

WARHAMMER
40,000

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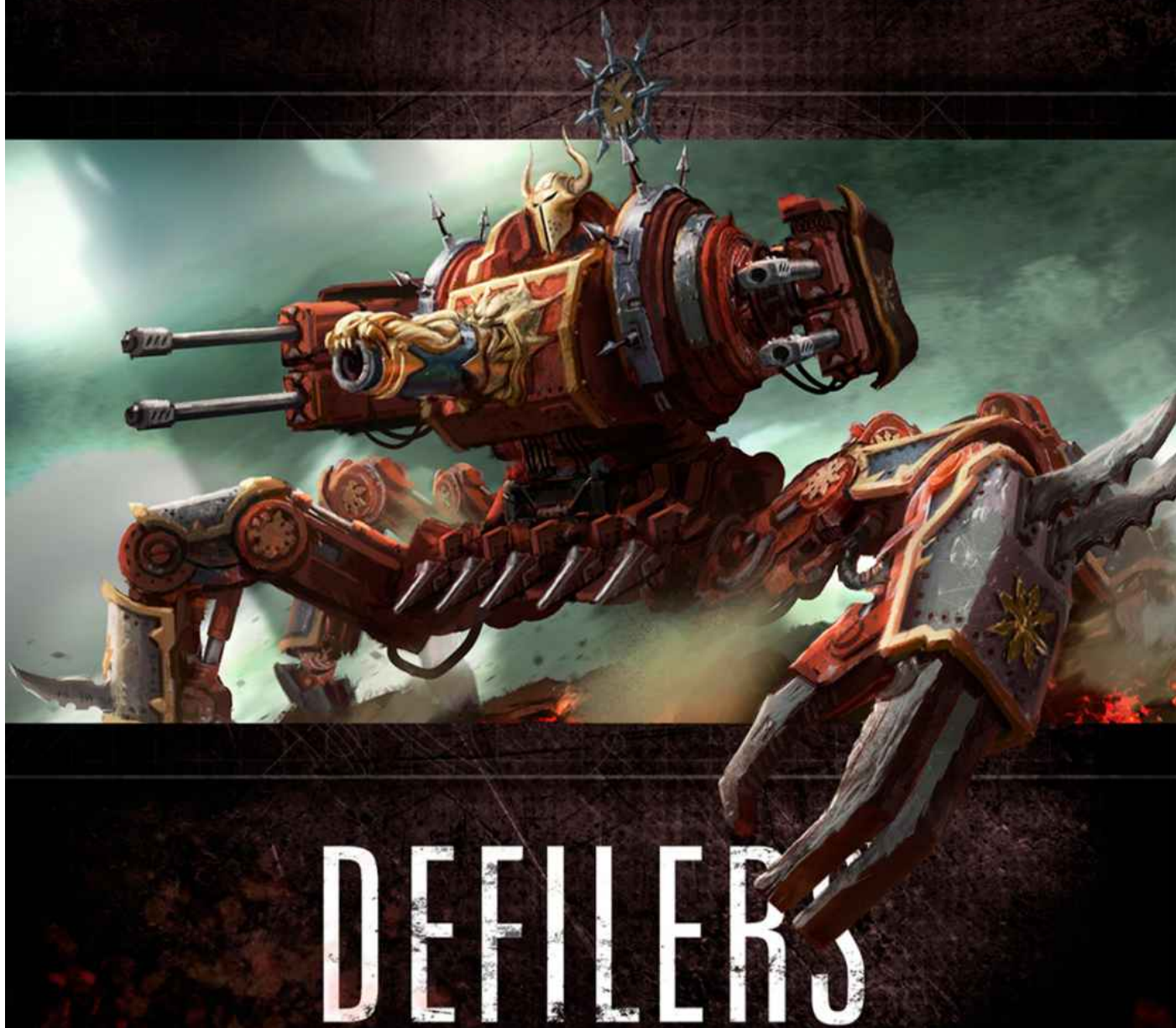
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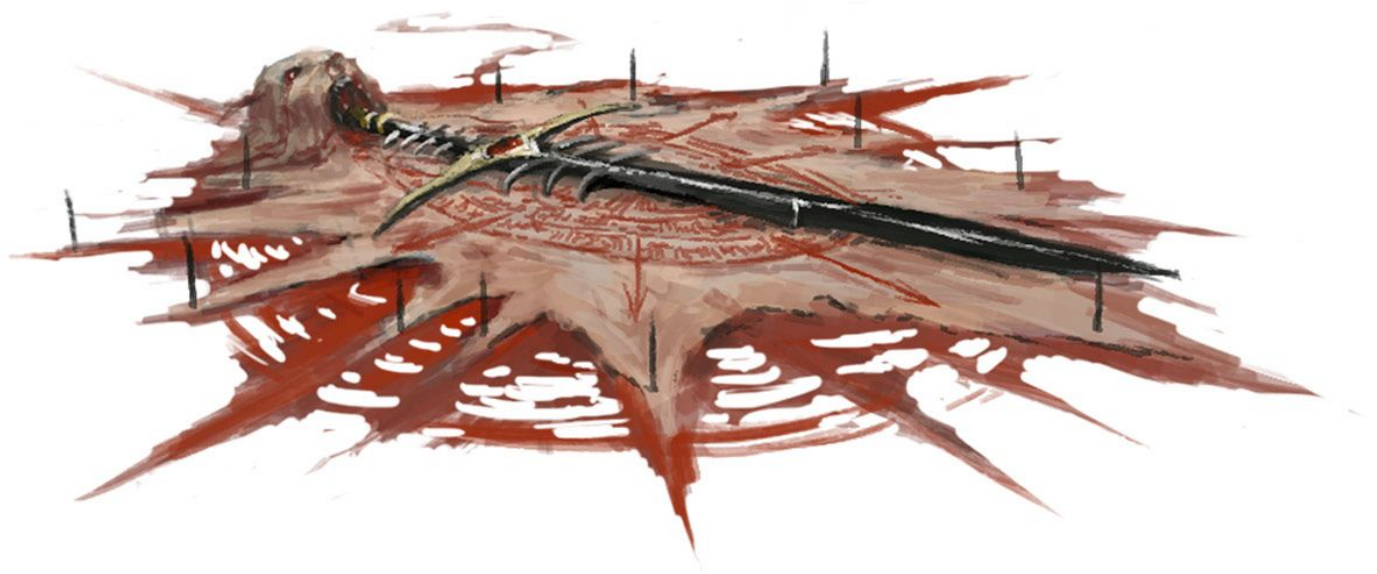
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DEFILERS

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DEFILERS



A SAVAGE THIRST

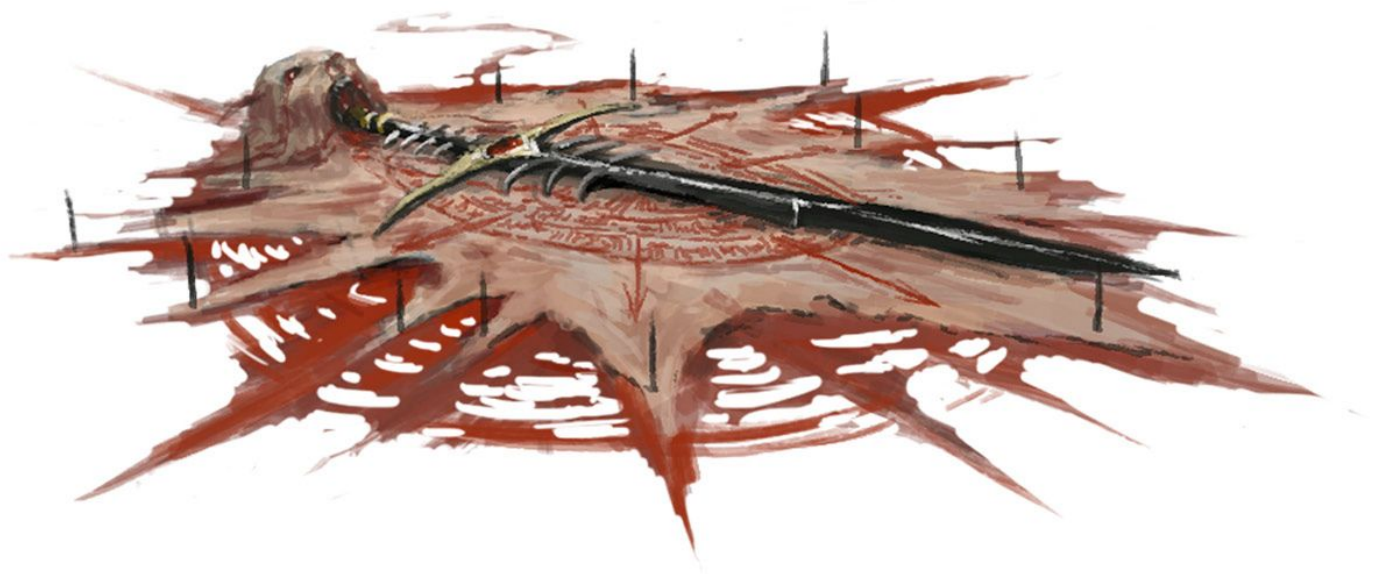
Defilers are enormous Warp-forged Daemon Engines. They are more than capable of crushing a Space Marine Rhino and annihilating the squad within, or pummeling rows of Imperial Guardsmen with unrelenting firepower. For thousands of years the forces of Chaos have used these planet-burning warbeasts to torment Imperial worlds across the galaxy.

One of the most terrifying sights on the battlefield, the Defiler possesses six legs, two of which end in man-sized metal pincers whose monstrous piston-driven grip is the bane of enemy vehicles. At the centre of the Defiler's crab-like metal chassis is a daemoniac torso that harbours potent weaponry. A battle cannon extends out from a metal daemoniac maw, capable of firing vast shells over considerable distances to cause devastation amongst its foes. Its reaper autocannon dispenses crippling firepower into advancing ranks and with its twin-linked heavy flamer the Defiler spouts the fires of the Warp, leaving little but charred corpses in its wake. When it closes with its enemies, the Defiler's mechanical claws enable it to plough through columns of vehicles, rending open the sides of tanks as it goes. With its whirring, needle-sharp blades and whip-like flails, any infantry who miraculously escape the Defiler's soul-crushing pincers will soon be shredded down to a bloody mush.

There is no crew guiding the Defiler's frenzies as it clanks into action. Instead, the war engine is fuelled and guided by the Warp energy of a Daemon, which is bound into the machine by a debased ritual. The Defiler is a slaughter-loving brute and to say it enjoys the carnage of the battlefield is an understatement. This vicious pairing of a Warp-horror and metal fights with sadistic delight to bring carnage wherever it goes. This thirst for violence, combined with its devastating weaponry, ensures the Defiler is a dreaded sight for any loyalist commander. Skilled leaders know that the Defiler is capable of savagery both close-up and afar, and must plan accordingly for the Daemon Engine's storm of violence.



BACKGROUND



FORGED IN HELL

Defilers are constructed in the soul forges, a huge sprawl of sulphurous worlds within the Eye of Terror. Within the Immaterium, millions of the Dark Mechanicum's bleak forge-citadels ring with the abominable industry of Chaos. They are foul places. The warp-distressed spires of tainted foundries vanish up into skies choked with sorcerous smoke. The air on the ground is thick with garbled chanting, hideous pledges and foul incantations that would never be uttered by the sane. The stench of rank magicks lingers in labyrinthine passageways, mingling with the charred odour from protein farms. The corrupted servitors who slave away for their masters never see any light save that of the glow of magma or the spark of sorcery.

Such places are forever spawning new creations of flesh and metal to be unleashed by the forces of Chaos in order to bring terror to the galaxy. On these old worlds, hidden in twisted metal and bone citadels and tainted manufactorums, Warpsmiths labour to create all manner of war engines. Their mechatendrils are forever whirring about them as they perform their forbidden art. And it is the Defiler that stands among the Warpsmiths' most revered and feared creations.

Strictly speaking, the body of a Defiler is not manufactured from anything new, for the obscure processes of the Warpsmiths reconstitute it from Warp-tainted metal wrenched from other constructs. The Defilers' ancient slab-sided metal panels have been known to possess the runic signatures of ancient Forge Worlds that fell during the Horus Heresy, and of Tech-Priests who had turned traitor. It is said by those within the Council of the Ordo Malleus that many such panels, as well as other elements of the Defiler's technology, are originated from Dreadnoughts, perverted by the hands of Chaos and distorted by the Warp. During this process the Warpsmith may affix all manner of weaponry to the construct. As such, Defilers have been seen crawling across the battlefield armed with havoc launchers, power scourges, power fists and huge twin-linked heavy flamers. But central to the war engine is the battle cannon, which delivers death to all corners of a battlefield.



TO BIND A DAEMON

Much of the war engine's actual construction remains incomprehensible to Imperial scholars. The only true knowledge that exists of its construction is of the vile ritual performed to infuse the metal shell with a Daemon.

Binding a warp-horror to a Defiler is a complex process. To summon a Daemon, or even a trapped soul, from deep within the Immaterium requires a flesh sacrifice. Offerings can come in many forms, but for a sufficiently brutal Defiler to be manufactured, a victim of profound might is necessary.

