single sentence just to prove the point.

SECRETS

If one were to ask Kho his motivations, he would struggle to explain them. Sometimes, he believes he is seeking revenge, at other times, he is protecting himself or improving the Imperium in some way. All that is certain is that he is gathering power and influence for some purpose, his proxies occupying roles across the sector.

In fact, Kho's own will was long ago subsumed by the machine itself. Not unlike his dominated victims, Kho's personality is now little more than a mask worn by the machine. The Xenarite Tech-Priests who built it made extensive use of xenos technology salvaged from a dead and airless world graced by crumbling ruins and little else, in orbit around a star whose heat was spent long ago. In doing so, they awoke an alien will within the machine. This entity has but one purpose — to return to the blessed silence it once knew, and it is using Kho to achieve this goal.

Slowly but surely, it has used Kho's resources to expand its form. Even now, on the forge world above, labourers build devices based on schematics no Human mind could conceive of, connecting them to the Emanation Engine below, thinking all their work is approved by the Forge Lord, for indeed he has at times graced their presence and said as much — even if he does not recall doing so. If the device is finished, it will allow Kho to reach into every mind in the sector at once and, though he will not understand why he wishes to do so, snuff them out.

Within the Engine, much of Kho has long rotted away, as the machine had little need for anything other than his mind. From time to time, Kho will consider leaving the machine, only to find the thought unaccountably uncomfortable. The Murmurur requires Kho's psychic ability to function, and until it is done with him, he will not be allowed to die.

THE MURMURER								
Human (Heretic), Leader								
WS	BS	STR	TGH	AG	INT	PER	WIL	FEL
10*	10*	10*	10*	10*	50	35	60	40
ARMOUR			WOUNDS			CRITICAL WOUNDS		
0*			9*			1*		
INITIATIVE			SPEED			RESOLVE		
4*			Normal*			5		
Skills: Awareness 45, Awareness (Psyniscience) 65, Lore 65, Lore (Macharian Sector) 85, Presence 70, Presence (Leadership) 75, Psychic Mastery 75, Psychic Mastery (Telepathy) 95.								
TRAITS								
Powerful Telepath: Murmurur can use the following Psychic Powers: <i>Beacon, Call Vermin, Cipher Seed, Compel, Dominate, Dread Presence, Erasure, Hallucinate, Mental Interrogation, Psychic Static, Soulsight, Telepathic Link.</i>								
Puppet Master: While dominating a creature, the Murmurur has direct control of their body and can perceive through their senses. He can also manifest his Psychic Powers through that body as though it were his own.								
Transient Body: Characteristics marked with * are determined by the specific body Murmurur controls at any given time (base values are his own).								
Amplified Power: The Emanation Engine drastically extends the range of Kho's psyniscience and Psychic Powers, allowing him to detect and target creatures at any range within the sector. Additionally, the Murmurur has Advantage on Manifest Tests.								
Warp Threshold: 6 (<i>Whilst plugged into the Emanation Engine, any Warp Charge that the Murmurur would generate locally is automatically dissipated</i>).								

THE PILGRIM'S PATH

“The stars are distant and lost, but we must walk the paths to them and spread our blessings. For the day will come when the stars awake, and then they will come to us.”



THREAT OVERVIEW

- **The Pilgrim's Path** is a Genestealer Cult operating on Macharia.
- Their Patriarch senses that the greater Hive Mind is yet distant, and so their focus has been on spreading to other worlds.
- The cult uses its influence to infect pilgrims on Macharia who have arrived from other worlds. Some ships leave bearing **Acolyte Hybrids** (page 172) among the faithful, while others carry whole clutches of Purstrain Genestealers hidden within their hulls.

The shrine world of Macharia is a beautiful jewel of the faithful in the Donia Magna system (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 274). Far from prying eyes, a blasphemous secret profanes this sacred world. The most zealous and stalwart members of the Adeptus Ministorum fail to recognise the unholy cult that hides within the shrine's depths.

The Pilgrim's Path is a small Genestealer Cult brought to Macharia by infected pilgrims from a world now long since claimed by the Tyranid Hive Fleet. The pilgrims established themselves among the faithful of Macharia, never straying far from the most important places of worship. They target pilgrims who, often caught up in the rapture of walking the holy ground of Macharia, are unobservant to the danger. Dragged off and infected by the Genestealer's Kiss, these unfortunates are left with the powerful urge to return to their place of birth to spread the curse, often cutting their pilgrimage short to do so.

There, they settle back into their lives and begin the horrific cycle of infection anew. Often these nascent cults are undirected, but by the fourth generation, Purestrain Genestealers are born to hybrid parents and, if no other has arrived, one will undergo the biological processes required for it to arise to the status of Patriarch. Once the cult has grown in strength, the true work of preparing the world for the arrival of Tyranid Hive Fleet can begin in earnest.

This too would have been the fate of Macharia, but either by a quirk of the Patriarch of the Pilgrim's Path, or through the cunning intelligence of the greater hive mind, this has not been so. The cult here has kept a low profile, and benefited greatly from the world's status as a nexus of faith for the sector's many pilgrims. Many who seek to follow in the footsteps of the Macharian Crusade begin their long pilgrimage here, while others merely to see where Saint Macharius began his long and storied career in the Emperor's service. Regardless of the reasons, all provide a suitable vector for the cult to spread its xenos taint.



RESOURCES

Though modest by the standard of some infestations, the cult's members are as dedicated as any other, and perhaps more practised in the art of subtle sabotage and infiltration than most. The cult's Biophagus, Gantus Black, is especially well-practised in evading the Imperium's methods of detecting his brothers and sisters. He provides outgoing 'pilgrims' with various tinctures and elixirs that confound the biological auguries that are sometimes employed to screen populations for xenos taint by those who know to look for such things, chiefly the Inquisition and certain Magi Biologis of the Adeptus Mechanicus.

Though the cult has fewer resources than most, they are not without the means to destroy any threats to their nest. Hidden beneath the Shrine of Macharius Ascendant is a warren of tunnels which grew out of a Ministorum Arch-Deacon's tomb centuries prior. These bunkers are home to hundreds of the Pilgrim's Path's sons and daughters, with those no longer able to pass among the common masses confined to the lowest levels, and those not so blessed occupying the upper levels. All are willing to die for the cult, armed mainly with flamers procured from the faithful seeking a blessing before departing on crusade.

METHODS

The cult's plots move slowly, spreading their taint to other worlds by means of pilgrims. This might come to the Inquisition's attention in a number of ways — a pattern of emergent cults might arise from a single infested pilgrimage departing Macharia for other worlds, or evidence of the cult might be found in Macharia itself. Should the Path's increased ability to escape detection by means of the cult's biochemicals be discovered, perhaps during a routine inspection of a pilgrim's belongings, this will quickly be identified as a novel threat worthy of the Inquisition's attention. It is already difficult enough to detect a Genestealer Cult — the ability to defy even those few techniques known to exist would be a worrying development.

If the cult were discovered, it may well attempt to escape Macharia rather than make a pointless stand. They maintain a number of reliable members within Macharia's voidport for just this reason, on standby to smuggle even the cult's Patriarch aboard a voidship should the need arise.

SECRETS

The very presence of a Genestealer Cult on Macharia is the Path's most carefully guarded secret, with the location and techniques of the Biophagus' laboratory a close second. This facility would be a worthy prize for any Inquisition acolyte to acquire intact, for in finding ways to masquerade the presence of the Genestealer's curse within the blood of a victim, Gantus was forced to profile several of the prominent biomarkers of infection. In the hands of a sufficiently skilled Tech-Priest, those markers not already known to the Inquisition could be revealed, allowing new ways to detect the curse in a population.



GANTUS BLACK, BIOPHAGUS

Medium Monstrosity (Genestealer Cult), Leader

WS	BS	STR	TGH	AG	INT	PER	WIL	FEL
40	40	40	50	40	70	60	70	70
ARMOUR			WOUNDS			CRITICAL WOUNDS		
2			21			5		
INITIATIVE			SPEED			RESOLVE		
10			Normal			4		

Skills: Awareness 70, Dexterity 55, Discipline (Composure) 80, Intuition (Human) 70, Logic (Investigation) 80, Medicae (Forbidden) 80, Medicae (Human) 80, Presence (Leadership) 80, Ranged (Thrown) 50, Rapport (Deception) 80, Stealth (Hide) 50, Tech 80.

TRAITS

Biological Warfare: Up to two other Genestealer Cult characters accompanying the Biophagus gain the Chemical Vials Attack (see below).

Twisted Science: As an Action on his turn, the Biophagus can use his Injector Goad on an Genestealer Cult ally within Immediate Range, dosing them with a gene-brew that enhances their abilities. Roll 1d10 and apply the related effect. Each character can only be affected by this Trait once per encounter.

1-2 Heightened Senses: The character has Advantage to all Awareness, Intuition and Reflexes Tests.

3-4 Regenerating Mass: At the start of the character's turns, they heal wounds equal to their Toughness Bonus.

5-6 Hulking Frame: The character gains additional wounds equal to their Toughness Bonus, and adds their Strength Bonus in SL to any Strength Tests and Melee Damage.

7-8 Carapaced Flesh: The character gains +2 Armour.

9-0 Combat Instincts: The character has Advantage to all Discipline, Melee, Ranged and Stealth Tests.

ATTACKS

Autopistol: Ranged (Pistols) 40, 5 + SL Damage, Medium Range. *Close, Loud.*

Chemical Vials: Ranged (Thrown) 50, 0 Damage. *Blast (1), Inflict (Poisoned), Unstable.* Ignores Armour. The Zone it lands in becomes *Obscured* and a *Minor Hazard* until the end of the Biophagus's next turn.

Injector Goad: Melee (Two-handed) 40, 2 + SL difference Damage. *Defensive, Inflict (Poisoned).*

Possessions: 300 Solars, Cult Robes, Forbidden knowledge of Genestealer Cult biology, Various unidentifiable chemicals.

THE REAPER

“ We reap the harvest eternal, because we sow Grandfather’s blessings wherever we go. ”



THREAT OVERVIEW

- **The Reaper** is a daemon of Nurgle.
- It has cultivated a sizeable cult on Goros Pok, who have direct access to some of the world's food production and supply lines.
- Once it has spread Nurgle's plague across Goros Pok, it wishes to turn the planet into a daemon world, one that can serve as a base for infecting all others.

Goros Pok had a serious storage problem. As the Noctis Aeterna disrupted the sector, vessels failed to pick up the agricultural tithes from the world, causing many stockpiles to spoil. Critical planetary resources were refocused on increasing the planet's storage capacity. Labourers from many backgrounds were tasked with converting existing facilities or constructing new structures for agricultural storage. Much of this work was completed with little direction or oversight, as the local Adeptus Mechanicus and Administratum institutions were stretched thin.

These workers struggled with their tasks, and some lost their lives. Few knew the basics of construction, but all of them saw first-hand the overflowing warehouses and silos. Nevertheless, new harvests from around the planet continued to arrive. Escorting one was a worker named Willem Argaut, a newly awakened psyker who went undetected in the absence of the Black Ships. His mind reached into the Immaterium, praying for aid and searching for the God-Emperor's light. But Willem drew the attention of a darker power than he could have intended.

The Reaper heard his cries for help and was all too eager to assist. Using the latent psyker as a conduit, it crossed the thinning barrier, manifesting for just long enough to bear some of its master's blessings onto Goros Pok. For seven days and seven nights, Nurgle's blessings were spread far and wide by an unnatural, pustulent rain, tainting the grain stores of half a continent. Any who ate even a morsel had their hunger sated but, in doing so, opened themselves to Nurgle's fetid touch, and was corrupted. Many died, sowing the ground with their rotting corpses, or rose again as Poxwalkers. Those who persisted were granted the Mark of Nurgle, sanctifying them as cultists of a more significant cause.

What Astra Militarum forces could be marshalled during the Noctis Aeterna responded quickly to what was happening around the new storage facilities; word of rampant death and decay spread fast to their commanders. But even as they arrived, the Reaper marshalled Nurgle's forces. Using its new mortal agents, it corrupted the first regiments, forming the Company of the Twisted Sick (page 136).

Where the Company of the Twisted Sick are focused on securing Goros Pok and reaching out to other systems, the Reaper's remaining cultists work to keep its plague-ridden manufacturums and mega-farms going. Especially Silo Facility 77, where the Reaper first manifested; its cultists see this as a holy site, ground-zero for their work to turn Goros Pok into a daemon world. Any who die among its followers (and any corpses they can get their hands on) are planted there to join the rot.