It is a warrior of the Adeptus Astartes that a Warpsmith most frequently demands is brought into his hellish foundry, for the Ruinous Powers value these offerings more highly than sacrifices of mere mortals. A prize of such strength is not easily won, and many followers of the Dark Gods will fall before a living Space Marine can be brought in captivity from the slaughter fields and into the dark heart of the soul forges.

After a Warpsmith has constructed the physical shell of the Defiler, the barely breathing Space Marine, stripped of his power armour, is bound with runic-chains to the war engine. In the red glow of magma-furnaces and the fug of toxic fumes, the Space Marine's black carapace is violated by arcane weaponry and his blood oozes across the chassis of the inert Defiler. Base litanies are chanted, forbidden sorceries set free upon the victim; the loyalist's hearts are stopped according to the whims of the Warpsmith. The death of the Space Marine heralds the birth of the Defiler.

The summoning of a Daemon is a precise art, but it is not unknown for a ritual to go disastrously wrong. A misplaced vowel within a litany can result not only in the instant death of the sacrifice, but of those around him. The infamous Warpsmith Draxar once invited a particularly powerful Daemon into the soul forge on the Daemon world of Phanomia, but failed to speak the words of binding correctly. The summoned Warp-horror materialised within the flesh of its Space Marine offering, and burst free from its sorcerous restraints. It then proceeded to slaughter Draxar as well as dozens of menials with the Warpsmith's own power axe, before vanishing back into the Immaterium.

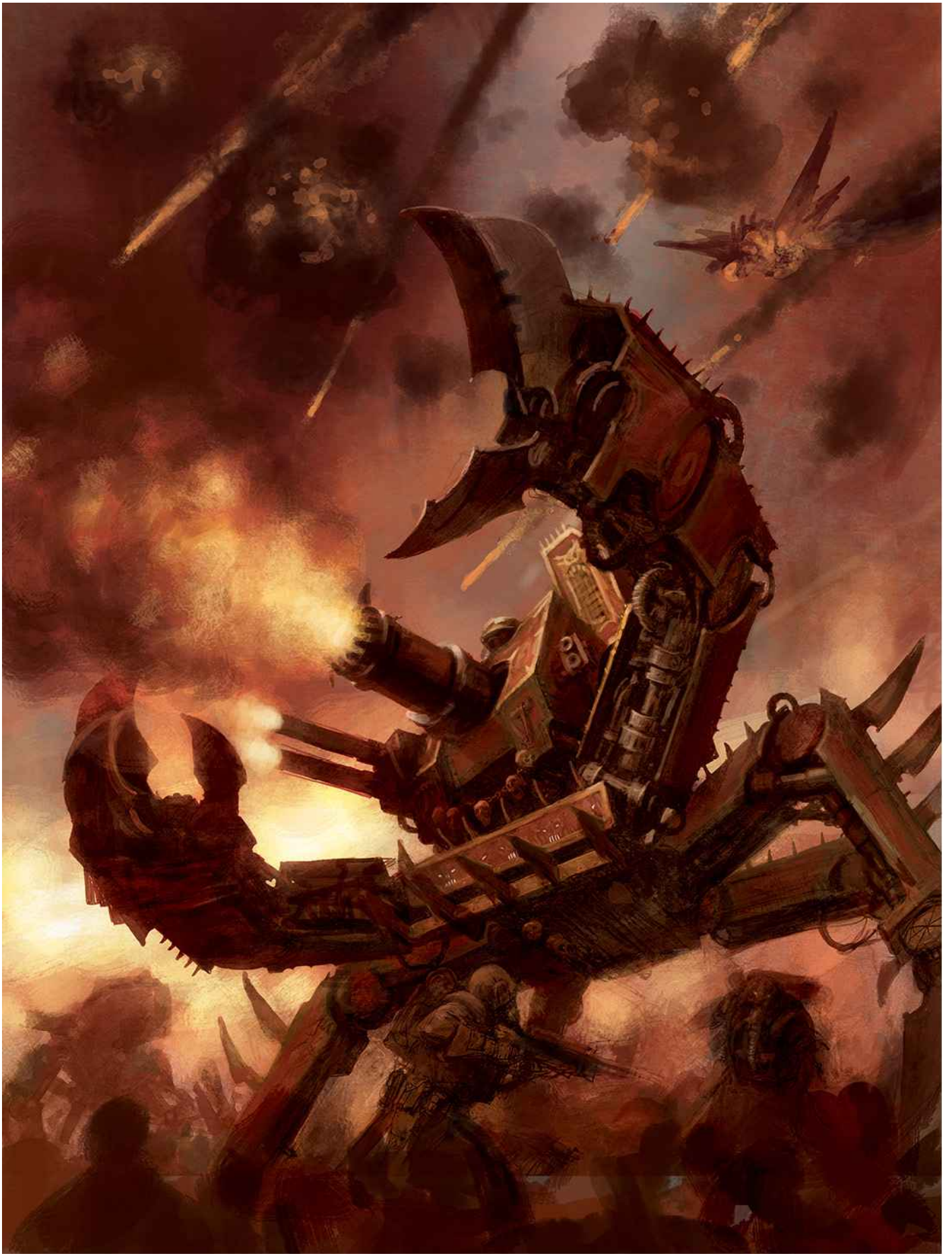
A Warpsmith will know that his ritual is complete when the war engine rises from its dormant form and snags against its glowing chains like a primordial beast. The Defiler's exhausts roar with defiance. The machine beast thirsts for slaughter. But the Daemon Engine remains bound by its runic reins, kept captive to the Warpsmith amidst the smoke of the forge-citadels, waiting to be used in a dark bargain or in dark corners of Chaos battleships.

The Defiler is never dormant. Chaos fiends continue to goad it, riling the Daemon within into a heightened state of fury, until finally it is time for the Defiler to stampede into combat alongside the forces of Chaos. Only then can it quench its thirst for carnage.

No matter which warband or Legion the Defiler fights alongside, each Daemon Engine becomes an integral part of that force. Irrespective of the different fighting styles of the various forces of Chaos, the Defiler is much sought after by Lords and Sorcerers, and is found in significant numbers among the traitor ranks. Those who fight for Khorne's favour, such as the World Eaters, are ever keen to harvest more skulls for the Blood God, and they frequently take advantage of the Defiler's hideous blood lust. The Iron Warriors fortify their dark frontiers with many Daemon Engines, and among them are numerous Defilers, always thirsting for the counter-attack. The Death Guard, too, deploy Defilers across the galaxy, each Daemon Engine capable of quickly eliminating obstacles that deny the spread of Nurgle's maladies.

Out of a curious respect for the warp-horror within a war engine, the Traitor Legions and warbands may choose to issue Defilers with a name. Sometimes this is based upon the Daemon who inhabits the machine, or some archaic ritual within the ranks of Chaos, but more commonly it is a base declaration of what the Daemon Engine does. In other instances, an Imperial Guard regiment who face the Defiler's onslaught will have given it a designation. Inquisitorial records detail atrocities conducted by Defilers throughout the ages, which are attributed to an eclectic array of names, including the Alpha Legion's 'Hellpincer', the Purge's Rot Crusher and the infamous Red Corsairs' 'Engine of Mael'x'.





THE RISE OF THE DAEMON ENGINE

The first Defilers were created as a result of a pact between the Dark Mechanicum and Abaddon the Despoiler before his First Black Crusade. It is said that as part of Abaddon's preparations, he quested to find an array of war engines to bring the Imperium to its knees. He desired constructs that had never before walked across a battlefield. Abaddon's need for new and horrific machines brought him to Xana II, which lay deep within the Eye of Terror. There, the renegades of the Adeptus Mechanicus pledged their allegiance to Abaddon's cause in exchange for rare artifacts, blood offerings and menials. As the Despoiler dismissed his dark servants out into realspace to fulfill their requests, the renegades of the Dark Mechanicum forged new creations within their citadels.

Some of the oldest Defilers became legends within the slaughter-fields of Abaddon's First Black Crusade. Though the Black Legion marched to war alongside countless daemonic war machines, few inspired as much terror as the scuttling packs of Defilers.

In 781.M31 the people of Urthwart were to experience the full force of this new horror. Interpreters of the Emperor's Tarot foretold of a new iron monster that would come from the heavens.

Soon a Chaos fleet entered into orbit, blackening the skies with their baroque ships. Numerous Cadian Chimeras rolled out across the landscape, carrying troops to reinforce important positions and defend key cities. A contingent of the Imperial Fists 4th and 5th Companies made planetfall shortly before the Chaos fleet's arrival to help prevent the planet's demise.

The armies of Urthwart were at the mercy of an assault from a Black Legion warband that sought to bring nothing but mayhem to the world. Defilers churned up the waves of advancing infantry with withering gunfire, decimating bunkers and gun emplacements. Their far-reaching shells pulverised the reinforcements before they could get into the thick of the action. Whenever the forces of the Imperium fought back and a stalemate seemed to be reached on the battlefield, it was the uncanny speed and terrifying ferocity of the Defilers that broke the deadlock. The frenzied Daemon machines would surge forwards with an unnatural thunder, peeling open the metal hulls of tanks, and even dueling Dreadnoughts in jaw-dropping clashes.

After four days of combat, it took the full force of the Imperial Fists 4th and 5th Companies to hold back the warband on Urthwart and force a retreat back to the orbiting ships. Eventually the Chaos fleet vanished back into the Eye of Terror, but the legend of the Defiler had been forged in battle.

Abaddon the Despoiler was so impressed with the Daemon Engines' devastating desire for blood and slaughter, and the amount of carnage that they could cause with relatively little support, that he demanded more be constructed within the soul forges. As the various traitor manufactorums hammered out even more Defilers, the Daemon Engines became aligned with different warbands and Legions – not only Abaddon's traitor force. New pacts were forged in the darkness. The arcane knowledge of the Daemon Engine soon spread throughout the soul forges, and Wargmiths within thousands of Dark Citadels learnt of the debased arts of creating a Defiler.



THE LUST FOR SLAUGHTER

By early M32, the Defiler had become a mainstay of the forces of the Chaos Space Marines. warbands used them to lay waste to Imperial fortifications in lightning-fast raids. Legions who fought to destroy the hated Adeptus Astartes fielded the Defiler in some of the most protracted and violent conflicts since the Horus Heresy.

One of the earliest of these atrocities involved a warband of the Word Bearers. A host of traitor warriors assaulted an Imperial fleet as it brought military aid into Segmentum Tempestus against Abaddon's Second Black Crusade. Though the Word Bearers had formed no specific allegiance with the Despoiler at the time, they nevertheless routed the fleet. After their own battleships destroyed Imperial vessels, the Word Bearers boarded five cruisers, unleashing Defilers on each of them. The Daemon Engines ripped through the passageways, crushed the crew members or torched them as they tried to flee. Ultimately the Defilers made quick work of the ships' inhabitants. Before they disembarked to the Chaos vessels, the Word Bearers sent the ships spiraling back into the rest of the Imperial fleet, and the void of space filled with explosions.



INFAMOUS DEFILERS

Although countless Defilers have been unleashed alongside numerous warbands and Legions, certain Daemon Engines have become notorious and their vile deeds have been recorded. Over the millennia, those infamous Defilers have fought their way into Imperial records.





GHOSTCRUSHER

Ghostcrusher became legend due to the horrific deeds enacted on Craftworld Ila-Manesh. In 326.M33 a huge warband of the Night Lords descended from the darkness of the Warp on a mission of revenge. Their aim was simply to eradicate the world's spirit stones, many of which had previously been stolen from the crone world of Aesyl-Sar. While delivering justice for this past Eldar sin, the Night Lords unleashed several Defilers. One of these, Ghostcrusher, stood out as a particularly savage machine beast. The Daemon Engine spearheaded a Night Lords assault upon the Shrine of Eldanesh, incinerating ancient tomes, crushing sacred totems, destroying spirit stones and burning the Guardians who attempted to prevent the desecration. So thorough were the Night Lords in their assault on Ila-Manesh that they left the craftworld a tomb, with no artifacts and no living Eldar remaining.



ENGINE OF PLAGUE

On the populous hive-world of Nucon VI, the Engine of Plague became the great enabler for the Death Guard to spread the putrid diseases of Nurgle. The world remained heavily defended by a robust Planetary Defense Force and a Cadian regiment, but the Engine of Plague, along with four other Defilers, tore apart tanks and gutted soldiers in key positions, gradually grinding down the Imperial forces. The Engine of Plague and its cohort eventually attracted the attention of the bulk of the planet's forces, wallowing in slaughter while their traitor masters infiltrated behind enemy lines. Within days the filth of Nurgle had spread to over a hundred billion people on Nucon VI.



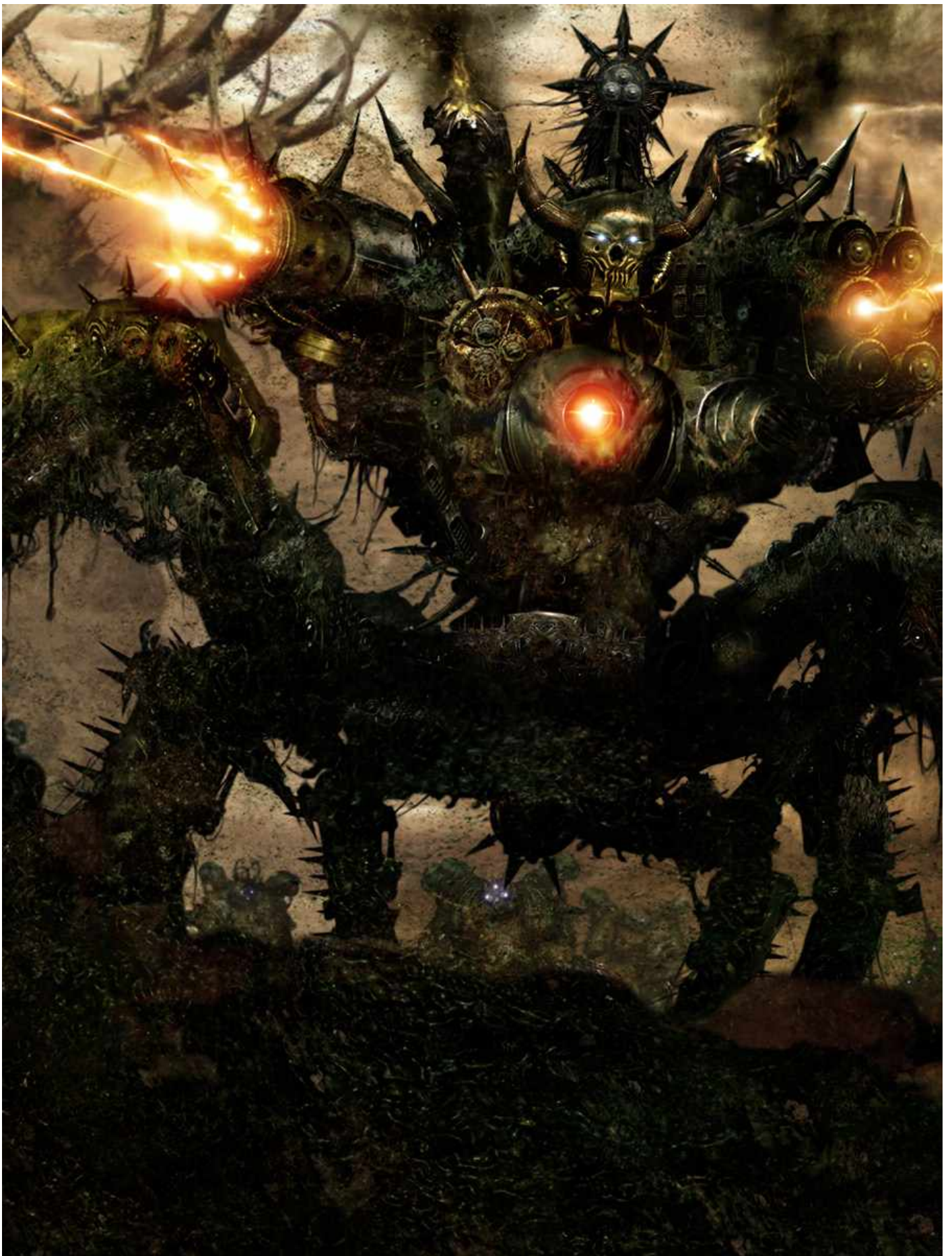
ME'KALLAR THE INSANE

Me'kallar the Insane was considered by Imperial scholars to be one of the most ferocious Defilers ever created. In 899.M34 it was at the forefront of a savage attempt to destroy the Blood Tigers' fortress spire on the jungle moon of Trygon II. A warband fleet belonging to the Tormented erupted out of the Warp in a rapid deployment. Twenty Defilers were among the spearhead on the ground, including Me'kallar the Insane. The Daemon Engine burned great swathes through the forest so that the Tormented could bring their war to the foot of the fortress monastery's outer walls. While the Blood Tigers were forced to focus their efforts on the horror below, Heldrakes tormented the structure further up the fortress spire.

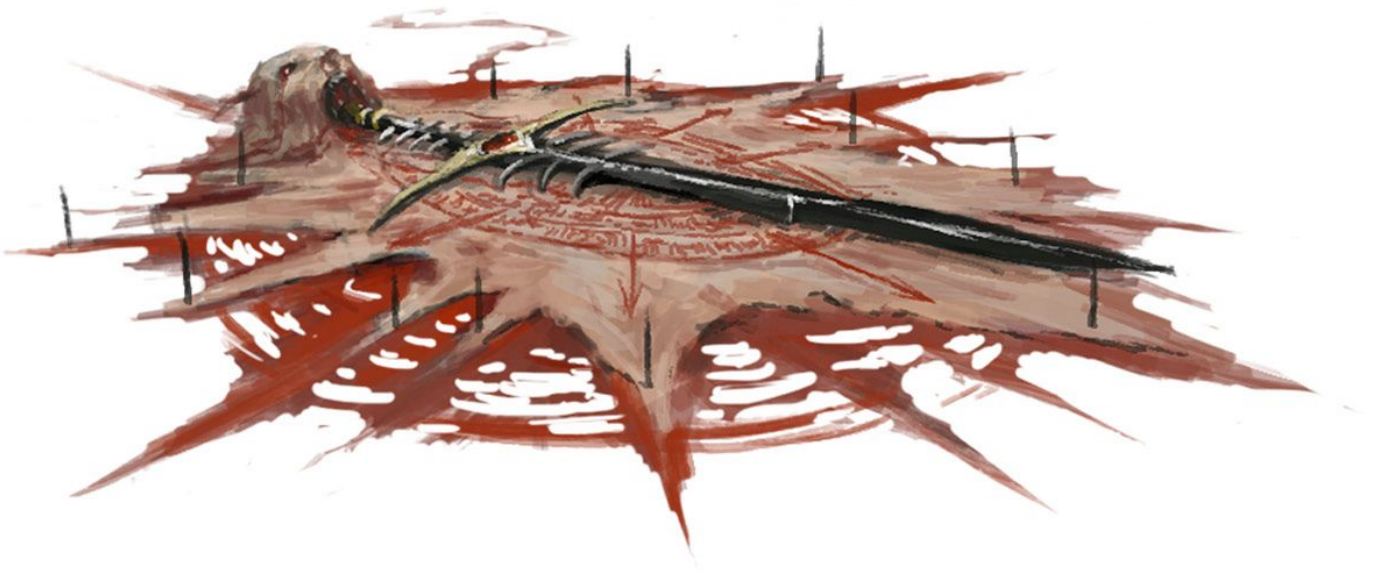
Gunfire raged through the skies while great gouts of blood and flame soaked the humid jungle down below. Only one foe from the Warp managed to breach the armored walls, and that was Me'kallar the Insane. The Defiler wreaked havoc inside the fortress monastery, crushing whole squads of Blood Tigers. Dreadnoughts finally reduced the Daemon Engine to smoldering wreckage, but not before it had caused significant damage.

Only after Me'kallar's fall did the forces of the Tormented finally retreat into the Immaterium, and the Blood Tigers were left to count their dead.



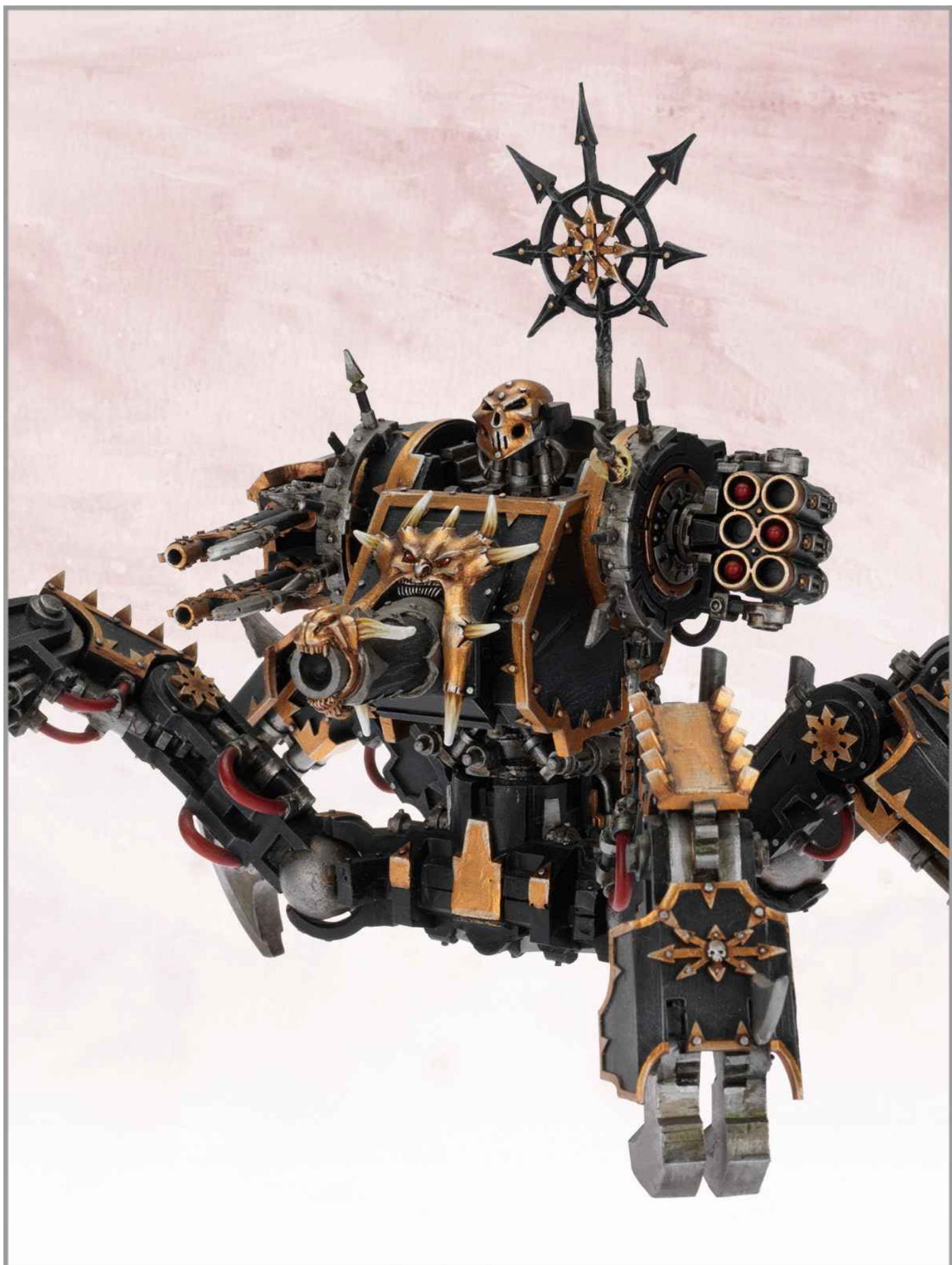


MINIATURE SHOWCASE





Defilers are unstoppable war engines that harbour hate-filled Daemons within their metal shells



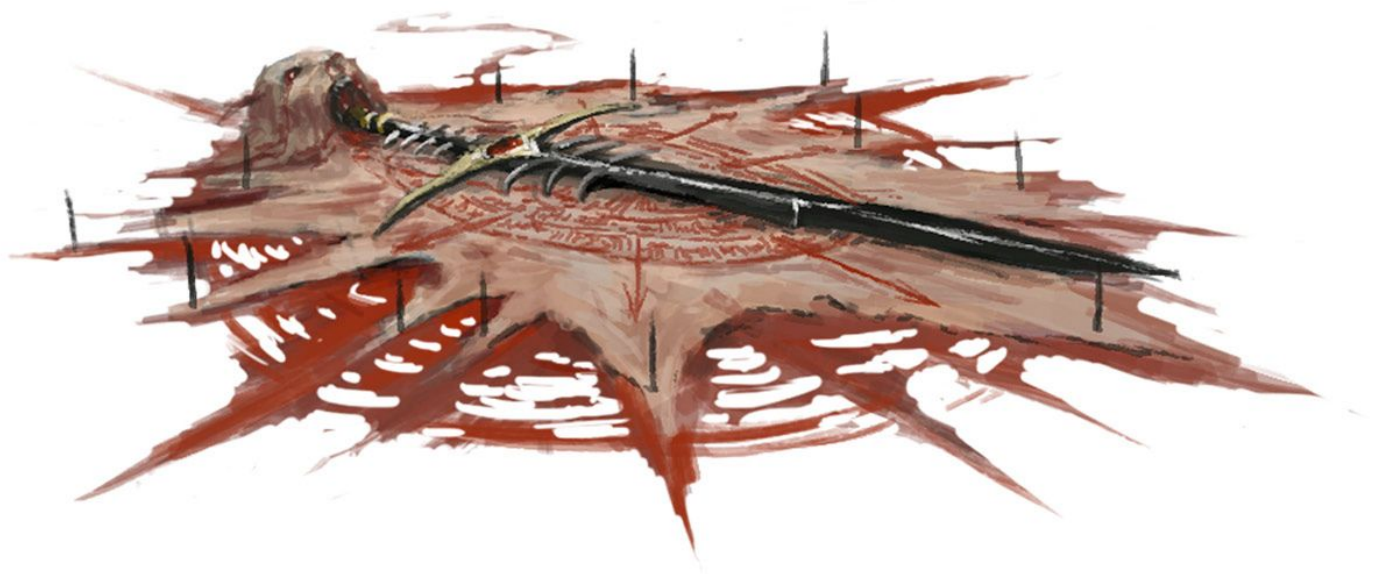
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EYE OF TERROR™

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EYE OF TERROR



The Eye of Terror is the largest and most well known Warp rift in the galaxy. It is a permanent tear between reality and what lies beyond...