The Reaper's weapon of choice is a large sickle, and it always manifests with it in hand. In accordance with an ancient myth on Goros Pok depicting the Emperor as the ultimate harvester of any crop, the daemon was given the moniker of the Reaper.

For the Reapers followers, use the **Poxwalker** stat-block (page 137) and entries from the Heretics section of *Imperium Maledictum* (pages 343–346).

RESOURCES

The Reaper has a growing network of followers on Goros Pok. Many of these are active agricultural workers who spread Nurgle's contamination in all the food they prepare. However, the cult's membership includes some positions of planetary authority, including a burgeoning company of traitors to the Astra Militarum (**Traitor Enforcers** and **Traitor Guardsmen**, pages 174).

Other nurglite entities have begun to interact with the Reaper's followers. Most of these are Poxwalkers, who constantly make more of their kind in conflict. In addition, Nurglings, rogue psykers, and Plaguebearers have been identified as hostiles during the ongoing insurrection.

METHODS

The Reaper is primarily focused on spreading corruption through greed and gluttony, driven by sickening hunger. Its prime targets are storage facilities on Goros Pok — furthering the spread of his pox and dealing crippling blows to the Imperium supply chains. Getting a shipment of contaminated materials off-world allows its cultists to establish a foothold at the destination.

Nurglings (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 351) are commonly the Reaper’s preliminary agents in these activities. Cultists can blend in effectively among Human populations, but Nurglings can sneak through gaps far too small for mortals. They readily infest food storage or water purification facilities and spawn more of their feculent kin before the facility’s security agents become aware of the intrusion.

SECRETS

The Reaper has cultists at critical positions within Goros Pok’s port authorities. Evidence suggests that outgoing supplies are not being inspected in a way consistent with standard Administratum doctrines. If correct, the entire port system may already be compromised.

The Sect of the Twisted Sickel has other competition on Goros Pok, who have begun to notice its prominence. The Harrower-In-Green and the Season’s Turn are cults representing the other Chaos Gods, and they all want a piece of the planet for themselves. Some have seeded cultists into the Sect of the Twisted Sickel to see how far their plans have progressed.

THE REAPER

Medium Daemon (Nurgle), Leader

WS	BS	STR	TGH	AG	INT	PER	WIL	FEL
50	10	60	70	10	20	20	40	20
ARMOUR			WOUNDS			CRITICAL WOUNDS		
3 + 1d5			23			7		
INITIATIVE			SPEED			RESOLVE		
3			Slow			3		

Skills: Fortitude 80, Medicae 30, Melee 60.

TRAITS

Disgustingly Resilient: Whenever the Reaper would suffer one or more Wounds, it may make a **Challenging (+0) Fortitude** Test. If it succeeds, it reduces the amount of Wounds suffered by the SL.

Lesser Daemon: Whenever the Reaper is attacked, roll 1d5 + 3 to determine its Armour.

Source of Corruption: Witnessing the Reaper is Minor Exposure. Make a **Challenging (+0) Discipline (Psychic)** Test to resist 1 Corruption Point. Every SL reduces the number of Corruption Points gained by 1. Additionally, physical contact with the Reaper is Moderate Exposure. Make a **Challenging (+0) Fortitude** Test to resist 2 Corruption Points. Every SL reduces the number of Corruption Points gained by 1.

ATTACKS

Plague-ridden Battle Scythe: Melee (Two-handed) 60, 8 + SL difference Damage. *Defensive, Inflict (Poisoned).*

Possessions: None.



THE STORM'S EYE

“Come to your rightful place in the eye of the storm.
Watch as your old masters and oppressors are caught in the roil!”

THREAT OVERVIEW

- ☠ **The Storm's Eye** is a cult that secretly worships Tzeentch.
- ☠ They have wandering cells working across the system, led by a central dark commune of powerful but cautious fanatics.
- ☠ They seek to open a Warp rift to engulf the entire system in the name of the Changes of the Ways.

Note: The Storm's Eye can be placed in any planetary system you require.

People drawn to the Storm's Eye are led to believe they are joining a splinter cult of the Imperial Creed. Their leadership proclaims they will raise hard-working Imperial citizens and offer the downtrodden a place to fit in, work hard, and recognise their accomplishments. Simultaneously, they claim to shelter citizens from an impending doom — a resurgence of the Noctis Aeterna they claim will happen in the coming years. Their fearmongering easily attracts the lowborn, downtrodden of society. Before their recruits know what is happening, they unwittingly participate in darker and darker rituals. This same act also works on bored nobles and curious intellectuals, anyone who thinks they could do a better job than those in power of running society. They quickly fall sway to the whispers of the Storm's Eye and their promises of more.

Each cell is compartmentalised, aware that others exist, but not where or how many. Above the cells sit the dark commune, the cult's leadership, who weave their machinations through cyphered vox traffic and intermediaries. Once a cell has been thoroughly indoctrinated and has accepted Tzeentch as its true master, the cell is splintered as its members go about starting up a new cell, spreading the winds of change and proclaiming safety within the Storm's Eye. As such, a cell rarely stays in one place for long.

Taliana Gaulista currently leads the dark commune. She recently took over and is still working on figuring out how best to step into the shoes of her predecessor. She is pragmatic and cautious, though not above instigating larger-scale operations than what the cult is used to. The very storm they preach of is one of their own design; they plan to unleash a Warp rift to engulf the system, giving it over to the Lord of Change.

They aim to do so by spreading throughout the system, embedding a cell into as many centres of population as possible. They believe that a synchronised psychic ritual — one they have been experimenting with for centuries — to call forth as many daemons as possible will break realspace and create a system-spanning Warp rift, affecting the actual change upon the system they desperately seek.

STORM'S EYE STAT-BLOCKS

All the following stat-blocks can be found in *Imperium Maledictum*, pages 344–346. Some among them, particularly high-ranking members and leaders, carry the Mark of Tzeentch (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 344).

- ☠ Use the **Cultist** stat-block to represent average Storm's Eye members.
- ☠ Each cell has around a dozen **Accursed Cultists**, with a **Rogue Psyker** or two among them.
- ☠ Use the **Cult Leader** stat-block to represent **Taliana Gaulista**.
 - ☠ Use the **Chaos Spawn** stat-block to represent **Getharius Malicain**.

RESOURCES

The cult's primary resource is its reach and capability to hide. It has cells hidden in every aspect of Imperial society, from groups of dilettantes in hive spires to organised dregs working in the system's manufactorums. They have loyal members among voidship crews and local merchants who see that the cult remains agile. Among the local Adeptus Terra is a cell within the local Ministorum and Administratum that doctor papers and strikes the cult's existence from public record.

However, their disconnected cell structure means getting these assets to bear against a particular problem would take time and effort. A full-scale mobilisation of the entire Storm's Eye is possible, but it would mean exposing the cult's leadership and every cell in it to reprisal. The dark commune would only order this if they are directly threatened or think they can enact the final stages of their centuries-long plan to open the Warp rift.

METHODS

The Storm's Eye is interested in subtle changes and spreading its influence slowly over time. They favour exploiting any societal weakness they can find. They foment sedition, insurrection, anarchy, criminal activity, and rebellion wherever they find it. Generally, they like to get others to do their work for them. Why fight Arbites when you can get a gang war started that will pull the Arbites into conflict? Why get involved in noble politics if you can instead set them against each other with a careful reveal of the truth at an inopportune time?

Through information gathering from cells, the dark commune learns many secrets, secrets they use to ensure their members' safety or gain leverage on those around them. Officers with secret dalliances, officials on the take, and corrupt Ministorum officials are all assets within the Storm's Eyes network.

SECRETS

The former leader of the cult was **Getharius Malicain**. He was a fanatic who, over time, became afflicted with various mutations. As **Taliana Gaulista** rose through the cult's ranks, she took the chance to tamper with Getharius's last ritual, which caused him to turn entirely into a Chaos Spawn.

Since then, she has kept Getharius locked away in an abandoned void station. None of the dark commune wish to harm him; some have begun referring to him more reverently, whispering about his strong connection with the Lord of Change. Taliana is unsure what to do with Getharius but often parades unfaithful members in front of him to test their mettle and show the cult's power.

Long ago, Inquisitorial agents infiltrated one of the cells closest to the dark commune. However, they failed to reach the cult's leadership before the cell they were investigating sacrificed itself to keep the commune from being discovered. The Inquisitor's notes from the investigation are archived on Mare Cinis (page 87). While the discovered cyphers they once used to communicate are long out of date, they might serve as a starting point for any investigators picking up the trail.



TÔK'S FIRESTORM KINDRED

“ See this, ceramite from our forges. I guarantee that it is purer than any ‘factorum in the sector. Take this sample and make any tests you need; we will return to place your order, eh? ”



THREAT OVERVIEW

- **Tôk's Firestorm Kindred** are a group of Votann Kin operating in the Macharian Sector.
- In their prospecting and trade efforts with other cultures, they operate from small voidships and work to keep the existence of their mothership, *The Cleansing Flame*, from being discovered.
- They aim to prospect the Yix Subsector of the Macharian Sector and present their superiors with a case for expanding into the region.

The Kin only entered the Macharian Sector within the last few decades. Their initial focus in the region has been to explore the Sargassum Reaches and interact with the factions established in the Iron Archipelago of the Yix Systems (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 289). They have engaged in preliminary trade, mainly as a means of gathering information and assessing the technological aptitudes of the cultures active in the region. As they carefully test the diplomatic waters, the Kin have gone to great lengths to maintain their secrecy. They recognise the importance of revealing only some of their assets, using shorter-range voidships to conduct these interactions.

This is because Tôk's Firestorm Kindred have a Bastion-class mining vessel prospecting and mining the Sargassum Reaches. *The Cleansing Flame* has conducted preliminary operations on several asteroids, moons, and habitable worlds. Their early conclusions are that the opportunities could justify a significantly increased Kin presence in the region. However, the Kindred's elders continue to review Hernkyn reports about the various factions and threats in the sector. Until those analyses are completed, they remain uncommitted to significant, long-term extraction and refining operations.

The vessel's commander, Tôk Stonehewer, acting on guidance provided by a venerable Ancestor Core, believes that trading with the Imperium may ease relationships and bring about some sort of accord. Hernkyn groups have made discreet visits to dozens of worlds in the sector. They have yet to identify any ideal trading partners, though they have identified a few potential ones, particularly among Imperial organisations secretly involved in the Silent Trade.

The Kin's components and goods are often superior to what is produced locally on many Imperial worlds, and would prove valuable. However, dealing with xenos is heresy, and though the Kin are often careful to conduct trade through intermediaries posing as abhumans (the so-called Squats found on many worlds), it is only a matter of time before the sheer volume of goods and their superior quality raises suspicion. Many of Stonehewer's underlings understand this, but are unwilling to contradict their leader, especially as he is acting in accordance with an Ancestor's guidance.

The Kin are willing to trade for information, particularly if they have reason to believe that a source is trustworthy and well-informed. They prefer to trade replaceable raw materials or salvage acquired in the region rather than relinquish their own artefacts. In some instances, the Kin supplied refurbished Imperium supplies to Imperial outposts without the final recipients recognising that xenos had performed maintenance on the devices.

Tôk's Firestorm Kindred wear the sigil of a stylised, red-orange flame within the outline of a grey cloud. It is generally worn as a shoulder patch and inscribed on all significant pieces of Kin equipment. Notably, they do not typically conceal the sigil when interacting with outside cultures. When asked about it, they refer to it as a family crest.

RESOURCES

The Kindred are well supplied and equipped within the Macharian Sector. *The Cleansing Flame* is fully crewed and provisioned with equipment, including trade goods. It includes a wing of void shuttles capable of carrying Hernkyn Yaegirs to explore the region while the mining vessel continues its extraction and prospecting duties. During their exploration, the mining vessel's storage capacity has begun to fill with rare and valuable metals and other resources.

When visiting other cultures, the Hernkyn bring recording devices, scanners, and samples of their manufactured trade materials. Notably, they also carry duplicate personal equipment for their Yaegirs. That way, if a particular tool appears to have an immediate trade value, it can be bartered and later replaced from ship's stores. Several of these tools have made their way into the hands of various Tech-Priests, who now hunt for their source.