Like a weeping sore on the verge of eruption, this galactic phenomenon has blighted space and led travelers to their doom for over 10,000 years. It is the most dangerous place in the known galaxy. At the centre of the swirling Eye is absolute Chaos – a whirlpool gateway into the realm of the Chaos Gods.

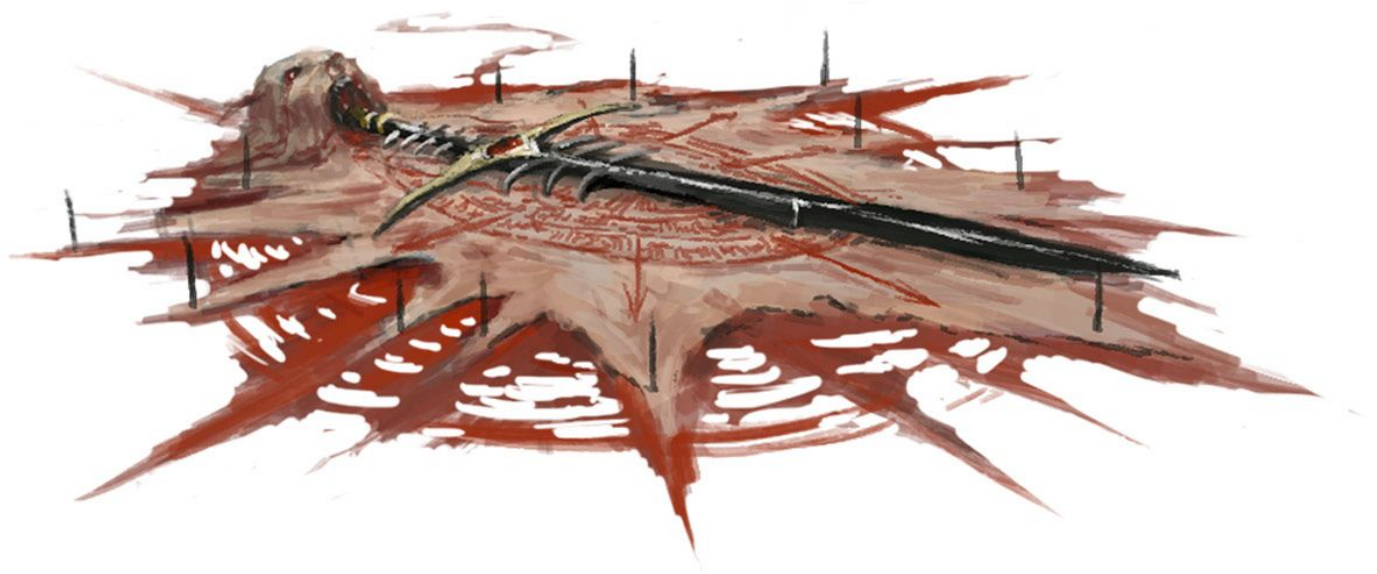
From a distance, the Eye of Terror stains the surrounding stars in a disturbing blend of colours. From Cadia, bulwark planet of the Imperium, it can be seen clearly in the sky even in daylight. If the viewer is stout hearted enough to gaze in that direction, it appears to them as a pulsing ocean of sickly purple. From Fenris, the icy home world of the Space Wolves, the Ocularis Terribus (as it is known in High Gothic) seems like a hideous wound gnawing at the night sky. From Terra, if magnification could see past the pall of atmospheric pollution, or penetrate the ring of defence stations and free-floating debris, the Eye of Terror would be seen as a small smudge, distant, but glowering with a menacing malignancy. Even at this vast range, it is nauseating to look upon that throbbing light. Many claim that staring too long into that hateful abyss can lead to nightmares, blindness or worse.

‘The Eye of Terror is a realm of madness and despair, where skies weep blood, ancient stars burn in multi-coloured flares and the whims of the Dark Gods of Chaos hold sway. Synonymous with discord, terror, ancient secrets and insanity, no other place in the galaxy fills the mind with such dread and foreboding.’

- Extract from the *Galaxia Daemonica Perpetua* of Jerome
[By order of Inquisitor Dalma, 453.M35]



BACKGROUND



ORIGINS

The Eye of Terror was not always there. The epicenter of that swirling mass was once the heart of the realm of the Eldar – an ancient race that had dominated the galaxy for untold aeons. Who knows when their long and steady downfall began, but some ten thousand years ago, their corruption reached its zenith. By their actions and excesses, a horrifying entity had coalesced within the Warp. At last, it burst forth with its birth-scream...

It was an unimaginably foul and sickening thing that the Eldar had created; a dark reflection of what was once pure and noble. Too late, the Eldar realised their fate, too late did they realise what their own growing perversity had nurtured within the eddies of the Warp.

The Eldar had given birth to the Dark God that would be called Slaanesh – or as the Eldar whisper, 'She Who Thirsts'.

When that foul divinity gained consciousness, psychic howls ripped across both the Warp and realspace alike. With a roar of supernatural life, Slaanesh claimed its birthright. The psychic implosion tore the universe, killing untold numbers. Hundreds of billions of Eldar alone were slain, and not a single one of their kind escaped the feel of the claws of this foul new god ripping at their minds and souls.

Warp space convulsed and a cosmic hurricane raged across the galaxy. Psykers of all races felt the pain, many dying in twisting convulsions of madness. A rift in realspace tore open, shredding the Eldar realm of old and creating a gaping lesion where dark forces still spin, a place where the Warp and material space blend. Bathed in their corrupting waves of Warp energies, Daemons cavorted openly in this new zone of horrors.

As Slaanesh joined the pantheon of Chaos Gods, a new era was begun.

The Warp, which for thousands of years had been a roiling storm-riven realm, was suddenly becalmed. It was as if, having spent its energies making the hole, the Immaterium had accomplished its work and began a period of recuperation. Races that had been unable to travel the vast distances between the stars suddenly found they were able to access the Warp once again. With the long brooding Warp storms now gone from Terra, the Emperor of Mankind was able to launch his Great Crusade – the long-forestalled attempt to reclaim all those far distant colonies founded during Humanity's lost Age of Technology.

In this way, it was the birth of the Eye of Terror that opened the door for Mankind to rise up and take the place of the Eldar as the ruling empire amongst the stars.

BANE OF WARP TRAVEL

With the Warp storms gone, Mankind again took to the Immaterium, travelling to the far edges of the galaxy once more. They were guided through the treacherous Warp by the steady beam of the Emperor's Astronomican. Navigators use this beacon as a fixed point – a compass that allows them to find sense within the illogical maelstrom. Without its steady beam, they could not traverse the Warp nor steer spacecraft through journeys of thousands of light years in impossibly quick times.

Travel near Warp rifts is dangerous, for they can distort the Astronomican. As the largest of all such holes in reality, the Eye of Terror is the deadliest threat of all, for it shatters the psychic continuity of the Astronomican. Surging waves of energy pulse up to a thousand light years from the Eye's centre, sweeping whole fleets or sectors off course or wiping them from existence in a flash.

So powerful is the Eye of Terror that Navigators try to avoid even turning their third eye towards that dreadful place. It is a nightmare region where nature and physics are overruled and madness reigns triumphant. Those that pass too closely and survive speak of skies burning with fire, of planets seething with seas of blood, disc-shaped worlds, heavenly bodies that writhe with screaming faces and features so tormented that the viewer would choose oblivion rather than remember that hideous sight.

As terrifying as travel near the Eye of Terror seems, it is nonetheless the destination of some.

A REFUGE OF EVIL

The Eye of Terror is known to be home to many of the darkest evils of the galaxy. It has been the abode of Daemons since the Warp first burst through into realspace. The worlds in that region were utterly consumed by Chaos, turned into nightmare realities. Many of these were originally Eldar planets, now known as crone worlds. They are now the domain of the Ruinous Powers, as are new realms that were formed, or brought through the Warp during the Eye of Terror's horrific creation. There, rivalries and grudges come to a head as opposing powers seek prime locations within the swirling mass. Armies of Daemons and their mortal allies fight bloody battles that rage back and forth, each of the shifting sides seeking supremacy.

At the centre of the Eye of Terror, the powers of the Warp run strongest, meaning the laws of space, time and reality do not apply. Some worlds are flat, floating planes spinning in the ether, others are surrounded by fireballs, while tiered worlds rise up, supported by intertwining pillars. No one can say how these realities exist, save that the pure power of Chaos washes over them and has made them so. Those worlds most steeped in chaotic energy are the abodes of Daemons, and are considered outlying colonies of the Warp, while the outermost planets upon the fringes of the Eye of Terror cling to more of the physical laws of the galaxy. In the centre, time not only does not flow, but also does not exist as a concept, save for when such trivialities might please the Dark Gods themselves.

On the world of Kathalon, in the Eye of Terror, the Bloodthirster Vangash'hagash holds sway; his world is a great burning lake criss-crossed with arching bridges of brass and bone. It is a world of martial glory, of challenges unending. The World of Immortal Sorrows, once at the heart of the ancient Eldar civilisation, is now a crone world where the Daemons of the Dark Prince boil the souls of that fallen race in rivers of tears. They drink of their lamentation, suckling at the sorrows of the mortal races.

Because of the anarchic whims of Chaos itself, the swirling mass of the Eye of Terror grows, spins and contracts of its own accord – obeying no laws that are understood by mortals. In times when the Chaos Gods wax strong, the raw forces of the Immaterium flow in surging tides, creating Warp storms that lash outwards to send ripples of madness crashing across the galaxy. When the Dark Powers wane, the laws of reality assert themselves more deeply into the swirls of the Eye. New planets, star systems or inexplicable regions of madness can appear, blink out of existence, or return to where they once were in ages past.

But the Eye of Terror is not just the abode of Daemons and their Warp-ilk. As it is a mix of realspace and Warp-driven powers, so too are its denizens a mix of mortal and Warp-spawned beings. After the Horus Heresy, the remnants of the Chaos Space Marine Legions were driven back from Holy Terra. Many sought shelter from the vengeful Imperial forces by retreating to the one place where they knew that they would not be pursued – the Eye of Terror. Many of the Legions claimed home worlds there, moulding them to their own perverse designs. They joined the eternal struggle in the Warp – fighting amongst themselves or taking up sides in the ongoing daemonic battles. At times, they will cease from internal strife to launch a bloody raid back into realspace – a scourge to the Imperium. In very rare cases, one individual will rise up who can unite the disparate factions into a more formidable force – an unstoppable army made of Daemon hordes, Traitor Legions, and mutant rabbles. Abaddon the Despoiler is the most infamous of these – the Warmaster of Chaos.

These forces are joined by the refuse of the galaxy – mutants, renegades and cultists find their way into the Eye of Terror, or die trying. The greatest number of these refugees from the realm of law and light are slain – killed for the amusement, pleasure or some other satisfaction of the deadly denizens of the Eye. Only the strongest and most able survive long enough to become enthralled – fighting alongside Daemons or Traitor Legions for a time, while their usefulness lasts.

CADIAN GATE

The tides of both space and the Warp are roiled by the presence of the Eye of the Terror. As such, travel to and from that deadly region is incredibly difficult. There are many routes, all of which shift and fluctuate save one. The one and only reliable route to and from the Eye of Terror is the area of space surrounding the planet Cadia. Known as the Cadian Gate, it is the only place a sizable fleet can enter or exit the Eye of Terror, and as such, it has become one of the most strategically vital worlds in the Imperium.

Cadia is a fortress world – a heavily guarded planet that is extremely well defended. Its entire population is geared for war and its factories and manufactorum churn out munitions, weapons, tanks and soldiers at a prodigious rate. It is perhaps the most vital location in the entire Imperium, outside of Terra, and the military strength based there is unfeasibly vast. Its entire population belongs to one branch or another of the Imperial military, the most famous of which are the Cadian Shock Troopers raised for service within the Imperial Guard. The Shock Troopers are considered some of the finest soldiers in the entire Imperium, even earning the respect of the legendary Adeptus Astartes.

The original human colonies of Cadia were destroyed by cyclonic torpedoes, for its population had been tainted due to its close proximity to the Chaos-spewing Eye of Terror. It was resettled and refortified so that late in the 31st Millennium it was ready to stand against the first of the Black Crusades. Although ultimately victorious, thanks in large part due to newly raised Space Marine Chapters and the Legio Titanicus, the early defenses proved undermanned, and the Cadian Gate was further reinforced. Since those earliest of days, the planet's fortifications have been constantly upgraded, rebuilt and improved. So now, every city is a fortress, with the streets and buildings fashioned with great cunning by the finest military architects.

'Any Cadian who can't field-strip his own lasgun by the age of ten was born on the wrong planet.'

- Anon

If any major Chaos incursions wish to plague the rest of the galaxy, they must first pass through the defenses of the Cadian Gate.

WARS WITHIN THE EYE

The Eye of Terror seethes with perpetual warfare. It is an ongoing realm of battle where Daemon fights Daemon and Traitor Legionnaires renew ancient feuds or start whole new ones with Chaos Space Marine Renegades. Which of the powers holds sway is always in flux – for any victory is temporary, while the losing side huddles in hasty alliances or rebuilds in some elusive eddy of the Warp-flow.

But the forces of Chaos do not just fight each other within the Eye of Terror. Throughout its history, other races have dared to launch their own assaults into that stronghold of madness. The Eldar have attempted many forays that sought to recover lost relics or spirit stones from the crone worlds. Few return from such ventures, and those that do will not speak of the atrocities they have witnessed.

A tribe of Orks, led by their dangerously unhinged warlord – the self-styled Daemon-Killa, plunged deep into the Eye of Terror. They made their mark by bringing battle to several half-real planets devoted to Khorne's rivals. The Ork warlord proved unstoppable until his Waaagh! crash-landed on a flesh planet belonging to a mighty Daemon Prince high in the standing of Khorne. The Warboss' vast horde was eventually slain to an Ork by the wrathful Daemon Prince and his minions, but his joy in the murderous spectacle was such that Khorne himself ensured the greenskin crusade rose once more the very next dawn. Now, the Orks repeat the fight over and over again, for the Blood God was so impressed by their limitless battlulust that he took the Orks into his own domain. In the shadow of the Brass Citadel, his elite Bloodletter generals battle against Daemon-Killa's undying horde on a daily basis.

For its part, Imperial forces have been banned from travel past the Cadian Gate – but there are many tales of those who have passed through into the realm of Chaos. From the legends of Leman Russ himself charging headlong into the Eye, to the whispered rumours that the Forgotten Wars of the Dark Angels once took them beyond the veil, there are dozens of unconfirmed reports, and many more half-truths.



Galaxia Daemonica Perpetua

The Eye of Terror is the largest refuge of the followers of the Old Gods, the birthplace of hideous Daemons: an anarchic abode of monstrous entities who eternally crave for dominance of the material world. From its shifting bounds, the Traitor Legions strike out in their countless raids and forays into Imperial space. Emerging from its tumultuous reaches, armies spill forth to enslave and destroy the Emperor's realm, in a war that has been waged for thousand of years without mercy or abatement. Constant vigil must be kept, for many times have the Emperor's enemies slipped past like assassins in the night, leaving countless dead and whole worlds ravaged before they slink back to their nightmarish fastnesses within the Eye of Terror.

Of all approaches to the Eye, the area around the world of Cadia is most navigable, although still treacherous and uncertain. Why this might be so has thus far evaded all explanation, but many attribute the effect to the numerous alien artefacts that lie in the wilderness space around the region; or perhaps it is the ancient constructions on Cadia itself that somehow quiet the violent torrents of the Warp. Known as the Cadian Gate, this area is the most closely guarded of all regions in the Imperium, save the sacred ground of Terra itself. Orbital stations numbering in their hundreds hang in the depths of space and five thousand watch stations and listening posts can be found in planetary orbits and on otherwise deserted moons and asteroids, every eye and ear searching for some omen, some sign of impending doom and disaster.

Fully a thousand regiments of Imperial Guard stand at constant readiness to respond to any incursion and no fewer than ten Space Marine Chapters maintain their fortress monasteries close by to watch for and strike at any threat. Three Titan Legions wait for the call to arms and untold vessels of Battlefleet Obscuras constantly make patrols and sweeps of the thousands of nearby star systems.

And yet, for all this watchfulness, Chaos cannot be held at bay. Sometimes, lone vessels strike at Imperial shipping routes; treacherous agents slip through to spread their 'wisdom' and creeds to any unfaithful who will listen, whilst warbands constantly harry the Emperor's forces. Most terrifying of all are the Black Crusades, when some ruthless leader rises from the ranks of the Traitors, uniting them in their

unholy purpose. Pacts with dark beings are made to bring Daemons forth by archaic, corrupted sorceries. These hosts have broken through the wards placed to deflect them, killing and maiming all that lay in their path, reveling in the unholy desecration, wanton savagery and bitter revenge. For every fleet and army turned back or destroyed, another ten are gathering, waiting for the time when the vigil lapses, when the guards grow weary and the guns are untended. May that time never come – for if it does, it will be the doom of Humanity.

- Extract from the Galaxia Daemonica Perpetua of Jerome
[By order of Inquisitor Dalma, 453.M35]



RISING TIDE

The Dark Powers are growing, preparing again for a new surge. They will not be sated until all is consumed by Chaos. The signs are undeniable. Rising ripples of psychic activity increase. Doomsayers and precognistics howl at the heavens, seeing the hand of fate in the stars above. Long dormant powers are stirring. Across the galaxy, Daemonic incursions rip through reality with ever-increasing frequency. Perhaps most ominously of all, the Eye of Terror has swollen, its throbbing maelstrom stretching out further, gushing forth more raw Chaos into the realm of reality. Eldritch storms rage out of the Eye, and in their cosmic winds can be heard an ominous sound... the sound of dark gods laughing.

WARHAMMER
40,000

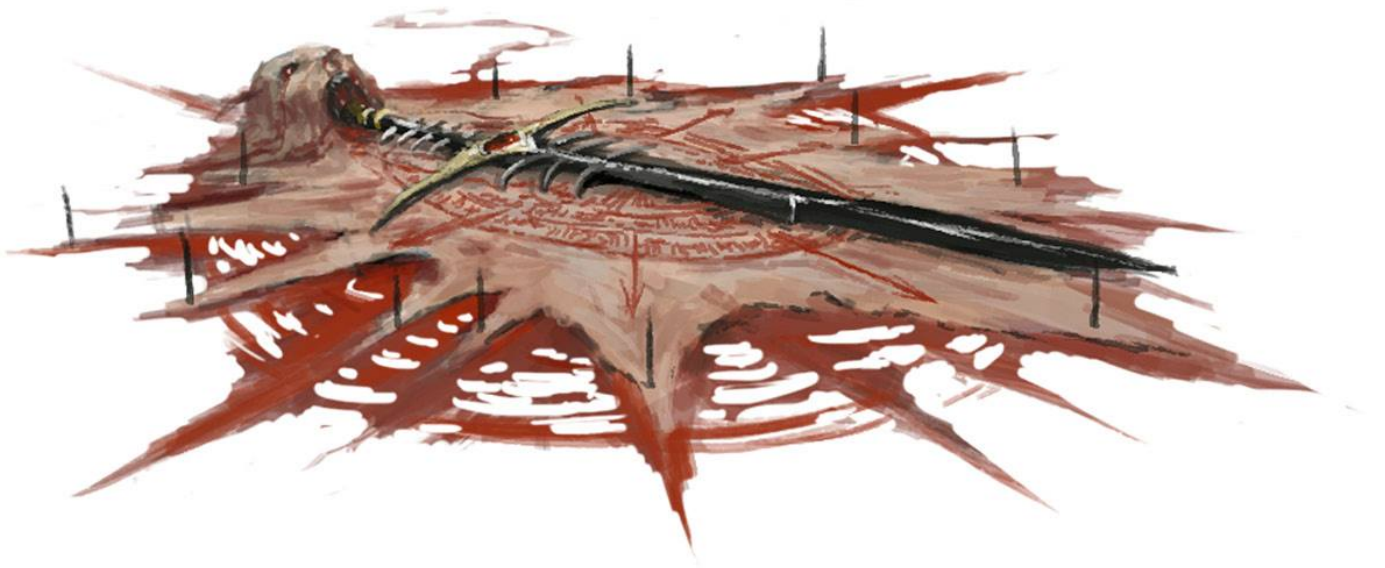
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GARDEN OF NURGLE™

INDEX CHAOTICA:

**THE GARDEN
OF NURGLE**



THE GARDEN OF NURGLE



A RANCID PARADISE

The Garden of Nurgle is the domain of the Lord of Plagues. Said to be located deep within the Immaterium, the seething storm of madness where the Chaos Gods dwell, it is a foetid jungle, a fecund hive of pestilence and disease. The garden's borders are always shifting, expanding in times of joyful plague and retreating in the brief eras of purity. It is from this garden that Nurgle extends his putrid reach into the mortal realm.

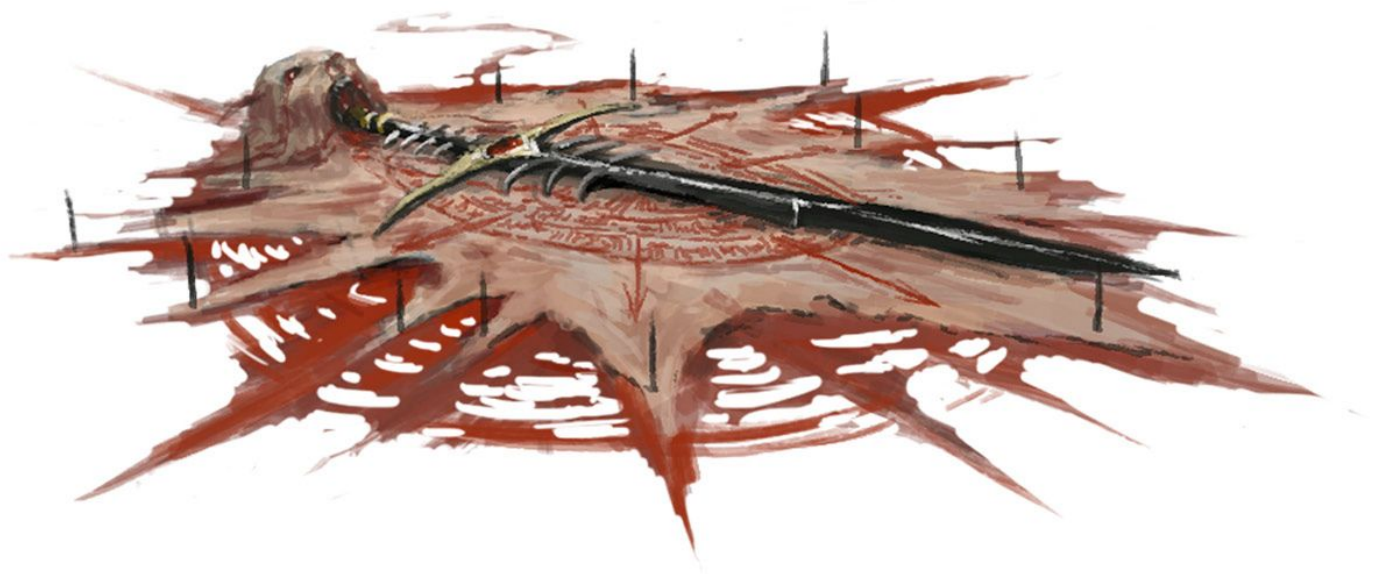
The Lord of Decay's paradox of giving life yet causing death are also expressed here in his private domain. Though this is a realm of withering demise for many who stray here, life is abundant. The garden is a place of growth and experimentation, where Nurgle can nurture new specimens and rear daemoniac half-breeds. Like any proud progenitor, Nurgle nourishes and protects his newly spawned creations. Moreover, this horrific mire is not exactly an unplanned place – Nurgle desires to organise, categorise and thereby enlighten others – yet the garden remains a sprawling, overgrown jungle.

Those who enter the Garden of Nurgle uninvited experience an unpleasant end at the hands of one or another of countless vile specimens. The other gods ceaselessly send their minions into Nurgle's garden. However, on rare occasions, willing questers venture from the mortal realm – though they are almost always unknowingly present at the behest of the other deities. As a result, bell-ringing Plaguebearers patrol the borders, and rivers of Nurglings bubble through the undergrowth, waiting to greet such guests on Nurgle's behalf.

Nightmarish entities slip and crawl through the gloomy jungle. Vines loop down from the boughs, strangling those who have not already succumbed to the turgid swamps or blade-reeds. Meanwhile, brightly coloured plants cloud the foul air with skin-corrupting spores that seep between the cracks of armour. Those who venture here find their mouths choked with swarms of pox-riddled Daemon-flies or their bodies drained of blood by hideous leech-things. They must negotiate toxic mosses, spore-grasses and putrefying pools of pus. The Garden of Nurgle is a haven of rot, and to live and endure here is a fate far worse than death.



BACKGROUND



THE DEATH BEDS

The Father of Plagues has been known to end his gentle constitutionals at the Death Beds. Here Nurgle comes to inspect the corpses of those who have strayed within his domain and met an unfortunate end. The heads of the dead are impaled on reeds, their gaping mouths dripping with ichor, while their bodies sag behind and the garden's plagueworms feast upon the exposed entrails.

In death, the corpses of the Death Beds are arranged to face Nurgle's bench. As chanting Plaguebearers busy themselves amidst the foliage tallying plagues, Father Nurgle contemplates the demise of his manifold victims and reflects upon the nature of decay. Many heads have long since rotted to nothing but bone, yet some are in the process of transformation, their flesh still peeling, beetles bulging under their skin, and their eye sockets drooling with fermented filth.

Every so often, Nurgle selects a head and fills it to the brim with infected spores. He then gives these fecund skull-seeds to his Heralds, where they may be secreted on distant worlds and even, in anticipation of future conquests, on newly forming planets. As a result, plagues will erupt and diseases will spread across fertile lands, ensuring that Nurgle's putrid reach grows ever further.