METHODS

Tök's Hernkyn are risk-averse as they investigate the Macharian Sector, and have prioritised stealth in their explorations. Whenever possible, they attempt to sneak into facilities — especially Imperial ones — and investigate them from within, posing as travellers from other parts of the world. At the first sign of resistance, the Hernkyn attempt to withdraw before the situation escalates. In keeping with this approach, the Kin usually target isolated settlements. The dangers of entering and safely escaping from major cities and hives exceed their calculated safety parameters.

To the best of their abilities, the Kin try to bluff past their physical appearance and clothing differences — most Imperial citizens will always think of them as Squat abhumans upon first impressions. However, any apparent xenos technology they wield will act to out them. Only if they are unable to withdraw peacefully do the Hernkyn resort to violence, and they do not hold back. Instead, they quickly escalate to the best of their lethality and attempt to leave no witnesses behind. The Kin understand they might need to depart from the sector entirely if identified as a threat. Their biggest concerns are preserving or at least recovering any of their members and critical equipment. If either is captured, Kindred will escalate the situation. If necessary, they may bring *The Cleansing Flame* to bear.

SECRETS

The Kindred's presence within the Macharian Sector and their connections outside the region remain a vital point of secrecy. They do not admit to any associations with any Leagues outside the sector or that such a notional civilisation exists.

The Kindred have found a stable route from the Galactic Core to the Yix Subsector. This means that if they can find worthwhile mining opportunities, they may choose to expand aggressively into the region. Other factions may be very interested in discovering that route, to use themselves or heavily blockade to prevent incursion.



HERNKYN YAE GIR

Medium (Votann), Elite

WS	BS	STR	TGH	AG	INT	PER	WIL	FEL
40	40	40	55	35	50	30	40	50
ARMOUR			WOUNDS			CRITICAL WOUNDS		
3			13			1		
INITIATIVE			SPEED			RESOLVE		
7			Normal			3		

Skills: Dexterity 50, Fortitude 65, Logic (Evaluation) 60, Navigation 60, Melee 50, Ranged 50, Tech 60.

TRAITS

Hernkyn Crackshot: When a Hernkyn Yaegir takes an Aim or Hide Action, the *Penetration* value of the weapon they are using increases by +1 for its next attack. Weapons without the *Penetration* Trait are not affected.

ATTACKS

Bolt Revolver: Ranged (Pistols) 45, 9 + SL Damage, Short Range. *Close, Penetrating* (4).

Plasma Knife: Melee (One-handed) 40, 6 + SL difference Damage. *Penetrating* (3).

Possessions: Ancestral Icon, Combi-tool, Trenchoat, Void Suit.

VALASTRA OF THE ENDLESS WHISPER

“Hear me in your dreams, little scribe. I’ve been watching you... You’ve had your eye on shelf 45-A82 f or some time now... All those volumes with such a thick layer of dust... Not touched for a century I’d say... What if it were all lost to ruin? All forgotten?... You can’t let that happen... Wake up!”



THREAT OVERVIEW

- **Valastra of the Endless Whisper** is a Slaaneshi daemon.
- It has formed a cult within the Administratum of Persepolis, tempting lowly scribes and adepts to consume massive amounts of data, some of it forbidden.
- While it continues twisting its followers' minds, Valastra's end goal is to escape the Immaterium and sow the seeds of the Dark Prince's madness as far as possible.

The Noctis Aeterna was a harrowing time for the people of Hive Skarthius on Persepolis. During savage attacks from Heretic Astartes, most reliable lines of communication were cut off, and the Emperor's light was cast into the deepest of shadows.

A handful of Hive Skarthius' Adeptus Administratum, all low-ranking scribes and archivists, searched for meaning in the darkness of those days. They came together to form the Last Light, and were determined to stand against the enemy that threatened to overwhelm their world. Where others took up the lasgun, however, they reached for the quill. They viewed their pursuit as a higher calling. To them, at least in their minds, fell the noble goal of preserving all the knowledge they could, fearing the Noctis Aeterna would never lift, condemning them to the horrors of Old Night once again.

They visited long-forgotten libraries tucked away in their labyrinthine halls. They journeyed into the depths of the hive — hooded, cloaked, and defended by carefully requisitioned servitors incapable of repeating what they saw in those cramped tunnels and chambers — for relics and records unseen by Human eyes for centuries. They did not seek something to help their beleaguered world, some scrap of lore or ancient machine that might promise salvation. They merely attempted to record.

With a focus and a zeal unseen in most outside of the Adeptus Ministorum, this handful of librarian-errants amassed the truths they so desperately wanted to protect. They filled scrolls, data spools and, when all else failed, carved reams of data into each other's flesh. It was this final act of obsession that drew the attention of the servants of the Dark Prince.

Their obsession called out through the Immaterium as a beacon that Valastra of the Endless Whisper followed to its source. There, it found minds ripe for exploitation and a cause perfect for corruption. Acting quickly to stave off the interests of the Changer of the Ways, whose daemons were drawn to secrets and knowledge, it appeared in the dreams of the Last Light's disparate members and began to twist them to its own nefarious ends.

RESOURCES

Valastra is a relatively new threat to the Macharian Sector. It prefers to appear in dreams and whispers, and many of its thralls still consider themselves loyal members of the Imperium who are committing minor heresies, at worst, by seeking out forgotten truths or by administering their own justice. As a result, Valastra's servants are as likely to appear as allies to the characters as they are to act against them.

It encouraged some followers to delve deeper into the hive, claiming ever more esoteric tomes and artefacts containing forbidden knowledge, playing on their unacknowledged need to experience life outside of the Administratum. Others it bade catalogue and record every fact and find in maddening detail, encouraging a drive for perfectionism within them. To its handful of founding members Valastra entrusted the most significant task: recruitment.

Use the various **Administratum** stat-blocks (*Imperium Maledictum*, pages 325–327) to represent Valastra's followers on Persepolis.

METHODS

Valastra prefers to encourage its followers to obsess over knowledge above all else, leaving pleasures of the flesh to other servants of the Dark Prince.

It is making a concerted effort to find a piece of archaeotech that the Last Light believes to be buried somewhere in the wastes of Asterion (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 264). The device is rumoured to be capable of instantly replicating any tome placed within it. This is hardly a remarkable feat in most cases, but Valastra knows the device can make so fine a copy that even psychic compulsions placed upon the book by its own daemoniac sorceries can be replicated and spread.

To recover the device, the Last Light is arranging a private expedition — with carefully forged paperwork — to locate and retrieve it. They are also bribing and blackmailing engineers, mercenaries, and labourers to design, build, and defend a bastion within the depths of Hive Skarthius. This bastion will act as a vault and the Last Light's formal headquarters; Valastra is orchestrating things to ensure that the correct sigils and materials are used in its construction to allow the daemon to manifest fully within its walls.



SECRETS

Valastra is not strong enough to manifest within Hive Skarthius, but its time approaches as its influence grows. If either of the daemon's schemes come to fruition on Crultus or the expedition to Asterion, the daemon will have the means to manifest fully into realspace.

It has recently begun obfuscating the Last Light's activities by relying on pleasure cults elsewhere in the sector, using the more overt behaviour of those cultists to draw the eye of the Inquisition and any other forces that would act against it. Valastra does its best to ensure nothing ties back to its recruiters from the Last Light.

VALASTRA								
Medium Daemon (Slaanesh), Leader								
WS	BS	STR	TGH	AG	INT	PER	WIL	FEL
50	10	50	60	70	60	50	60	70
ARMOUR			WOUNDS			CRITICAL WOUNDS		
1d5+2			24			6		
INITIATIVE			SPEED			RESOLVE		
12			Normal			3		

Skills: Athletics 70, Awareness 70, Dexterity 80, Discipline 70, Fortitude (Pain) 80, Lore (Forbidden) 70, Presence (Intimidation) 75, Rapport (Charm) 80, Rapport (Deception) 80.

TRAITS

Extra Appendages: On its turn, Valastra can attack two targets if they are both in Immediate Range — one with its Greatsword, the other with its Serrated Claws.

Lesser Daemon: Whenever Valastra is attacked, roll 1d5 + 2 to determine its Armour.

Source of Corruption: Witnessing Valastra is a Minor Exposure. Make a **Challenging (+0) Discipline** Test to resist 1 Corruption Point. Every SL reduces the number of Corruption Points gained by 1. Additionally, physical contact with Valastra is Moderate Exposure. Make a **Challenging (+0) Fortitude** Test to resist 2 Corruption Points. Every SL reduces the number of Corruption Points gained by 1.

Tempt with Obsession: Characters who have been Corrupted by Valastra have Advantage on any Intelligence (Logic) or (Lore) Tests but suffer Disadvantage on any Willpower (Discipline) or (Presence) Tests (this effect remains until the character has removed their Corruption).

ATTACKS

Greatsword: Melee (Two-handed) 50, 9 + SL difference Damage. *Heavy* (4).

Serrated Claws: Melee (Brawling) 50, 9 + SL difference Damage. *Rend* (2).

Possessions: None.

VARON VIPERSONG

“Tread carefully Mon-keigh, I have killed countless of your kind and captured countless more. But I will give you a chance, unlike your fallen kin. Tell me what you know of your supposedly merciless Inquisition...”



THREAT OVERVIEW

- **Varon Vipersong** is a rogue Kabal Sybarite, leading a band of Drukhari Kabalite Warriors from the **Dripping Fang** Kabal, operating in the Androsk Subsector.
- He and his Kabalites move through hidden Webway portals in the Macharian Sector as they scout for ripe targets and claim captives where possible.
- He aims to gain enough strength and favour to raise his group of Kabalites to become the 'Hand of the Archon', the Archon's most elite kill team and trusted agents.

Varon Vipersong was destined for greatness. He is a Trueborn Drukhari descended from a highly influential family within the Dripping Fang, one of the devious Kabals that rule Commorragh, and is related by blood to the Kabal's Archon, Vypar S'Threil. Regrettably for Varon, his family tore itself apart during one of the many bouts of betrayal and infighting that marks Drukhari life. Only Varon survived, in a single night losing his influence, his status and, though it mattered somewhat less to him, his closest kin. Varon threw himself upon the feet of the Kabal's Archon, Vypar S'Threil, and plied his remaining favour to avoid being cast into the Kabal's fighting pits. As a mercy, Varon was granted a place among the lowly Kabalites and told to 'prove his worth' by leading raids to secure more captives for the Kabal. It did not take long for him to rise to the rank of Sybarite; his tragic fall only stoked his ambition.

Varon is a Drukhari caught between two worlds, once hailing from the Kabalite courts of Commorragh but forced to survive among the 'half-born' warrior class. He is at least as deadly and cunning as the average Sybarite, and far more driven than most. He inherited his family's last remaining favours and knows he must call them in effectively to maintain his position within Commorragh while putting pressure on his targets. His Trueborn status and growing reputation among the lower Kabalites as a cunning warrior has gathered him a following. He chooses the strongest warriors from among them to join his squad, promising that one day they will rise with him to become the Hand of the Archon.

As with all attempts by Drukhari to grow in power, Varon's attempts are watched with a mixture of approval, disgust, and caution. Any who rise too fast are quickly thrown down, and Varon has begun to suspect that his Archon's 'tests' are little more than an attempt to put him in his place.

RESOURCES

The Dripping Fang Kabal as a whole operates through Webway portals hidden in the Drimor Subsector, particularly around Proteus Secundus, Quartus and Quintus (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 282). Through his old ties and lost family secrets, Varon has a handful of other Webway portals he keeps secret, particularly on Voll, near Hive Sanksorak, under the rule of House Vylathi. Knowing where these portals are located would be invaluable to the Inquisition to shut Varon down. However, if pressured, Varon would likely give up the Kabal's portals in Drimor before sacrificing his own.

Among the few favours Varon has yet to exhaust is the services of a Haemonculus outside the Dripping Fang's influence. Klaevus Varan has worked several times as a healer for Varon and his Kabalites, but Varon retains Klaevus' services for the pact he made with a Mandrake assassin, whom Varon calls upon for desperate operations. The Mandrake is a nightmarish creature that lives within the shadows and feeds upon the pain and terror of its prey, making it a nigh-perfect assassin.

Varon's squad has around twenty **Drukhari Kabalite Warriors** (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 348), and more seek to join his cause every day.

METHODS

Varon has made several deals with Humans in the Macharian Sector to grow his power base and influence, avoiding the roadblocks within the Kabal that would now withhold power from him. He targets overambitious leaders within the Imperium's planetary governance — heads of noble houses or leaders within the Administratum. He offers mercenary work in trade for information and throngs of pitiless captives he can claim for the Kabal's pits, more lives than his band of Kabalite warriors could claim through raiding alone.

Varon often claims to have more power than he realistically has, leaning on his family's legacy or frequently outright lying to strike deals in his favour. Only some Drukhari, those higher up in the Dripping Fang, routinely see through his bluffs. The Humans he deals with are none the wiser, and many believe Varon commands a sizeable xenos army.

SECRETS

Varon has another master he must, for now, serve: Dracon Sykil Xulfur, leader of the Splinter of the Blood Toxicant, of which his squad serves under in the Kabal's hierarchy. Varon knows he will have to kill her one day to claim his rightful place, but until then, he must tolerate her orders. Similarly, Sykil knows who Varon is and must humiliate him to ensure his power within the Splinter does not grow enough to overcome her. Sykil often sends Varon on hopeless or deadly missions, preventing him from pursuing his true goal.

Varon seeks a Drukhari artefact that once belonged to Archon Vypar S'Threil and was thought to be destroyed — a Nightmare Doll. These twisted talismans are exceedingly rare and difficult to construct, created explicitly for one owner, and absorb the injuries they might suffer on the battlefield. Varon believes that recovering the Nightmare Doll will improve his position with the Archon. However, the Haemonculus Klaevus Varaan claims he can reverse the Doll's effects and wield it as a weapon against the Archon. Varon knows the Archon lost the Doll somewhere in the Macharian Sector and that an Ordo Xenos Inquisitor discovered it. Varon is unsure how he will use the Doll but is trading for any information on the Inquisition to recover it.



MANDRAKE								
Medium Druhkari (Kabal), Elite								
WS	BS	STR	TGH	AG	INT	PER	WIL	FEL
60	40	50	40	50	30	30	50	30
ARMOUR			WOUNDS			CRITICAL WOUNDS		
1			18			1		
INITIATIVE			SPEED			RESOLVE		
8			Fast			3		
Skills: Athletics 60, Awareness 50, Melee (One-handed) 75, Presence (Intimidation) 60, Stealth 70.								
TRAITS								
Blade Artist: Whenever the Mandrake makes a melee attack with a bladed weapon, it gains the <i>Penetrating (+1)</i> Trait.								
Fade Away: As an Action on their turn, the Mandrake can become invisible to the eye while inside Zones with <i>Dark</i> , <i>Obscure</i> , or <i>Poorly Lit</i> Environmental Traits, and has Advantage on Stealth Tests. They remain in this state until they take a non-movement Action (such as making an attack, or interacting with an object).								
Shadow Creature: The Mandrake always takes half damage, unless it takes damage from psychic abilities or phenomena.								
ATTACKS								
Glimmersteel Blade: Melee (One-handed) 75, 5 + SL difference Damage. <i>Inflict (Fatigued)</i> , <i>Penetrating (1)</i> .								
Baleblast: Ranged (Pistols) 40, 4 Damage, Medium Range. <i>Penetrating (1)</i> , <i>Rapid Fire (2)</i> .								
Possessions: None.								

VARON VIPERSONG								
Medium Druhkari (Kabal), Elite								
WS	BS	STR	TGH	AG	INT	PER	WIL	FEL
50	50	40	40	40	35	35	40	50
ARMOUR			WOUNDS			CRITICAL WOUNDS		
5			16			1		
INITIATIVE			SPEED			RESOLVE		
7			Fast			5		
Skills: Athletics 50, Fortitude (Pain) 50, Intuition 40, Melee (One-handed) 75, Presence (Leadership) 50, Presence (Interrogation) 50, Ranged (Pistols) 60, Reflexes 50, Rapport (Deception) 60.								
TRAITS								
Blade Artist: Whenever Varon makes a melee attack with a bladed weapon, it gains the <i>Penetrating (+1)</i> Trait.								
Blade Master: Varon can make two attacks with his Sybarite Swords on his turn. He does not suffer Disadvantage when attacking with two melee weapons simultaneously. When wielding two melee weapons, they gain the <i>Defensive</i> Trait.								
Sadistic Raider: Drukhari within Long Range of Varon can choose the result of their roll when their <i>Power from Pain</i> Trait activates (Varon gains the chosen bonus also).								
ATTACKS								
Sybarite Swords: Melee (One-handed) 75, 6 + SL difference Damage. <i>Penetrating (1)</i> , <i>Rend (2)</i> .								
Blast Pistol: Ranged (Pistols) 60, 4 Damage, Medium Range. <i>Blast</i> , <i>Inflict (Stunned)</i> .								
Possessions: 300 Solars, a Collection of horrific battle trophies, a Set of Kabalite Armour.								

XANDRO COSMAR & ANKHET

“ Look out into the void and the stars, my friend. Anything and everything out there can be yours. You just have to want it bad enough. ”



THREAT OVERVIEW

- **Xandro Cosmar** is a Rogue Trader and Commander of the battlecruiser *Mortiferum Ludum*, accompanied by his heretek advisor, the Tech-Priest **Ankhet**.
- Together, the pair form a cunning alliance: the overwhelming resources and freedom of movement afforded to a Rogue Trader, combined with a rogue Tech-Priest's genius.
- Their ambitions are simple: to collect and study xenos artefacts discovered across distant worlds, using the guise of Imperium-approved xenocide as a cover for securing their plunder.

Claiming descent from a long line of wealth stretching to the days before the Horus Heresy, Xandro Cosmar is a man accustomed to getting what he wants and has no qualms about using anything to get it. As a Rogue Trader and Commander of the Overlord-class battlecruiser *Mortiferum Ludum*, Xandro has seen decades of service to the Imperium as a vanguard, seeking out new planets and exterminating any native intelligent life for the Emperor's glory. He pursues this path not out of a sense of patriotism, but calculated greed.

He is a dashing example of Rogue Trader propaganda. Despite decades of service, rejuvenat treatments have ensured that Xandro has retained much of his youthful looks. He prefers his long, jet-black hair tied back in a low ponytail and dresses in fashionable and elaborate clothing well suited for society functions or commanding the bridge. He sees himself as a cross between a collector of fine goods and a hunter of dangerous game. Having collected vast wealth and accolades, Xandro has grown bored of what the Imperium can provide within its borders, instead favouring his unparalleled freedom of travel, seeking out new and unknown worlds to plunder for novelties to add to his teeming collections.

Xandro does not just collect xenos artefacts but also maintains a hidden menagerie of xenos creatures in the *Mortiferum Ludum* for his amusement. A few of these wretched beasts are the last of their kind, so enthusiastically did Xandro hunt them to extinction. All are trophies, a personal tally of his exploits that, in his own mind at least, add to the glory of his name.

Xandro is driven by the desire for others to recognise his own presumed magnificence. He sees himself as a clear successor to the deeds of Lord Solar Macharius. Like the fabled hero, Xandro knows he has the will to bring hundreds of worlds to heel. Unlike the Lord Solar, Xandro has little qualms about using xenos technologies to achieve his objectives and sees himself as an innovator in this aspect, defying both the Lex Imperialis and the Imperial Creed in one heretical swoop. To him, the Macharian Crusade was a blueprint, one he could improve upon, and Xandro has absolute faith that it is only a matter of time before his conquests spark a new wave of zealots ready to follow him into the great unknown.

The Rogue Trader has already begun collecting a cadre of admirers willing to follow him beyond the limits of the Astronomican. Chief among his staff is his heretek advisor, Ankhet. In stark contrast to the Rogue Trader's unsullied flesh, Ankhet is a heavily augmented Tech-Priest, having performed countless surgeries upon himself to the point that his silhouette is barely Human. Ankhet skitters along using a dozen or so appendages underneath his red robes, his visage is a cluster of unblinking eye lenses that twist and focus, surrounded by cables, tubes and vents.

Despite their physical differences, Xandro recognised a kindred sadistic spirit in Ankhet. It did not take long for the two to strike a bargain. In exchange for Ankhet's extensive knowledge of xenos technology and his heretical willingness to employ it to the Rogue Trade's benefit, Xandro would take the Tech-Priest to the fringes of the Macharian Sector to continue his research away from the prying eyes of his Mechanicus brethren and the Inquisition.

Use the **Voidship Captain** stat-block (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 338) to represent Xandro Cosmar, and the **Tech-Priest** stat-block (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 324) to represent Ankhet.



RESOURCES

The *Mortiferum Ludum* carries a full complement of **Armsmen** (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 337), who are acclimated to dangerous combat engagements in various hostile conditions. Ankhet is typically accompanied by **Gun Servitors** (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 323), which he custom-builds for each mission.

Xandro is also extremely wealthy and understands the value of using money to overcome most obstacles. Bribery comes to him naturally, as he needs officials to look the other way, and he has amassed countless favours from agents across the Adeptus Terra to make his life easier. Xandro might even be owed a favour with the characters' Patron. Xandro does not hide his wealth and is often adorned with trophies taken from the various xenos creatures — or species — that have died in his conquests. His most prized piece is a matched pair of bracelets bearing what he claims to be authentic Aeldari spirit stones, but he is not beyond parting with such pieces if they can save his neck, especially as there are some things solars cannot buy.

Ankhet possesses a number of strange single-use inventions that use xenos technology as a basis. Many are unpredictable and dangerous but Ankhet has never really cared about collateral damage if given an opportunity to use his inventions on a threat.

METHODS

Xandro and Ankhet make for useful recurring villains who know how to avoid Imperial incrimination. They dabble in dangerous technologies, often sending agents with sufficient deniability to seek out xenos artefacts to secure on their behalf. Xandro and Ankhet are usually in the right place at the right time. When new xenos technology is uncovered, they dabble in the Silent Trade or insert themselves into Inquisitorial investigations to pick over the bones or steal information.

At the same time, Xandro knows how to cultivate connections and will not hesitate to invite characters to join him onboard his voidship, helping them in their adventures so he can keep a close eye on their activities and Patrons. The sooner he can convert characters from potential threats to pawns in his schemes, the better. In the case of the characters, Xandro can appear initially as a Contact or collaborator, then stab the party or their Patron in the back when it best suits his interests.

Xandro might make a play to become the characters' new Patron, using his network of spies to seek out blackmail on the characters' Patron and offer himself as a better alternative who understands their needs and provides the freedom some characters might crave. Against an Inquisitor, this is a headstrong gambit indeed, and characters who accept this deal would quickly find themselves branded a traitor, but Xandro thinks himself the centre of a cult of personality and would certainly try.

SECRETS

There are many elements of Xandro's practices which fall well within the freedoms allowed him by his Dynasty's Warrant of Trade. Hatred for the xenos is a virtue, and Xandro's frequent hunts and purges are eccentric at worst. However, his willingness to work with xenos technology is a proscribed activity he knows well enough to hide. Equally, his goal of wishing to lead another crusade would be seen by some as laudable, but his means and methods again betray him. Any conquest gained by means of xenos artefacts would be cursed from the outset, as such objects are not to be trusted. Nevertheless, there are Inquisitors who would embrace even this aspect of Xandro's methods, believing it is only righteous to turn the tools of the enemy against them. Xandro himself is not so deep a thinker — anything that can bring him the victory and glory that is so obviously his right is by definition a good, even if it must be kept secret for now.

Ankhet has secrets he has kept even from his Rogue Trader accomplice. Many standard years ago, he began integrating xenos technologies into his own form, especially within his various cogitation implants. At first these additions, drawn from an ancient calculation array found in aeons-old ruins beneath the acid soils of Voll, only enhanced his abilities. As time has worn on, however, these modifications have affected his thinking deeply. During his brief maintenance cycles, he sees plans for vast planetary machinery that could alter the biosphere of entire worlds, leaving them so utterly toxic that no Human could hope to survive even a momentary exposure. Nevertheless, he feels a deep compulsion to build such a device and deploy it, despoiling a habitable world to make it suitable for beings he cannot name, and who are surely long dead. For now, he is happy to assist Xandro, as it allows him more time to refine his plans and find the materials necessary to put them into effect.

USING THREATS IN YOUR GAME

You may use these Threats in several ways. Each is flexible enough to serve as the primary antagonist for a campaign arc, or may be used as an effective thorn in the party's side to be purged once greater threats have been addressed. If you wish, you may simply find the stat-blocks useful game aids and craft Threats of your own, tailored to your party's interests and goals.