THE BILE PONDS

On rare occasions a Daemon who abides by Nurgle's path will come to the garden's murky waters to imbibe its sacred filth. Known as the Bile Ponds, these deathly still waters are occasionally breached by pockmarked limbs, which will snatch passing Nurglings and pull them under the reeking surface. Certain pools are used to bless weapons and infect them with greater foul potency. But only the brave dare approach the water's edge and risk the attentions of the betentacled denizens beneath the surface.

The Host of the Destroyer Hive, Typhus, came to Nurgle's great garden to accept the Plaguefather's challenges and prove his might. Typhus retrieved the pollen from the underground Doomwart flower, and fought the grove Daemons whose minds were controlled by the plant's wilting spores. Then he dared to dip the chalice of blight in to one of the Bile Ponds. Typhus fought off the beasts that dwelt within the cursed waters so that he could sup the noxious fluid from the sacred vessel.

From the Bile Ponds, Typhus then followed a being composed entirely of his own swirling Daemon-flies to Nurgle's throne itself. Nurgle permitted Typhus to dip his corrupted scythe, Manreaper, into the effluent that had seeped from the throne, so that his champion could better spread his works throughout the galaxy.





THE MORABUSIUM

The Morabusium is where the Lord of Decay nurtures and tends to a selection of his most cherished herbs, categorizing them by the manner in which a victim perishes after consuming them. Some of these plants insert foul seeds into the victim's stomach, only for creatures to sprout later; other species see the victim's blood turns to acid, dissolving skin and internal organ. There is little more pleasurable for Nurgle than for his minions to bring him new guests with whom he can share tisanes made from his plants. Unfortunately, these brews often turn out to be fatally toxic to others.



THE HOUSE OF PUTREFACTION

Within the centre of this necrotic garden stands Nurgle's ancient manse. This dwelling is an enormous, decrepit building, somehow forever in a state of dilapidation, but never quite succumbing to collapse. Rotten timbers and fungus-caked boundary walls extend along the manse's perimeter, bound together by strangler vines. Sentient lichen throbs with life whenever new prisoners are tangled within their twisting fronds, sapping the captives' vitality until they become wilted husks.

Nurgle can often be found sitting in a rotten armchair on the manse's veranda. There, in the sultry heat, he regards the fauna of his garden as they shamble warily past, and it is here, at the front of his manse, where Nurgle accepts offerings from his minions. His fiends take the opportunity to leave rotten tokens at his feet so that they might receive his blessing. These scraps of rusted metals or headless bodies are invariably requests that the Plaguefather has made of them previously, though more often than not he has forgotten precisely what it is that he had asked for.

Father Nurgle's manse contains many repulsive rooms. His archives can be found within the attic. There, dusty bell jars contain specimens of long-forgotten plagues and diseases sit on shelves, each categorised by their casualty rate. In his workshop he keeps Isha, the Eldar mother goddess, who is imprisoned in a withering cage that drips with foul ichors. Nurgle continually feeds her with new plagues so that he may evaluate their effectiveness, and it is both to his delight and puzzlement that she has endured for so long.

Nurgle's famed cauldron can be found in his kitchen. Here, the Plaguefather labours to create vile new contagions. He uses specimens from his garden, decants rank fluids into vials, and notes his developments with a quill taken from the plumage of a Lord of Change. Whenever Father Nurgle wishes to make a sudden incursion into the mortal realm, he tips over the cauldron. The noxious substance oozes down the steps of his house, eventually spilling into the mortal realm.

In the darkest part of the manse lies Nurgle's oubliette. Only the strongest of his visitors are brought down here, as the Lord of Plagues is forever fascinated in discovering the point at which life fades to death, where the strong become weak. Here, such guests are given a chance to fight through labyrinthine corridors in order to gain their freedom. Should they endure the horrors that prowl the dungeon's dank passageways, then they will still have to contend with exposure to subtle poisons that seep through the walls and floors.

Under the influence of these toxins, the victims' skin sags and their muscles capitulate. Soon they become little more than Daemon-like creatures themselves, crawling along the corridors, rasping out their final breaths. However, a chosen few who both please Nurgle with their determined efforts and finally succumb to his putrid delights will be chosen to fight alongside his hordes in war. His chosen may even be granted a rare daemonic gift with which to spread pestilence throughout the mortal realm.

Seldom has the manse itself been breached successfully and have the intruders escaped with their lives. One incursion is said to have involved a squad of Fire Hawks Space Marines, a Chapter long since declared lost in the mortal realm. While Nurgle was preoccupied drowning a Lord of Change in his cauldron, the Space Marines arrived engulfed in an inferno of flame and bolter fire to reclaim their fallen captain, whom Nurgle's minions had once overtaken all-too easily from Khorne's Wrathgate. The Lord of Decay has his suspicions about the source of this event, laying blame at the feet of the Blood God for the foul deed, for while the Fire Hawks brought their inferno, several blood relics and skull-seeds also vanished from the garden.



THE SLOW HUNT

It has been known for survivors to escape Nurgle's oubliette, but he does not find this displeasing, for his Slow Hunt provides ample sport. He simply climbs up to his balcony where he lets it be known loudly to his minions that his guests have gotten lost in his garden and need to be brought back.

As time is meaningless to Nurgle, he is in no hurry for his prey to be caught. He has no need to send out his greater beasts amidst the spinewoods, fleshworts and through sluggish, poisonous waters to hunt down his victims, for such creatures already lie there in wait. And having heard Nurgle's call, they lumber into action to do his bidding.

Rot Flies hum through the dark woodland, scenting musky trails of fear. Sometimes a larger minion will emerge from its shack in the undergrowth to investigate on Nurgle's behalf. Whole tally-bands of Plaguebearers will shamble out to make good sport of the quarry.

More often than not, Nurgle simply reclines upon his veranda and waits for the trophies to be brought to him. The victims' heads are then mounted on rotting wood within the manse, where Nurgle can look upon them proudly, while the successful hunts-daemon is rewarded with an artefact to represent the Father of Plague's favour.



THE DREGS

The Dregs are a quiet corner of Nurgle's vast garden. No paths lead here, and there is certainly no way out, for it is surrounded by strangespines and stingleaves. It remains a place of shame.

When Nurgle's mortal followers are slain, some are returned to the Dregs. In this quarter of his vast garden, they wallow in the knowledge that they were felled in combat. It is a depressing, swamp-like place, a quagmire of failures. Eventually, they may be returned once again to the mortal realm, but there are those here too who are doomed to remain forever. Among these lost souls are a small few who turned traitor to Nurgle, seduced by other gods, and have prevented his loyal minions from spreading disease. Other have failed spectacularly to follow Nurgle's orders, losing precious vials of pestilence or spilling rare plagues on dead worlds. Even those who were once the most accomplished servants receive no mercy when they have raised Nurgle's ire, and are doomed indefinitely to associate themselves with creatures far beneath their own standing. They remain here in a state of decay until they are forgotten.

Seldom does Proud Father Nurgle dwell upon this quarter of his demense.





VIOLATIONS OF THE ROTTEN BORDERS

Though it is rare for Nurgle's manse to be breached by those who yet have purity in their souls, his garden has known a number of incursions. The most common invasions into Nurgle's paradise are the result of territorial disputes with his dark siblings, and so borders, temperaments and ambitions are constantly in a state of flux.

Shards of crystal have sprouted from the gangrenous boughs, heralding the encroachment of Tzeentch's sorcerous creatures. On occasion, whole crystal avenues have erupted in a lunatic path through Nurgle's garden, almost reaching Nurgle's manse itself. Vicious battles were fought amidst the yawning mouths and gaping eyes that lined those pathways. Pink Horrors and horn-mawed Screamers burned their way towards the manse. Under the guidance of Elhe'eladrax of the Eternal Change, they made quick work of the putrescent minions who guarded against their advance. It was the cunning of Ku'gath, the Plaguefather, that prevented Tzeentch's spearhead from reaching the grounds of Nurgle's manse. He lured them into a maze of plants whose poisons gradually tainted and withered the minions of change. When the final, ragged few shambled towards the manse, Ku'gath stood in their way, bombarding them with Nurglings whose disease-caked innards showered their victims with filth. Despite the Plaguefather's eventual victory, his form suffered greatly from magical burns caused by the multi-coloured flames spouted by Tzeentch's followers.

After each of these failed invasions, the putrid boughs have grown again. Vines have pulled at Tzeentch's magical labyrinth and sentient lichen has smothered its weird, ever-shifting forms. The structure soon buckles under the weight of poison, retreating ethereally away from the borders, and the garden returned to its eerie calm.

Of the mortal races that have been summoned to Nurgle's garden at the whims of the gods, few have lived to speak of their efforts. The Archon Drekarth X'uskul once veered off course and spilled unexpectedly from the webway into Nurgle's domain. While he was in this strange realm, he took the opportunity to capture beasts that would make good sport for the gladiatorial arenas in Commorragh. He led a band of Wyches with an array of advanced weaponry on a raid through the dark forests, but little did the Archon realise that his incursion would lead to his own raiding party becoming the sport itself.

Bladed whips lashed against Nurgle's putrid offerings. The Wyches' web-needles raked through pus-bloated forms. Great phials were filled with all manner of toxic substances. However, the Lord of Decay cheerfully sent forth dozens of his Plague Drones to chase down the raiders. Fierce combat raged beneath low-hanging tendrils and in bacteria groves, as the membranous-winged Rot Flies thundered this way and that. Yet the strange weaponry of the Wyches brought down the bulging airborne beasts, and X'uskul's swift blade liberated the fallen riders of their heads. Through guile and violence, the Archon and a sole Wych endured; they managed to leave with a captured Rot Fly.

X'uskul did not question the ease with which he acquired the beast. Much as the Plaguefather had hoped, the Archon returned with it to Commorragh. Within days, whole sections of the Dark City were contaminated by a strange plague and were accordingly quarantined. Asdrubael Vect himself was forced to kill the beast that X'uskul had brought back, and the Archon has not been seen since.

Nurgle's paradise also harbours a number of ancient artefacts, many of which are long forgotten in the mortal realm. These precious items are buried under sacred trees, submerged within bile ponds or dropped somewhere unknown where its previous owner was slain in the thick of the forest. During one of Tzeentch's incursions, as the crystal shards of his realm emerged to distract Nurgle's forces, Kairos Fateweaver braved the largest of the bile ponds to retrieve the Staff of Tomorrow, which had lain there since a rebellious Daemon Prince had plucked it from his grasp. The item had lain dormant under the dubious fluids until Fateweaver reclaimed it.



THE GARDEN ERUPTS

Nurgle's paradise is vast, and forever the location of hideous and curious deeds. The Empyrean is incomprehensibly large and ever changing, and the whims of the gods can sometimes see mortals caught up in their daemonic rivalries. Time is meaningless in the Garden of Nurgle, yet when the mortal realm is affected by daemonic deeds, the Inquisition is sporadically able to fill their hidden records with disturbing reports.

873.M40 The Swamp Ship

A Plague Ship, formerly the Gothic Class Cruiser, *Crimson Star*, passes through the Warp, only to smash inside the borders of Nurgle's realm. Its vast cargo of fly-infested passengers is spilled into the woodland. Eventually they become bound within trees, their agonised expressions forever trapped within the distorted bark.

The ship remains there to this day, jutting out from the swamps, and bound by strangleweeds to look like the embalmed ancients of the mortal realm of Humanity. Father Nurgle continues to walk here, not only for the view, but as he also has designs to experiment on the fabric of the *Crimson Star* with botanical toxins.

956.M41 The Skull-Seeds of Hyphrax V

The skull-seeds, from some Ratling corpses are taken from Nurgle's Death Beds, packed with putrid spores, and inserted into three captured Cadians from the 145th Regiment. The Guardsmen are freed, disorientated, and sent back into the mortal realm.

Years later, two of the men die in combat against Orks on the agri world of Hyphrax V, where their bodies fall into a bloody quagmire left by the Imperium's victory. The skull-seeds take root on the planet and spread Nurgle's Rot far and wide, the resulting daemonic infestation eventually leading to the enactment of Exterminatus. The skull-seed bound within the third Cadian has yet to germinate.

965.M41 Cleansing Fire

Ten Space Marines of the Fire Hawks Chapter slip through the ethereal void and enter the realms of Nurgle to free Captain Tirek, who is held captive within Nurgle's manse. The Fire Hawks are enveloped in a spiritual fire, a cleansing inferno of their wrath made manifest. They fight their way through the thick, ever-changing gloom and assault his dwelling, burning back the drips of ichor and clouds of spores. Fierce fighting rages throughout his oubliette, their weapons furiously dealing with diseased creatures. Their cleansing flame purges disease from the very air around them. The Fire Hawks' incandescent attack results in the deaths of hundreds of the Nurgle's subordinates.

Having lost only two battle-brothers in the melee, the Fire Hawks finally leave with Tirek. However, little do they realise that Nurgle's Rot has taken root beneath their captain's power armour, and the bubbling plague is spreading throughout his body. The Fire Hawks venture back out into the Immaterium, their captain slowly succumbing to disease, becoming a vector for the horrific Red Plague.