It is best to begin seeding rumours of these Threats into your ongoing adventures prior to their actual appearance, building their presence in the background. These rumours could be mentioned by the characters' **Contacts** (page 122) or seeded during their downtime as background chatter. The Inquisition receives requests for aid and investigation from every corner of the Imperium, and rumours of these Threats may appear as part of this near-endless stream of data, attached to intelligence reports or merely mentioned in passing by other acolytes. Regardless, it will always be more satisfying for players to encounter a threat that has been seeded to some degree before they ultimately appear. This will also help to make your campaign feel smoother and more well-connected.

When the time is right, you may reveal the Threat as directly as you wish. They may emerge as part of another adventure, a threat that complicates the primary investigation. Alternatively, the characters' Patron may simply assign their acolytes to deal with the Threat. Threats can be used as a simple and direct setup for one-shot investigations, the next step in a more extensive planned campaign, or as exciting fuel for a Patron's *Sidereal Quests* Liability (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 41).

On a grander scale, you can weave any Threat into the fabric of your campaign. They could act as a Patron's or characters' nemesis, showing up in person at crucial turning points to throw a spanner in the works — a literal option for a Patron's *Nemesis* Liability (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 39). Consider why they might have crossed paths with the characters' Patron in the past and what enmity lies between them. Wait for the worst possible time for them to interfere in the Patron's or characters' plans.

CAMPAIGN PLANNING

If you wish to deploy a Threat as the driving force of an entire campaign, this will require some extra work to set up. In this case, consider the following:

- ☠ Do not introduce the Threat right away. Plant clues and create a thread for the characters to pull on, relating to one of the threat's aspects. Lead them towards an inciting incident to cement the Threat as their enemy.
- ☠ Ensure the Threat has plenty of ways to evade the characters' capture or avoid confrontation until the campaign's finale — while ensuring the Threat has a consistent presence. This is a delicate balance to achieve. Consider using aspects of the Threat's organisation (significant minions or lieutenants under their command) to confront the characters instead, or find spaces where they can interact with the Threat on even ground, where no direct conflict can occur.
- ☠ Do not reveal the Threat's true intentions until the campaign's midpoint. Instead, allow the characters to pull on threads and discover it for themselves. Pace it out.
- ☠ Consider what other forces (including other Threats) may cross the characters' path or what other situations could complicate matters for them, especially related to whatever setting they find themselves in.

NON-INQUISITION PATRONS

By no means are these Threats Inquisition-exclusive, though it might take an Inquisitor's resources to root them out and defeat them. Characters bound to Patrons of other Factions can stumble upon these Threats in their own adventures, becoming a problem they might have to deal with without initial Inquisition support. If you need an Inquisitor (or characters from their retinue) to aid your Patron or characters in combatting the Threat, there is a roster of sample Patrons in **Chapter III: Roleplaying Inquisitors** (page 53) to choose from.



OPEN CASE FILES



The Inquisition is vast in its remit and powers but pitifully limited in terms of its absolute size. Very few individuals have the strength of will to take on the mantle of Inquisitor, and every day, many more threats to the Imperium arise than the Inquisition could hope to address.

What follows are just a few of these Open Case Files, short adventures that should take a few sessions to complete. These can be used as introductory missions for newly minted acolytes within the Macharian Sector, as detours from a more extensive investigation, or as opportunities to allow your characters to explore more of their current locale. Resolving these Cases could inspire future stories, missions and characters within your campaign. Many can help fill in the years between Conclaves presented in **Chapter V: Heresies Macharia** (page 84) and relate to similar threats and concerns, allowing your group to dig deeper into the sector's threats and intrigues.

Each Case File consists of three parts. First, the **Hook** pulls your party in — an inciting incident they could easily stumble upon or discover as part of their characters' downtime. Second, a **Response** — where you begin their investigation.

Finally, the **Resolution** — outlines the Case's potential outcomes. Each stage of the Case contains helpful advice, challenges that must be overcome, and mechanical suggestions to keep things interesting for your players.

As with **Contacts** (page 122) and **Sector Threats** (page 135), Open Case Files are flexible — change a few details, such as featured planets, systems, and the characters involved, if they will better fit your campaign. Inject as many local characters and flavours as possible, especially NPCs your characters have already interacted with. For example, any local Contacts they have can make the characters aware of the case file's Hook, introducing them to the mission at hand.

When a mission is complete, see the **Rewarding Players** section of *Imperium Maledictum* (page 312) to award characters with the appropriate amount of XP. Most Open Case Files have the characters interacting with one or multiple Factions within the Imperium, and they award additional Influence depending on how the Case is ultimately resolved.





A GRAVE MISTAKE

All manner of rumours make their way to agents of the Inquisition, and most are ignored. Not so for a missive from Virida, as it arrived with the characters' Patron bearing the cypher key of an Inquisitor thought dead a century past. The message itself was short, the fact of its existence far more unusual than its content, and warranting an investigation on that account alone. This was, as it happens, precisely the sender's intent.



MESSAGE FROM INQUISTIOR BARTOLOS

++ Priority alert. Planet Virida, Drimor Subsector. Suspected xenos infiltration. Possible compromise of high-ranking individuals within Imperial authorities. Assistance required. End message. ++

This Case File works best as an isolated part or detour of a more extensive campaign. It can introduce the characters to the Drukhari xenos threat (such as **Varon Vipersong**, page 156). Though it takes place on Virida, any world that might invite the presence of Drukhari raiders may suit.

Hook

Inquisitor Bartolos vanished in the Drimor Subsector in 850.M41. An Ordo Xenos Inquisitor of modest achievement, Bartolos was on the trail of a Drukhari sympathiser when he disappeared. Several attempts to locate the Inquisitor failed, and his name was added to the long list of worthy dead carved into the monolith of service on Mare Cinis and recalled after that only in the records held there.

While it is not impossible that Bartolos still lives, it seems unlikely that, if this were the case, he would have waited so long to contact his fellow Inquisitors or be without any explanation for his absence.

Further, the message, though bearing his seal, does not conform to his previous writings, which tended to be verbose and elaborate rather than short and direct.

In fact, the message has been sent by Proctor Llewellyn Verane, Inquisitor Bartolos's daughter. Wearied by his long service to the Imperium, Inquisitor Bartolos cast off his pledge to the Emperor. He retired — an almost unheard-of luxury for an Inquisitor and a betrayal of every oath he had sworn in the Emperor's name. Worst of all, he has escaped punishment by the simplest means of all — he died in his bed several decades ago.

He told his daughter something of his life as an Inquisitor — more than he should have, and enough for her to know the peril of reaching out using her father's name as an alias. However, Verane has cause for alarm and — rightly, as it happens — believes it warrants the Inquisition's attention. As an Administratum clerk on the jungle-covered world of Virida, she has been tracking deaths among the citizens. She noticed an unusual pattern of deaths confined to a particular zone of the jungle and brought it to her superiors. The region was investigated, but nothing unusual was found; her concerns were quickly written off as a statistical anomaly or paranoia. Now *Laal's Citadel*, one of the great servo-cities that strides across the surface of Virida, is approaching the zone, and the proctor fears the worst — that whatever threat stalks the forests will claim the population of an entire city. Desperate, she did as she promised her father she would never do and used her Administratum connections and his Inquisitorial seal to plead for aid.

In truth, the jungle itself is not to blame, but a Drukhari presence hidden within it. The xenos raiders found the planet inimical to them and decided to lure their prey to them instead. Bribing the governor of *Laal's Citadel* to alter its route towards a hidden entrance to the Webway, they intend to launch a surprise raid. Should they be successful, the entire servo-city and its millions of citizens might find themselves dragged off to captivity in the dark city of Commorragh.

RESPONSE

Of course, the characters may find themselves more interested in locating Inquisitor Bartolos than listening to his daughter's wild tales of disappearances in a jungle with a history of hostility towards intruders. If pressed, she can show them to his final resting place, an unmarked grave at the mouth of a cave atop the Juncta Plateau, a truly inhospitable region of the planet-spanning jungle. He was not consigned to the corpse recyclers lest Inquisitorial marker-pathogens in his blood alert the wider Inquisition to his death. The interred skeleton is indeed the Inquisitor's, the lone augmetic eye still staring from one eye socket, the digital weapon gifted for his routing of the heretek Loftus Kar from Hexas Panan gleaming upon one skeletal finger.

The coordinates attached to the message sent using Bartolos's cyphers lead to *Laal's Citadel*, a mighty servo-city. When the characters reach it, Verane will contact them, guiding them with messages hidden amidst a ceaseless barrage of Administratum paperwork, much of it delivered by randomly appointed couriers, minor scribes, servo-skulls, and other obscure means. She attempts to direct the characters towards her discoveries — the excessive deaths and a sudden change in the city's trajectory towards the anomalous region of the jungle.

If the characters pursue her leads, they will find the sharp scribe quickly sets them on the right path to the office of Cityspeaker Naurane Wicht, one of the servo-city's highest-ranking officials. Offered a simple deal by the Drukhari — bring us your city in exchange for your own life — Wicht chose her own pitiable life over that of the millions whose safety was entrusted to her. When confronted by Inquisitorial authority, she quickly breaks down and will offer no resistance.



RESOLUTION

However, it is up to the characters how they wish to proceed. They may use Wicht to lure a party of Drukhari raiders to their doom, preparing the servo-city's void shields and interception batteries, which Wicht had promised to disable for their attack under the pretence of essential maintenance. Alternatively, they may wish to avoid the area near the Webway portal or seek to destroy it.

They may also wish to pursue Bartolos and, in the process, discover Verane. She has no love for the Inquisition but would make an exemplary operative if convinced to join them by a persuasive character. Either way, the characters' Patron will point out that she knows far too much to be allowed to remain beyond the Inquisition's reach and must be recruited or killed. Recovering Bartolos' corpse for post-mortem punishment is also a priority — any Inquisitor who betrays their oaths must be made to answer for it, in spirit if not in fact.

If the characters are successful, *Laal's Citadel* remains standing. If Verane is recruited, in addition to standard XP and solar rewards, their Influence with the Ordo Xenos increases by 1.





DOG DAYS

Kastan Marsd, an Interrogator from Alis Raud's retinue has been independently investigating daemonic activity across Persepolis. In his zeal, he has allowed himself to be baited into a trap and disappeared three cycles ago, deep within the Abyssal Levels of Hive Skarthius.

This Case File works best when used as part of a hive-based investigation, although the specifics of the hive can be altered to fit your planet of choice. The characters may have met Interrogator Marsd at a previous Conclave (page 85), discovered his disappearance through a known Contact (page 122), or mentioned via Inquisitor Raud (page 68) herself.

Hook

Through a network of favours almost as labyrinthine as the Adeptus Administratum, the characters' Patron has been called upon to investigate the disappearance — this could be as a favour to Inquisitor Raud, or the characters' Patron may seek to ply information from Marsd upon his rescue about Raud before she can retrieve him herself.

Shortly after they arrive in Hive Skarthius, the characters are approached by a **Servo-skull** (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 323) bearing Inquisitorial insignias. It has been combing the hive's voidport for someone with Inquisitorial clearance for some time. The servo-skull is Interrogator Marsd's failsafe, set to activate if he disappears. It refers the characters to an address in the mid-hive that Interrogator Marsd has been using as a safe house. The servo-skull wipes its memory and deactivates as the characters move on.

Response

The address the characters have been directed to is a warehouse in the hive's middle layers. It is a squat and unwelcoming ferrocrete building near a small cargo port for access. Immediately, the characters can see that a group of enforcers have cordoned off the building. Four **Enforcers** (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 327) guard the cargo port, refusing to let anyone inside. They are led by Proctor Sai Darak, who does whatever he can to stymie the investigation without drawing suspicion.

Darak and a handful of her enforcers are secretly tied to the cult the characters encounter later, and are responsible for Marsd's disappearance. Within, characters can find the remains of Interrogator Marsd's current investigation.

Papers detailing maps of the Abyssal Levels, enforcer arrest transcripts, and detailed medicae reports on many patients are found scattered across a large holo-table in the office overlooking the warehouse. Going through all of them takes time, and gleaning any helpful information is a **Challenging (+0) Extended Logic (Investigation)** Test requiring a total of 8 SL, with one Test allowed per hour. Piecing together the clues reveals that an inordinate number of people who voyage into the Iron Sprawl district of the lower hive return with no memory of their time there and strange bruises and scars covering their bodies.

Characters can make a **Hard (-20) Tech (Security)** Test to access Marsd's holo-table and retrieve a map of the Iron Sprawl with a couple of locations of interest marked on it. If no one succeeds, the characters can obtain a map or guidance to the area elsewhere, but this slows down their investigation. The warehouse also contains a battered ground vehicle whose engine rests on a nearby table, a sparse living space, and all the equipment needed to maintain a cyber-mastiff.

The Iron Sprawl itself is a twisting maze of tunnels, dead ends, and flooded maintenance passages. Corrosion speckles every surface, and the air feels oily. Characters can make **Hard (-20) Rapport (Inquiry)** Tests to interrogate the locals; they are cautious of talking to outsiders, but the people who live and work here remember a man matching the Interrogator's description. Failing these Tests can draw the unsavoury attention of local **Gangers** (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 340). By the end of their inquiries, they are directed to a place called the Cistern.



The Cistern is larger than some cathedrals and a mass of Humanity toils to repair the mechanisms in this part of the Abyssal Levels. Workshops line the walls, some stacked five or six high before reaching the ceiling, and the smell of unwashed menials sticks in the back of the throat. A successful **Difficult (-10) Presence Test** (Specialisation determined by the character's method) is required to obtain the information for free, otherwise, a bribe is called for. Someone remembers seeing a man matching the Interrogators' description leading a cyber-mastiff into a sealed area of the Iron Sprawl less than a few hours walk from the Cistern. They also warn the characters about an exaction squad hunting an escaped criminal in the area (a cover for the heretic enforcers' activities).

RESOLUTION

Following the directions, the characters find a bulkhead recently forced open. Years-old purity seals that used to hang from it, purporting to ward against daemons, lie cracked on the floor. Despite endemic overcrowding, no one lives nearby, and the corridors beyond the bulkhead bear the telltale marks of promethium burns.

The twisting, scorched passages beyond are seemingly empty, but the characters hear a distorted sound akin to a dog barking. Eventually, they come across a **Cyber-mastiff** (*Inquisition Players Guide*, page 112) with an Inquisitorial seal hanging from its collar. It has been clawing at the door to a sealed hab-block. The characters can bypass the door or break it down. Still, whatever they choose, the cyber-mastiff ensures their entrance is not quiet, and the cultists within, who are attempting to turn the Interrogator into a daemonhost, are alerted to their presence.

Zones across the interior of the hab block are *Poorly Lit*. Some close to the central communal spaces are Warp-touched. Broken furniture scattered throughout the hab can be used as *Light Cover*. Interrogator Marsd (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 335) is unconscious and tied to a table in the central space, daubed with heretical runes. If the characters do not hold the cyber-mastiff back, it does everything possible to break the table and drag him free. It will attack any cultist who gets in its way.

The cult are members of the enforcer team who were involved in the cleanup of this area during a past incident. Proctor Darak and one additional fallen enforcer are present for each combat-orientated member of the party (use the profiles from *Imperium Maledictum*, page 327) and **Cultists** (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 344).

Wrapping up the investigation, the characters learn that Darak is one of the enforcers who cleared the hab of heresy a year prior and are now within the thrall of a daemon's machinations. They felt spurned in their duties, which the cult plied into influence over them. They promised them whatever they desired in return for aiding the cult's 'master', a daemon of Slaanesh who once almost managed to manifest in the depths of the hive before its cult was purged. Acting for the daemon, the cult pressed them to create a host for it, though each attempt ended up in bloody failure. The characters also learn that the original call for the Inquisition's aid was intercepted by someone higher up in the enforcers' chain of command or by someone on the seat of the planetary council — which is where Interrogator Marsd's inquiry points next.

If the characters are successful, Interrogator Marsd is recovered. His wounds are extensive and will take significant time to recover fully. In addition to standard XP and solar rewards, the characters' Influence with the Ordo Malleus increases by 1. If Marsd's cyber-mastiff survives, Marsd may be added as an Ordo Malleus Contact for any character who cares for the familiar during his recuperation.



THE FALLEN CAPTAIN



Captain Louis Gontir has returned from the frontlines a storied war hero, but also a broken and mangled man. As an exemplary servant of the Emperor, he was awarded a relatively safe position as an Astra Militarum drill master and planned to spend his remaining days in relative quietude. Unfortunately, he brought home a trophy from the frontlines, an artefact corrupted by the foul blood of Chaos Daemons it slew. Since his return, Gontir's war stories and charisma have inspired a following, becoming a cult whose leader is slowly spiralling into madness and corruption due to the trophy he holds dear.

When the characters investigate, they find a man wielding far more influence than he should and a fanatical group of followers under his sway. They must determine if this is proper Imperial zeal or something more sinister. When events turn sour, the characters face a brutal tactician and his dedicated followers.

This Case File works best as an isolated part or detour of a larger campaign — related to daemons and daemonic influence. It can take place on any world with a significant Imperial presence.

Hook

The characters are alerted to the presence of a burgeoning sect of the Imperial Cult on a nearby world — either by their Patron or through one of their Contacts. What is troubling is the swiftness at which the sect has gained influence within the lower echelons of society — local authorities within the Ministorum are concerned.

The sect's leader spent significant time in a Ministorum re-education program after his tour of duty. Requesting aid from the Ministorum and Astra Militarium to review Gontir's service record will take some time and influence (remotely or on location). The characters will find aspects of his record classified under Inquisitorial order beyond their level of access. In truth, Gontir's unit ran afoul of daemonic activity in their last battle and barely survived. The classified information was redacted by the Ordo Malleus Inquisitor Lark, who oversaw the cleanup. Impressed by Gontir's service — his actions almost certainly saved her life — Lark broke with protocol to allow the man to continue his service to the Emperor in a quiet role, rather than recruiting him or outright silencing him for having witnessed a daemonic incursion.

The characters are advised to observe the sect and get close to Captain Gontir to interview him. They need to determine whether the sect is corrupted or legitimate. If so, they must do whatever they can to neutralise the sect's leadership, especially Gontir, and snuff them out by whatever means.

Response

The characters can find the cult operating within the bowels of Imperial society, often called 'Gontir's Men'. The cult consists of primarily downtrodden folk — manufactorum workers, labourers, and scavengers — who see Captain Gontir's return as a historic moment, rare for any trooper to return from the frontlines to their home. Though not without scars, Gontir's body leans heavily on a crutch due to a mangled leg, the right half of his face marred with burnt scar tissue. Despite this, when he speaks of war, battle, and glory, the horrors he had been through, he focuses on the heroic and inspirational moments rather than the abject horror and pointlessness of his experiences. What began as informal lectures for his more promising students and unguarded conversations in local watering holes grew over time into talks in front of small crowds, and ultimately into cathedrum sermons in front of a fervent audience that grows each week.

Discovering the nature of the subtext of his sermons is not easy for a layperson or anyone not paying close attention to the details. Passing a **Challenging (+0) Linguistics** Test or a **Difficult (-10) Intuition (Humans)** or **Lore (Theology)** Test allows a listener to detect subtle variations in how he talks about the God-Emperor. While he pays lip service, the deity described sounds more vengeful and active. He talks about the God-Emperor's return and other aspects that do not align with known texts. What he says might sound positive to many, but goes directly against the Imperial Creed and the teachings of the Ministorum. It does not reach outright heresy, but it should raise suspicions for the characters and warrant further investigation.

Getting close to Captain Gontir takes work. Bodyguards surround him: **Cultists** (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 344) and a group of **Gangers** (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 340) who all act like Astra Militarum troopers. Gontir is a **Cult Leader** (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 346), though his Speed is Slow and he lacks a Mark of Chaos. To access Gontir will mean talking their way through, or sneaking past, his outer guards and other fanatical cult members trying to talk to him. Characters can make a **Challenging (+0) Presence, Rapport, or Stealth** Test according to their chosen method to gain entry successfully.

Once the characters meet with Gontir, it should be clear that the captain has lost what was left of his mind. In private, he lacks the charisma seen in his rousing speeches. Without the crowd's attention, his mind wanders back to his battles and mutters dark thoughts about the horrors he witnessed. They notice he clutches the handle of a broken chainsword covetously, keeping it bundled under his robe.

Any psyker within a few feet of the chainsword can feel the malevolent Warp energy flowing from the broken blade. If examined, something Gontir will not readily allow, what is left of the blade's teeth is caked in gore that has stained and pitted the metal. Touching it is a source of Minor Exposure to Corruption (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 221). Gontir and his closest followers revere the corrupted blade — representing what Gontir and many of their brethren in the Astra Militarum have gone through. They are lost to its influence.



RESOLUTION

The Warp-tainted blade needs to be disposed of or at least quarantined, but Gontir and his men will not simply hand it over. Gontir's tactical mind will kick in; he will try to protect himself and the blade. He claims the characters are agents of Chaos and instructs his cultists to capture them. The Gangers and Cultists should outnumber the party two to one, and Gontir's *Fanatical Zealotry* Traits works on both the Gangers and Cultists in this case (do not forget to account for Superiority if the characters have done reasonable reconnaissance and preparation before confronting the cult leader).

Gontir's first order of business will be to ensure he has enough followers between him and the characters to protect himself. His followers are zealots and will all lay down their lives for him. They can all use the **Look Out, Sir!** rule (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 318).

Once it is clear to Gontir that all is lost and the characters have the upper hand, Gontir will draw the broken blade and call upon his interpretation of the God-Emperor to aid him, triggering his *The Price of Failure* Trait. Once his transformation into a **Chaos Spawn** (*Imperium Maledictum*, page 345) is complete, the minds of his followers will break — they will still fight for their lives, but escape will be their only priority.

Once the characters defeat Gontir, they must dispose of the broken blade. Reaching out to their Patron, they will be put in contact with some Ordo Malleus agents who can help. In addition to standard XP and solar rewards, their Influence with the Adeptus Ministorum increases by 1. The Ministorum spends the next several years working diligently in the area to re-educate citizens affected by Gontir's false dogma.



LOST IN TRANSIT



Captain Barik Thale, a recently promoted Imperial Fleet officer, was found dead within a cargo container in a storage area of the hive's voidport during a routine inspection of the world's tithe. A lone corpse — even that of a fleet officer — rarely elicits much response in Hive Rokarth. However, as his weight had been included in that day's accounting of Voll's tithe, a potential violation was flagged, and the Macharian Vigilites were obliged to investigate. This was expected to be perfunctory, as all involved wished to see the matter swiftly resolved and shipments resume, but a weapon of xenos origin was found on Captain Thale's corpse. With all eyes on the hive's governor, and the Administratum beginning to rack up punitive additions to Voll's tithe, the Inquisition were at last called upon.

This Case File works best set in a populated hive city; it features much travel between hive levels and a cast of characters from across a hive's societal classes.

Hook

The characters arrive to find the offending cargo container guarded by Vigilite Emilia Tark, a handful of irate Administratum clerks, and Maul Berisk, a representative of the ruling House Castyx. Vigilite Tark is dour-faced and overworked and simply wants to hand over this politically fraught investigation as soon as possible. Berisk is present to greet the agents and direct them to conclude their investigation as quickly as possible. The Administratum clerks simply wish to finish processing their now staggering amount of paperwork.

Response

Inside the container is Thale's body, nestled among a collection of medicae supplies destined for delivery to the Astra Militarum's frontline. Of significance is the rather large hole in one plasteel wall of the container, which Tark is reluctant to admit is the result of one of her officers accidentally discharging the gun. The weapon itself, a squat-looking pistol of robust design, lies where it was dropped next to Thale's body.

Any character with even a single Advance in *Ranged* can tell that this is no mere las weapon. Anyone making a **Difficult (-10) Tech (Engineering)** Test can identify the weapon as some kind of ion blaster, used by certain xenos species, most notably the T'au or Leagues of Votann.

Inspection of the corpse reveals it is several days old, though much of this was spent awaiting the characters' arrival, which Tark or Berisk can both confirm. Further inspection reveals that he is missing medals on his uniform from his recent promotion, but a hefty pouch packed with solars has been left behind — if this was a robbery, it was poorly executed, which anyone with an Infractionist background or who makes a successful **Routine (+20) Logic (Investigation)** Test can easily tell.



ION PISTOL

A pistol designed by the Leagues of Votann, the Ion Pistol and its larger variant, the Ion Blaster, are advanced weapons, utilising technology proscribed by the Adeptus Mechanicus. It bears markings that a successful **Difficult (-10) Lore (Xenos)** Test can identify as belonging to the Leagues of Votann. They mark the weapon as having come from the forge of someone named Theyn Hyvor.