975.M41 The Fall of the Seers

The Seers of Craftworld Lugganath venture into Nurgle's garden on a noble quest. In order to find a cure for the Brittle Coma, their aim is to rescue Isha, the goddess of fertility and healing, who is kept in a cage to please the morbid whims of Father Nurgle. Their psykers project their minds into the garden, thinking their ethereal forms and ghosthelms would permit them to travel unmolested towards their goal. Their bodies are afflicted in the mortal realm even as the entropic forces of the garden wear them down, taking root in their fading essence, until their souls are forever trapped in Nurgle's paradise. To this day, Nurgle delights in walking through the copse of sickly trees that they have become.

999.M41 The Plague River

Nurgle's minions carry his cauldron to the steps of his manse, where he tips open the vessel and pours an immense, plague-filled river through into realspace. The river wends its way into the Cadian Sector, unleashing a jaw-dropping array of filth-bringing Daemons. As the Imperium shudders beneath the first salvos of Abaddon's brutal conflict, Nurgle seizes the opportunity to distribute his finest epidemics ever further. Diseases infect hive worlds and seep behind fortress walls, weakening the defenders of the Imperium at this most crucial hour...

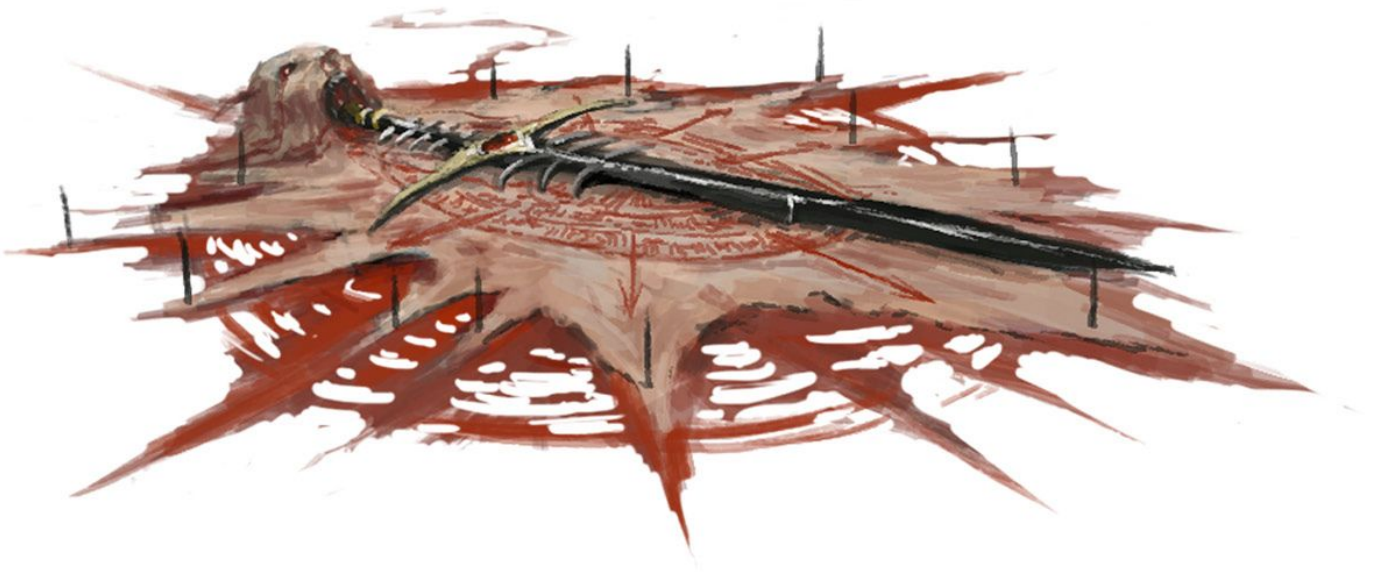
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JUGGERNAUTS[™]
OF KHORNE

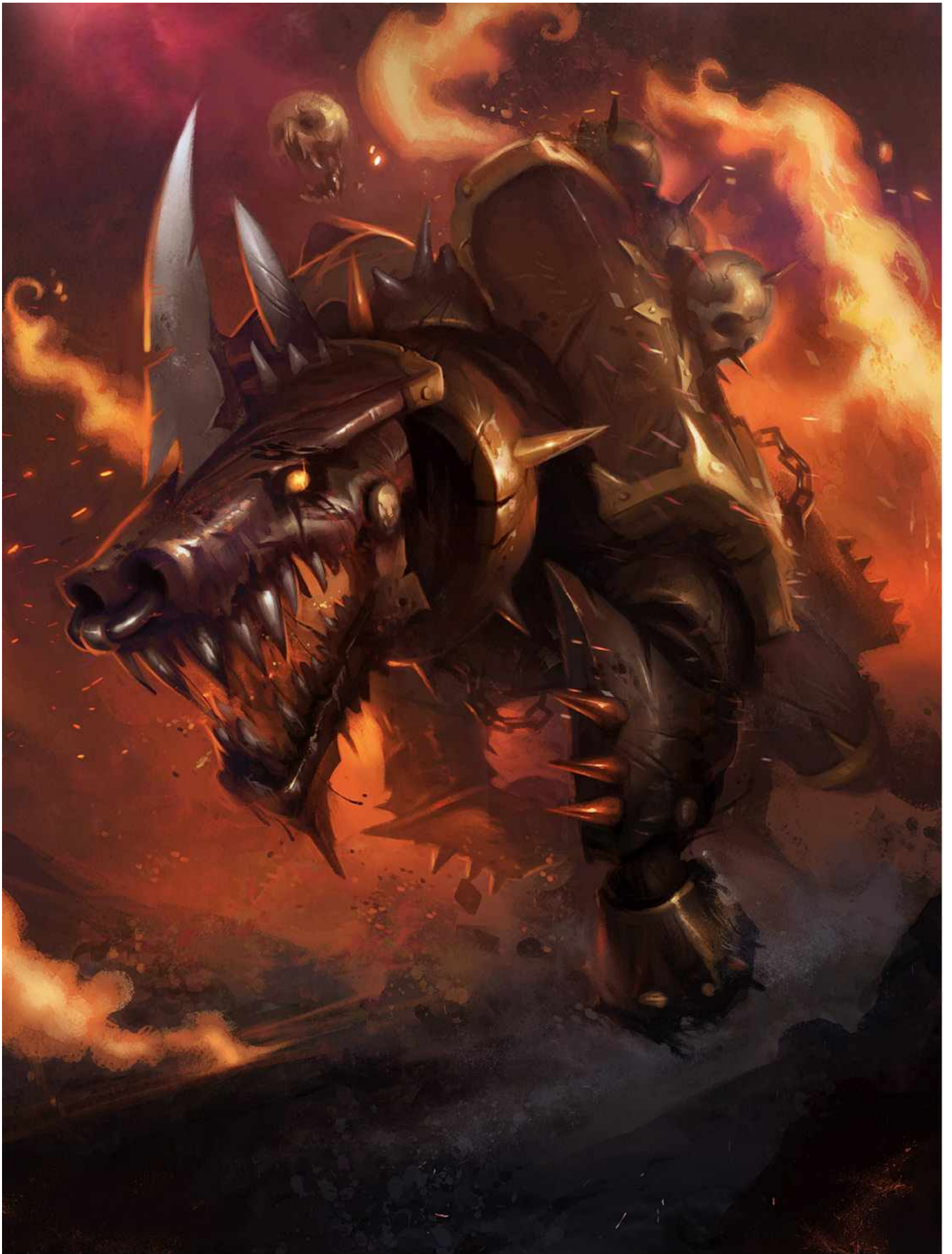
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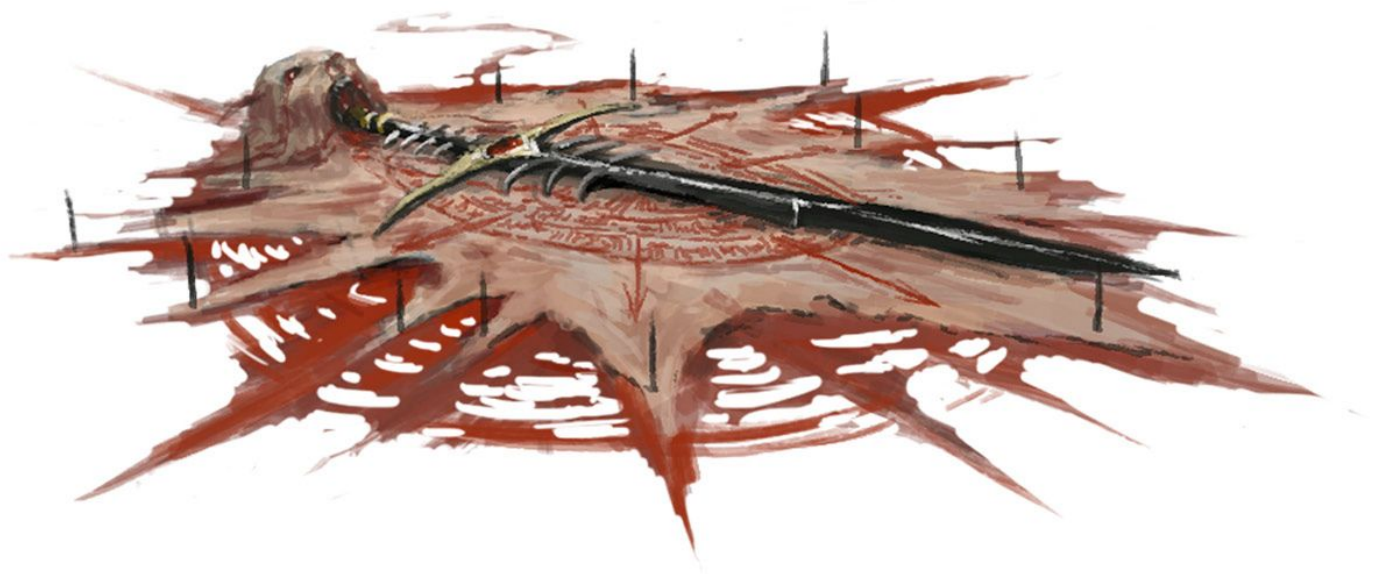
JUGGERNAUTS



Juggernauts of Khorne are the Blood God's steeds, a manifestation of his unbridled rage. A fusion of brass and beast, its limbs slam into the ground as it charges, spurring the creature forwards with staggering force. With its head tilted down, and its blade-horned snout at the ready, its crushing impact knocks foes from their feet before it tramples them into ruin.



BACKGROUND



ANATOMY OF A DAEMON

Those who have come close enough to study a Juggernaut and survive tell of a beast that appears at first to be more machine than flesh. Its riveted brass hide is covered in needle-sharp spikes, and it is branded with the marks of Chaos and Khorne, each sigil sizzling with fire. This toughened exterior ensures that Juggernauts endure bolter fire with unnerving ease.

There are few signs that might be considered flesh to be found on a Juggernaut, save for the eyes that burn with murderous intent and rows of savage-looking teeth that drip with their victims' blood. The Juggernaut's piston-driven tendons and ligaments are composed of Warp-tainted brass, as are the thick, sharp blades and serrated crest atop its muzzle. Yet the Juggernaut is most definitely a creature with a mind of its own. Its breath fogs the air with each snort, a grunt that resounds like thunder while its shod-hoofed kick rakes up ash and dirt.



KHORNE'S HUNTING FIELDS

Juggernauts come from the realm of Khorne. The Blood God's domain is a bleak and desolate landscape, where Daemons of Khorne lurk with violent intent. Few mortals have set eyes upon the place. Even if the gods were to summon mortals there for their own inscrutable purposes, and they survived the ordeal, the unfortunates would barely comprehend the madness of the Immaterium, let alone speak of it.

So savage are Juggernauts that they are not permitted into the inner rings of the Blood God's Brass Citadel; they are kept much further out, where they can gorge on intruders and further develop their bestial instincts for killing.

In the Cracked Land, extending out from Khorne's vast citadel, the bones of fallen warriors, too numerous to ever count, jut out of an ashen wasteland. Further afield, bounding the Cracked Land, swamps of gore churn under crimson skies, and fanged geysers cough up great billows of sulphurous fumes. Rivers of boiling blood gush through the landscape, the flow rising and falling in a reflection of the slaughter being unleashed within the mortal realm. Further out from this region is a place known as the Hunting Fields. It is here that the Juggernauts prowl, forever in search of new things to kill.

Those Juggernauts whose ruddy hides are so dark as to be crimson or almost black tend to be the most aggressive creatures, dominating and killing many of their wild kin. The most violent Juggernauts are highly prized by the Blood God, for they are ideal for use in daemonic challenges of strength, or even as rewards for those who prove their value to Khorne.

Juggernauts are intensely territorial, and are indiscriminate in their rage. Any being who approaches, whether summoned mortal or foolhardy Daemon, will find itself on the receiving end of a Juggernaut's charge, and trampled beneath brass-shod hooves.



CONQUER THE DAEMON

Juggernauts seldom encroach into the material realm alone. In fact, a Juggernaut is often used as an immense war-mount ridden into battle by a Bloodletter – but only once Khorne himself has deemed a Bloodletter worthy of claiming one. Together, both steed and rider form the deadly combination known as a Bloodcrusher. They become Khorne's cavalry, crushing and trampling their foes underfoot.