Ion Pistol: Ranged (Pistol), 7 + SL Damage, Medium Range. *Rend* (2), *Supercharge* (4).

In fact, this was a deliberate execution perpetrated by the person who sold the weapon to Thale, who was concerned he was being a little too indiscreet with it. The killer would have retrieved the weapon if they had the time but were interrupted while attempting to stage a common mugging and dumped Thale's body in the cargo crate. Anyone examining the body can tell Thale was shot cleanly with a las weapon. The shot was administered from above. A **Challenging (+0) Logic (Investigation)** Test reveals this is a likely sign that Thale was kneeling at the time.

The port's security logs indicate there were no unauthorised entries to the port around the time of the murder, but a high-level override code with House Castyx designation was used around this time. This is not unusual, and Berisk will be outraged at any suggestion of his house's involvement.

He can (truthfully) explain that the code cannot be traced to any individual but could have been accessed by any ranking member of his house or its client dynasties — far too many people to investigate practically.

BENEATH THE HIVE

Their Vigilite contact suggests that a weapons dealer named Hector Crug may prove useful. She grudgingly admits that the Vigilites are unlikely to get any information from the man, given his distrust of them.

Crug's store is a small rockcrete shack with a broken, gaudy sign backlit by flickering lumens at annoying, unpredictable intervals. Crug is reluctant to help but can be convinced to talk with a payment of one-thousand solars, or a favour that probably involves having someone killed or a credible threat of violence.

When Crug agrees to tell the characters what he knows, he retreats to a small back room to recover his records. After a sudden shout, he returns surrounded by three squat, well-armed, armoured figures holding Crug at gunpoint, demanding to know the characters' interest is in the weapon. Their own weapons are strikingly similar to the one found near Thale's body, and they speak Low Gothic in a thick but unplaceable accent. Characters can make a **Difficult (-10) Lore (Xenos)** Test to realise these people are no mere abhuman Squats, but xenos Kin of the Leagues of Votann.

Their leader, Theyn Hyvor, demands the characters surrender the ion weapon if they have it. Characters can make a **Difficult (-10) Presence (Leadership)** or **Rapport (Charm)** Test to diffuse the situation, becoming **Routine (+20)** if they return the weapon. Hyvor can explain that he has been tracing several weapons and pieces of technology stolen from his people by raiders (including an Ironkin's cerebral unit, though he will not be forthcoming with this information). Hyvor insists his people did not kill Thale but merely want the weapons back or a fair trade for them.

Seeing the opportunity to save his skin, Crug finally spills what he knows. The weapons were recently sold by one Celestina Visconti (page 126), a socialite with extensive contacts among the nobility. Visconti is a minor client of House Castyx, which is how Celestina accessed the port and eliminated Thale. She is a key lynchpin in the Silent Trade, the illegal black market for xenos technology in the Macharian Sector. If Crug dies, this information can be recovered from a dataslate on his person.

The Kin will agree to let the characters handle things if they promise, truthfully or not, to return any weapons and tech that remain with Celestina. She can be found in a lavish (for Rokarth) suite of apartments. Celestina is a graceful socialite with an ease of speech that catches many off guard, but she keeps one of the ion pistols nearby should she need it.

If the characters reveal they are Inquisitorial agents or threaten violence, Celestina will offer a deal, trading her safety for what she knows about the Silent Trade and especially the Rogue Trader Xandro Cosmar (page 158), from whom she acquired the weapons and related tech. Otherwise, this information is available in a dataslate of blackmail information she has retained as insurance. Celestina explains that she had Thale killed after he waved his newly purchased weapon around several Macharian Vigilites, whom she had to pay off. She was afraid the weapon would lead back to her, which, evidently, it has.

While occupying the characters with this story, Celestina has had her bodyguards — a trio of former Vigilites lured into her employ by her wealth — into a position to ambush the characters. If they do not cut a deal with Celestina for her continued freedom, she silently orders them to attack and lunges for her own hidden weapon. Use the **Astra Miliatrum Trooper** stat-block to represent Celestina's bodyguards (**Imperium Maledictum**, page 329). The remaining weapons and tech can be recovered from a locked storage area hidden beneath Celestina's quarters.

RESOLUTION

Removing Celestina will be a blow to the Silent Trade on Rokarth, though she might also make a useful Contact. Resolving issues with the Votann peacefully grants the characters' Patron the *Arms of the Alien Boon* (**Inquisition Player's Guide**, page 32). Consider carefully how their Patron might feel about this — Radical Patrons will be more open to cutting a deal with the xenos. In addition to standard XP and solar rewards, the characters' Influence with the Adeptus Administratum increases by 1, as does their Patron's.





THE LOST KABALITE

Varon Vipersong and his Kabalites have been using a hidden Webway portal on Voll to steal away Imperial citizens and influence corrupt leaders. So far, they have remained undetected, but one of his scouting Kabalites ran afoul of the Macharian Vigilites and was captured. The Vigilites have called upon the aid of the Inquisition to take the Kabalite off their hands before the Drukhari's threat for retribution comes to fruition.

This Case File works best as an isolated part or detour of a more extensive campaign or the means to introduce the Sector Threat of Varon Vipersong (page 156). Though it occurs on Voll, any significantly populated world or other hive would suffice.

Hook

While the characters are on Voll, they are contacted by their Patron or an authority within the Macharian Vigilites (if their standing is positive and their presence known). Vigilites in Hive Sanksorak have captured what they believe to be a xenos operative, asking to talk directly to Inquisitorial representatives. Characters can make a **Challenging (+0) Lore (Voll)** Test to recall that Hive Sanksorak is the holding of House Vylathi. They are publically known for breeding the planet's farmed tardigrades and processing them for meat, but privately, they are known to trade in secrets and dark favours while maintaining deep ties to House Castyx.

The characters are directed to the Vigilites' precinct fortress in Hive Sanksorak to meet with Vigilite Bekker, who is overseeing the captive. She brings the characters to the deepest and most secluded cells in the precinct fortress's confinement block. Most of the other Vigilites are keeping themselves out of the way. Characters can make a **Challenging (+0) Intuition (Human)** Test to understand that these Vigilites are acting cagey, fearful of the alien they have captured and of Inquisition agents stalking their halls — word has gotten out that the characters are visiting.

Bekker introduces the characters to the captive and quickly backs away. The xenos is bound to a chair within their cell, stripped of their armour and weapons. Those have been collected onto a nearby table for examination (see the **Drukhari Kabalite Warrior** stat-block, *Imperium Maledictum*, page 348). Though they may initially appear Aeldari in origin, characters can make a **Difficult (-10) Lore (Xenos)** Test to determine they are the far more aggressive Drukhari. The captive is struggling in their restraints, frothing at the mouth with anger.

The operative knows a handful of Low Gothic phrases to communicate with the characters. However the characters decide to get information out of the captive, they can learn the following:

- Their name is **Grevyth**, and they are a warrior of the Dripping Fang Kabal.
- Grevyth is offering themselves over to the Inquisition. This is an act of the utmost desperation — they know the Inquisition may kill them, but are certain that their Sybarite (commander) **Varon Vipersong** will do far worse as punishment for failure. Varon will not tolerate one of his warriors being captured.
- Grevyth knows that Varon is dealing with a prominent **noble in Hive Sanksorak** and can give the characters her name as a show of faith (**Severin Vy'Gharst**). They also know that the pair have been working together for some time.
- Grevyth knows the location of a **hidden Webway portal** on Voll, one they have been using to conduct operations in and around Hive Sanksorak (no amount of coercion will extract this location out of Grevyth).
- Grevyth can also generally inform the characters about aspects of Drukhari society (their Kabal's capabilities and former missions) but will always steer the conversation back to securing 'asylum' with the Inquisition, even if what that means is long-term captivity.



RESPONSE

The characters may wish to investigate Severin Vy'Gharst to confirm that Grevyth's information is legitimate. The noble has a compound in the mid-hive and oversees several meat-processing manufacturums, with thousands of workers under her thumb (some of whom she has already traded to Varon as captives). Confronting her directly, Vy'Gharst attempts to bargain with the characters. She claims Varon is under her control, not the other way around, and is eager to hand this 'asset' over to the Inquisition. She is terrified and thinks she was too clever to be caught.

Vy'Gharst used Varon to assassinate a few minor members of House Vylathi and assure her ascension within the house, which she characterises as *'petty games the Inquisition surely has no interest in'*. She offers a deal — allow her to remain free, and she can lure Varon in with news of his captured warrior. Then, the characters can deal with the far greater threat, just as Vy'Gharst claims to have always intended. Should she remain free after this encounter, Vy'Gharst secretly informs Varon that the Inquisition await him — the noble is keen to see the characters destroyed to save her own neck. If the characters decide to investigate stealthily or simply kill Vy'Gharst where she stands — not an unreasonable action to take with one who trades in Human lives with xenos — they can retrieve similar information from her personal cogitator.

Regardless of how the players handle Vy'Gharst, word reaches Varon Vipersong (page 156) about his captive warrior, and he will soon attempt to recover or destroy Grevyth and his captors. He will infiltrate and attack the precinct fortress with his Kabalite Warriors. Alternatively, Varon will attack en route if the characters decide to extract or move Grevyth to their own secure location or hand him over to Ordo Xenos operatives.

Beyond silencing Grevyth, Varon would only love a captive Inquisition agent to drag to Commoragh for interrogation, partly for his own pleasure, partly to seek information about his Archon's lost Nightmare Doll. Varon seeks to capture some of the characters in his attack. If he is successful, it would be a monumental effort to recover them — Commoragh is a place of horror and dread, where even the most unflappable of Inquisitors might fear to tread. It may be possible to bargain for their return, perhaps for information that would aid Varon in his ascension. Of course, this would make the party little better than Vy'Gharst.

Truly ingenious characters may wish to set up a double-bluff, using Grevyth as bait to track Varon back to his hidden webway portal, so long as they can trick Grevyth. The Webway portal would be infinitely more valuable to the Inquisition than the life of a single Drukhari lowborn.

RESOLUTION

Varon Vipersong makes for an interesting recurring nemesis, and if you intend to use the scheming Drukhari in this way, you should allow for his escape. He will sacrifice any of his own warriors to ensure he gets away. If Varon succeeded in capturing any Inquisitorial assets or agents, the characters may wish to pursue him in the future.

Without tracking Varon directly or saving Grevyth from execution, securing and shutting down the Webway portal will take more time to locate. Tracking Varon's former movements in and around the hive without directly following him is challenging but ultimately leads back to the Webway portal. If interrogated, Vy'Gharst suspects a few locations where the Webway portal could be and provides the characters with maps and notes. Whether the Inquisition destroys or quarantines the Webway portal is between the players, their Patron, and how their Philosophy would direct them. Regardless, once Varon knows the portal is compromised, he will never use it again.

How the characters wish to deal with Severin Vy'Gharst is up to them. The noble will not go willingly without a fight. The characters may wish to call upon the local Vigilites for aid in capturing her or go over her head and seek help from more prominent figures in House Vylathi to get her to back down. However, the noble house would be more interested in covering up Vy'Gharst's heretical activities to maintain its public image. Vy'Gharst can provide additional information on the Drukhari and Silent Trade through interrogation. Publicly executing him as an example would show the Inquisition's prowess and suppress xenos collaborators and Silent Trade activity on Voll.

In addition to standard XP and solar rewards, the characters' Influence with the Ordo Xenos increases by 1, and the same goes for either the Macharian Vigilites or House Vylathi, depending on how their investigation resolves.

APPENDIX 1: BESTIARY

ACOLYTE HYBRID

These hybrids bear a mix of both Human and Tyranid traits, unmistakably alien, but undeniably born of Human stock. They can pass among the populace only in the most debased and corrupt fringes of mutant-haunted hive cities. Typically they remain hidden until they are needed. Most emerge only on shadowy raids and other covert operations where they go unnoticed.

ACOLYTE HYBRID								
Medium Monstrosity (Genestealer Cult), Elite								
WS	BS	STR	TGH	AG	INT	PER	WIL	FEL
40	30	50	50	60	30	40	60	20
ARMOUR			WOUNDS			CRITICAL WOUNDS		
2			21			1		
INITIATIVE			SPEED			RESOLVE		
10			Normal			3		
Skills: Athletics (Climbing) 65, Melee 60, Melee (Brawling) 70, Presence (Intimidation) 70, Ranged (Pistols) 45, Stealth 60, Stealth (Hide) 75.								
TRAITS								
Genestealer Mutation: Acolyte Hybrids are connected to the Genestealer Broodmind. They gain Advantage on Discipline Tests when within Long Range of a Genestealer Psyker.								
Helping Hand: This creature has an additional limb. They may use it to wield an additional One-handed weapon and use it in combat.								
ATTACKS								
Autopistol: Ranged (Pistols) 40, 5 + SL Damage, <i>Medium Range. Close, Loud.</i>								
Knife: Melee (One-handed) 60, 4 + SL difference Damage. <i>Subtle, Thrown (Short).</i>								
Rending Claw: Melee (Brawling) 70, 4 + SL difference Damage. <i>Penetrating (2), Rend (2).</i>								
Possessions: Cloak, Cult Icons, Makeshift Armour.								

DAEMONHOST

These abominations are a feared entity in the hands of an enemy, yet simultaneously a powerful weapon in an Inquisitor's arsenal. Daemonhosts are horrific creations, a daemon entity bound within a Human host, writing flesh containing the daemon by means of unholy runes and profane rites. They twist the fabric of realspace mere by their presence, and unleash unholy curses and Warp phenomena at their master's bidding.

DAEMONHOST								
Medium Human (Chaos), Elite								
WS	BS	STR	TGH	AG	INT	PER	WIL	FEL
30	30	30	60	30	60	60	40	50
ARMOUR			WOUNDS			CRITICAL WOUNDS		
1 +1d5			18			5		
INITIATIVE			SPEED			RESOLVE		
9			Slow			3*		
Skills: Awareness (Psyniscience) 70, Discipline (Psychic) 50, Fortitude (Endurance) 70, Linguistics (Forbidden) 70, Presence (Intimidation) 55, Psychic Mastery (Telekinesis) 60.								
TRAITS								
Conduit to the Warp: Each time the Daemonhost takes a Critical Wound, roll 1d100 on the Psychic Phenomena Table (<i>Imperium Maledictum</i> , page 164). When the Daemonhost dies, roll 1d100 on the Perils of the Warp Table (<i>Imperium Maledictum</i> , page 165)								
Malefic Warding: The Daemonhost has additional Critical Wounds equal to its Willpower Bonus (included above). It also grants allies within Long Range and who have had their true names inscribed upon its wards or flesh an additional +1d5 Armour.								
Source of Corruption: Witnessing the Daemonhost is Minor Exposure. Make a Challenging (+0) Discipline (Psychic) Test to resist 1 Corruption Point. Every SL reduces the number of Corruption Points gained by 1. Additionally, physical contact with the Daemonhost is Moderate Exposure. Make a Challenging (+0) Fortitude Test to resist 2 Corruption Points. Every SL reduces the number of Corruption Points gained by 1. (Note: <i>Characters in the company of the Daemonhost must make these Tests at least once a day, when witnessing the Daemonhost for the first time in that period.</i>)								
ATTACKS								
Unholy Gaze: Psychic Mastery (Telekinesis) 60, 3 + SL difference Damage. Medium Range. <i>Inflict (Frightened).</i>								
Warp Grasp: Psychic Mastery (Telekinesis) 60, 5 + SL difference Damage. Immediate Range. <i>Inflict (Prone).</i>								
(Note: <i>The above attacks can be opposed by Deny the Witch! (Imperium Maledictum, page 163) like any other Psychic Power.</i>)								
Possessions: Sarcophagus of Chains (the Daemonhost is contained within a shroud of chains and malefic wards. This keeps the Daemonhost docile and easier to transport. Freeing it from these chains takes an Action, at which point it is free to move and act on its own will, and its Resolve increases to 5).								

DISC OF TZEENTCH

Only Tzeentch's greatest champions and sorcerers are worthy of riding these mighty demonic steeds. They allow their riders to fly above battlefields and rain down destruction from on high. The daemon psychically binds itself with its master, allowing the pair to keep nigh-perfect balance and perform daring acrobatic feats.

DISC OF TZEENTCH

Medium (Daemon), Elite

WS	BS	STR	TGH	AG	INT	PER	WIL	FEL
40	10	30	40	30	40	30	40	20
ARMOUR			WOUNDS			CRITICAL WOUNDS		
1d5+1			14			1		
INITIATIVE			SPEED			RESOLVE		
6			Fast, Fly			2		

Skills: Awareness 40, Melee (Brawling) 50.

TRAITS

Bound Mount: The Disc of Tzeentch can Fly, and can carry a rider upon it. Characters bound to it are immune to its *Source of Corruption* Trait, so long as they have at least 2 Corruption.

Lesser Daemon: Whenever the Disc of Tzeentch is attacked, roll 1d5 + 1 to determine its Armour.

Source of Corruption: Witnessing the Disc of Tzeentch is Minor Exposure. Make a **Challenging (+0) Discipline (Psychic)** Test to resist 1 Corruption Point. Every SL reduces the number of Corruption Points gained by 1. Additionally, physical contact with the Disc of Tzeentch is Moderate Exposure. Make a **Challenging (+0) Fortitude** Test to resist 2 Corruption Points. Every SL reduces the number of Corruption Points gained by 1.

ATTACKS

Lamprey Bite: Melee (Brawling) 50, 3 + SL difference Damage.

Possessions: None.

KROOT CARNIVORE

Medium Kroot (Kroot), Troop

WS	BS	STR	TGH	AG	INT	PER	WIL	FEL
30	30	40	30	40	30	30	30	30
ARMOUR			WOUNDS			CRITICAL WOUNDS		
1			12			0		
INITIATIVE			SPEED			RESOLVE		
7			Normal			2		

Skills: Athletics 35, Awareness 35, Melee 45, Ranged 35, Stealth 45.

TRAITS

Ambusher: The Kroot Carnivore can attempt to make a Stealth Test as part of their Movement if their Zone has Cover.

ATTACKS

Kroot Rifle (Shooting): Ranged (Long Guns) 35, 7 + SL Damage, Long Range. *Heavy (4), Loud, Two-handed.*

Kroot Rifle (Blades): Melee (Two-handed) 45, 6 + SL difference Damage. *Heavy (4) Two-handed.*

Possessions: Ragged Light Leathers.

KROOT HOUND

Medium Kroot Hound (Kroot), Troop

WS	BS	STR	TGH	AG	INT	PER	WIL	FEL
40	10	30	30	50	30	40	30	20
ARMOUR			WOUNDS			CRITICAL WOUNDS		
1			12			0		
INITIATIVE			SPEED			RESOLVE		
9			Fast			2		

Skills: Athletics 35, Awareness 50, Melee 45, Stealth 55.

TRAITS

Ambusher: The Kroot Hound can attempt to make a Stealth Test as part of their Movement if their Zone has Cover.

Loping Pounce: A Kroot Hound does not have Disadvantage on Melee and Reflexes Tests to defend itself after making a Charge.

ATTACKS

Ripping Fangs: Melee (Brawling) 45, 4 + SL difference Damage.

Possessions: None.

KROOT CARNIVORE

Kroot Carnivores are naturally skilled trackers and experts in navigating dense jungles and barren wastelands. The Kroot are an genetically adaptable species, capable of taking on the traits of whatever prey they consume. This process is guided by a skilled Kroot known as a Shaper, who ensures favourable traits take hold and less desirable mutations are minimised.

KROOT HOUND

Hailing from the Kroot homeworld of Pech, Kroot Hounds share many common traits with Kroot Carnivores. These ornery beasts often accompany warriors into battle. Possessed of keen senses, fast legs and strong beaks, they hunt in packs and excel at finishing off fleeing foes.

TRAITOR ENFORCER & GUARDSMAN

Frontline Astra Militarum forces are deployed to battlefronts across the Imperium. There they encounter horrible conditions, terrifying foes, and endless death and slaughter. Their faith bolstered by Adeptus Ministorum preachers and the looming shadow of their Commissars, the loyal know their duty — to die for the God-Emperor. Sometimes that is not enough, and whole regiments have turned traitor in the face of overwhelming odds. They take their arms and training with them, only to perish all the same, in service to the Dark Gods.

WRAITHGUARD

These wraithbone constructs are piloted by an amalgam of Aeldari souls. Wraithguard are the most common Aeldari constructs Imperial agents are likely to encounter; standing over twice as tall as any human, these statuesque warriors are incredibly resilient. As their pilots are not flesh and blood, they can carry a host of dangerous weaponry, some capable of tearing apart a target's very soul.

WRAITHGUARD								
Large Aeldari (Construct), Elite								
WS	BS	STR	TGH	AG	INT	PER	WIL	FEL
50	60	60	60	40	30	40	30	10
ARMOUR			WOUNDS			CRITICAL WOUNDS		
5			21			1		
INITIATIVE			SPEED			RESOLVE		
8			Slow			3		
Skills: Awareness 55, Discipline 40, Fortitude 70, Intuition 50, Reflexes (Balance) 50, Tech (Aeldari) 50.								
TRAITS								
Aeldrai War Construct: The Wraithguard is immune to the <i>Blinded</i> , <i>Fatigued</i> , <i>Frightened</i> , and <i>Poisoned</i> Conditions. It is equipped with either a Wraithcannon or D-Scythe, but never both (see Attacks below).								
ATTACKS								
Wraithcannon: Ranged (Long Guns) 60, 19 + SL Damage, Long Range. <i>Heavy (4)</i> , <i>Loud</i> , <i>Penetrating (4)</i> , <i>Rapid Fire (4)</i> , <i>Reliable</i> , <i>Two-handed</i> .								
D-Scythe: Ranged (Long Guns) 60, 10 + SL Damage, Long Range. <i>Heavy (6)</i> , <i>Penetrating (6)</i> . The D-Scythe only deals damage to creatures with souls. It makes no sound and produces no visible damage, causing characters it kills to simply become lifeless husks. Critical Wounds it afflicts cause the resulting body parts to become forever debilitated.								
Wraithbone Fist: Melee (One-handed) 50, 5 + SL difference Damage. <i>Inflict (Prone)</i> .								
Possessions: Aeldari Spirit Stones.								

TRAITOR ENFORCER								
Medium (Heretic), Leader								
WS	BS	STR	TGH	AG	INT	PER	WIL	FEL
35	35	40	40	30	25	40	30	20
ARMOUR			WOUNDS			CRITICAL WOUNDS		
4			15			4		
INITIATIVE			SPEED			RESOLVE		
7			Normal			3		
Skills: Athletics 50, Awareness 50, Fortitude 60, Melee 50, Ranged 50, Ranged (Long Guns) 60, Reflexes 40.								
TRAITS								
Ranked Fire: As an Action, the Traitor Enforcer can command all Traitor Guardsmen in their Zone to fire their Ranged Weapon on their next turn, granting them an additional +1 SL.								
Worthless Lives: When in the same Zone as an Enforcer, Desperate Traitor Guardsmen do not Flee or Surrender.								
ATTACKS								
Lasgun: Ranged (Long Guns) 60, 6 + SL Damage, Long Range. Burst, Loud, Reliable, Two-handed.								
Power Sword: Melee (One-handed) 50, 8 + SL difference Damage. Penetrating (4).								
Possessions: Defaced Astra Militarum Flak Armour, an Entrenching Tool, a set of Survival Gear in a Backpack, a Symbol of the Dark Gods, a Tattered Uniform.								

TRAITOR GUARDSMAN								
Medium (Heretic), Troop								
WS	BS	STR	TGH	AG	INT	PER	WIL	FEL
30	30	40	40	30	25	30	25	20
ARMOUR			WOUNDS			CRITICAL WOUNDS		
4			14			0		
INITIATIVE			SPEED			RESOLVE		
6			Normal			2		
Skills: Lore (Forbidden) 30, Melee 40, Ranged 40.								
TRAITS								
For Chaos!: A Traitor Guardsman can use their action to suffer 1d5 Damage that ignores Armour and gain the Prone Condition to give allies in the same Zone Advantage on their next Attack Test.								
ATTACKS								
Lasgun: Ranged (Long Guns) 40, 6 + SL Damage. Long Range. Burst, Loud, Reliable, Two-handed.								
Knife: Melee (One-handed) 40, 4 + SL difference Damage. Subtle, Thrown (Short).								
Possessions: Defaced Astra Militarum Flak Armour, an Entrenching Tool, scraps of heretical writings, a set of Survival Gear in a Backpack, a Tattered Uniform.								

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