Bloodletters are Khorne's Lesser Daemons. To prove their value to Khorne and raise their standing to that of a Herald, a Bloodletter must undergo numerous challenges. One of many such trials is to go forth into the Hunting Fields and capture a Juggernaut. The Bloodletter is only successful in his challenge when he brings the Daemon-beast back to the pens of Khorne's foundries, a great sprawl of smoke-spewing spires located within the smouldering volcanoes on the edges of the Blood God's realm.

Khorne often orders his Bloodletters to undergo such missions, tracking down the beasts and sniffing for their blood. The Bloodletter uses whatever brute strength and keen wits he has at his disposal to survive, hunt, and eventually capture the Juggernaut. By the end of the encounter, the Bloodletter usually resorts to using his Hellblade to fight off the beast's attacks, using the language of violence to establish dominance over the Juggernaut until the beast exhibits a semblance of compliance.

More often than not, however, the attempts are unsuccessful. The battered remains of would-be Heralds are torn up and scattered over considerable distances around the Juggernauts' domain. It is not without reason that Heralds are significantly rarer than Bloodletters.



FOUNDRIES OF RAGE

Once captured, Juggernauts are kept within immense slab-sided pens, under smoke-choked skies that rain blood, and amidst the noise of metal being hammered into murderous new forms. The walls that hold the Juggernauts in are incomprehensibly dense. Even so, they are battered and cracked due to the constant attempts of Juggernauts to break free from their compound.

Within the confines, large packs of enraged Juggernauts fight for domination. So violent are the strongest of their kind that they will soon trample and savage the lesser of their kin. But, for Khorne, murder is murder after all, and a Juggernaut skull is as prized by him as any other.

For what seems like eternity, these brass and flesh Juggernauts roam the passageways of their pens, their eyes glowing in the darkness, their searing grunts echoing within the confines.

Whilst captive, the Juggernauts are goaded with burning instruments that penetrate even their armoured hides, ensuring that the beasts are at their optimum fury when a rider is summoned into the pens to claim his prize. Occasionally a Herald will become careless at this last stage, and slip in the pen, which is ultimately his last step. The fury that the Herald helped instill within the beasts is swiftly taken out upon him.



TO CLAIM A DAEMON

To ride a Juggernaut into battle is one of the greatest honours that Khorne can bestow upon one of his Daemons. The beast is a vehicle of fury and therefore only the most favoured Bloodletters and Heralds are tasked by the Blood God to ride one forth from the pens of the foundries. Such a Daemon has earned this honour through long and violent service in Khorne's name. Each will be a warrior of considerable might, that has spilled blood across numerous worlds and, more importantly, who has acquired a spectacular amount of skulls for Khorne. Of course, the collecting of skulls by Bloodletters is often achieved by nefarious means, lies and backstabbing, proving every bit as effective as rampant slaughter, but that matters little. It is skulls that interest Khorne, no matter how they are taken.

Bloodletters do not claim a particular steed through any conscious choice, but by instinct. In fact, perhaps only Khorne himself knows exactly who chooses whom. Honoured Bloodletters are simply beckoned forth into the dark labyrinthine pens, armed only with runic chains. The Bloodletter emerges much later – if at all – having restrained his beast, though the process of becoming a Bloodcrusher is only just begun.

So prized is the reward of a Juggernaut that unworthy Bloodletters have been tempted to steal one, even without the Blood God's blessing. The Heralds who goad the Juggernauts always turn a blind eye to the intruders who step into the pens, for they know full well what happens to those unworthy in Khorne's eyes. The remains of the intruder are rarely found, as whatever remains of them is ground into the red dust that blows through the enclosure.



THE MURDER BOND

Once a Bloodletter has successfully dragged his mount from the foundries, the Daemon must begin to break in the war-beast so it spends more effort trying to fight the Bloodletter's enemies rather than the Bloodletter itself.. This process is within itself a battle of daemonic wills, as a beast of such considerable might does not submit easily. Many a Bloodletter has been found gored and trampled into the barren landscape of Khorne's realm, its body driven into the ground by a long-departed steed.

As time is meaningless in the Warp, it is impossible to say how long this process takes. It is typical that the Daemons head across the Blazing Rampart and towards the borders of Tzeentch's realm, an ever-changing place of dark sorcery. There, they war against the Changer of Ways' minions, claiming grisly trophies for their master. The Bloodletter must keep his steed sated, lest it turn upon him in its search for slaughter.

Eventually, Juggernaut and Bloodletter both recognise that they are each driven by the same purpose: to satisfy Khorne's bloodlust. Amidst the carnage, they discover each other's aptitude for murder. They realize that working in concert as a Bloodcrusher, they become an unstoppable incarnation of slaughter, capable of greater deeds in Khorne's name than either would be alone. When the Bloodcrusher has finally become a killing machine united in soul and body, the Murder Bond has at last been forged, and then the real carnage commences.

Bloodcrushers are a cruel symbiosis. In legions, Bloodcrushers form the first murderous punch from a wave of Daemons. Juggernauts act as brutal battering rams, plunging deep into enemy ranks. While the Juggernauts gore and pound defenders, turning their lines into a bloody quagmire, their Bloodletter riders use their Hellblades to harvest a huge bounty of skulls for Khorne.



INFAMOUS JUGGERNAUTS

As the Chaos Daemons have ravaged Imperial worlds for millennia, certain Juggernauts have entered legend for their acts of atrocity. The Factis Daemonum of the Ordo Malleus contains many records of these daemonic steeds, both individual horrors and noteworthy packs.



KHUL'TYRAN

Of the known Juggernauts that have made a bloody name for themselves in the mortal realm, few are more infamous than Khul'tyran, steed of the legendary Skulltaker.

Though Skulltaker frequently fights alone, he has also brought slaughter to the worlds of mortals and beyond from astride Khul'tyran. Together they have caused havoc across the breadth of the galaxy, and the Imperium in particular has suffered greatly from the pairing's deeds. Indeed, they have cleaved an unfathomable number of skulls as offerings to Khorne.

At the time the creature was claimed by Skulltaker from Khorne's infernal foundries, Khul'tyran was said to have been the toughest in the

Juggernaut stockade. The Daemon-beast had killed more of his kin than any other before or since. He prowled the perimeter of the pens, regularly making bids for freedom – he once shattered the compound's wall and would have escaped were it not for the dozen Heralds of Khorne who held him back. Skulltaker selected Khul'tyran from the pack when the Champion witnessed the beast goring three Heralds at once. It was a sure sign, by Skulltaker's reckoning, that they could take forth the Blood God's wrath in an appropriate manner.

And so they did. The pair has stormed out of the Warp to harvest a bounty of skulls for Khorne. They have dueled others on countless planets in the mortal realm, never yet losing a challenge. They have claimed the skulls of Ork Warlords and Eldar Exarchs. While Skulltaker decapitates his foes with the Slayer Sword, Khul'tyran tears into metal armour as if it were soft flesh, and flesh as if it were dust.

So pleased is Khorne with their murderous work, that while in the Immaterium, Khul'tyran is the only Juggernaut permitted to prowl the smoke-choked passageways of the Blood God's Brass Citadel, as its reward for unbridled destruction.





BLOOD STALKERS

Amongst the most notorious daemoniac steeds to have caused terror within Imperial lines were the Juggernauts known by the people of the agri world of Daya as the Blood Stalkers. Ridden by Heralds, the Blood Stalkers showed unusual behaviour compared to other Juggernauts.

Whereas most Juggernauts assault defences in blistering charges, stampeding across their foes, the Blood Stalkers hunted carefully around the perimeters of the fortifications on Daya, a gateway planet to the Maxima Sub-sector. The creatures were famed for mauling isolated sentries and annihilating clusters of Scouts who were out on patrol, fatally weakening the Planetary Defence Force over a period of weeks. It was not long until the Blood Stalkers began to destroy isolated settlements and communication networks, leaving only the stains of murder as a sign that they were ever there. Word soon spread around the cities of Daya, each one an embellished tale of beasts that left only hundreds of battered, headless corpses as evidence of an attack. Soon, whole hives echoed with chatter about the beasts.

It took the deployment of a full regiment of the Cadian 16th to instil discipline on the planet, but by the point the Blood Stalkers disappeared, the Daemon beasts had savaged a hundred thousand defenders. Moreover, the Blood Stalkers created so much fear and paranoia that the daemoniac surge that followed the creatures' disappearance overwhelmed the Planetary Defence Force within a single day, and not even the might of the Cadian 16th could prevent Daya's collapse.



THE GHOST PACK

In the slums of Brauldon's Gate, in 366.M38, 'eddies in the Warp resulted in the awakening of dozens of potent Psykers in the capital hive of Malanth. As a result of this energy, an pack of Bloodcrushers pounded forth from the Warp. Able to shimmer through both material and immaterial realms simultaneously, they rampaged through the hive's many levels as ghosts, scouring the sprawl for signs of psychic activity and destroying all that stood their path, the Mark of Khorne glowing on their armour. Their pale ethereal forms materialized in numerous districts of Malanth as the Juggernauts sniffed out the blood of the psykers.

Eventually, the Bloodcrushers hunted them down in a towering, thousand-spired shrine block. The Juggernauts proceeded to savage every single one of them with alarming ferocity, shredding their prey in multiple dimensions, and causing the stricken psykers to send a huge astropathic wail through the Warp. The nightmarish echo of the fallen psykers' death-screams endures to this day, looping around the Halkak star system. Those attuned to the tides of the Warp can just about make out the savage growls of the psykers' murderers amid their victim's lingering cries.

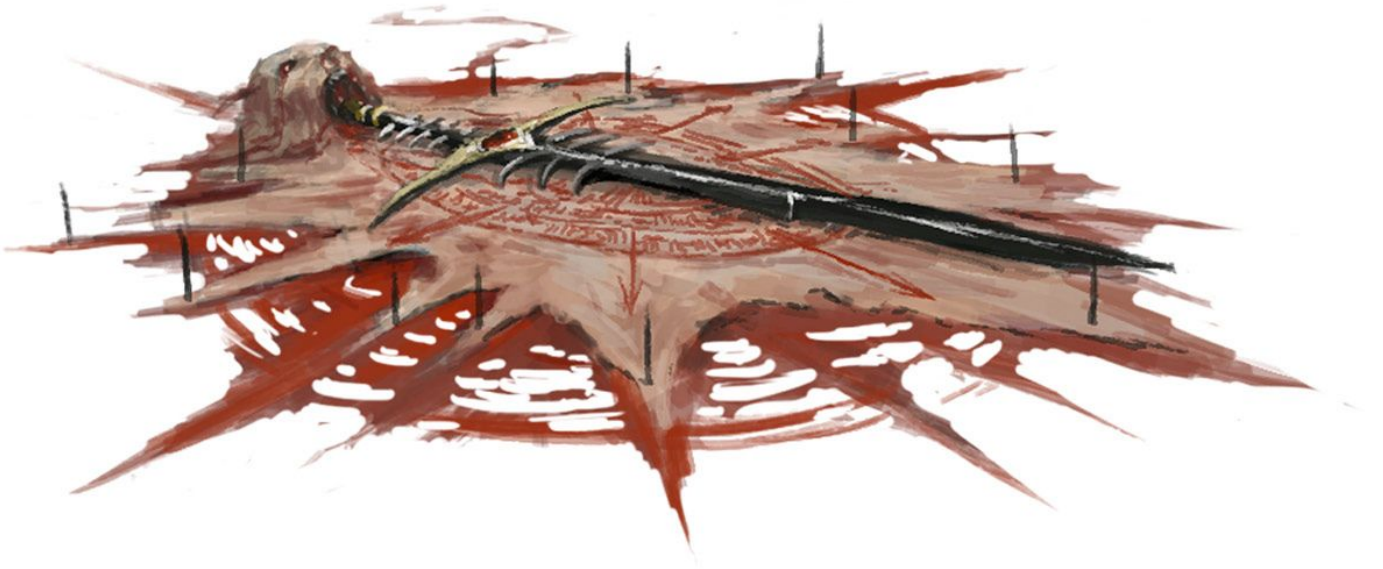


THE BEASTS OF BENGOLI

On the jungle-covered world of Bengoli V, Bloodcrushers spearheaded a vast daemoniac incursion that gutted the shrines containing thousands of Ecclesiarchy relics. Despite focused retaliation from the Catachan CXXIII, the Juggernauts proved remarkably stubborn in their efforts to smash the well concealed defence emplacements; they trampled thousands of miles of the surrounding ironbark forests, gunfire pinging harmlessly off their brass hides. They stomped over clusters of defenders, pushing back though Imperial lines, and forcing the Catachans to make a tactical retreat into the holy shrines.

However, within these spiritual confines, the Catachans would meet their deaths. The Daemon cavalry burst into the refuges, their riders' Hellblades sending severed heads flying through the air, covering statues of glorious ancient warriors in fresh blood. The concentration of slaughter amidst the holy relics caused a rift to open in the fabric of reality, allowing a whole legion of Khorne's followers to spill out into the material plane. So devastating was the attack on Bengoli and the scale of the invasion, that the Ordo Malleus had no option but to inflict Exterminatus on the doomed planet.

MINIATURE SHOWCASE





Bloodcrushers of Khorne



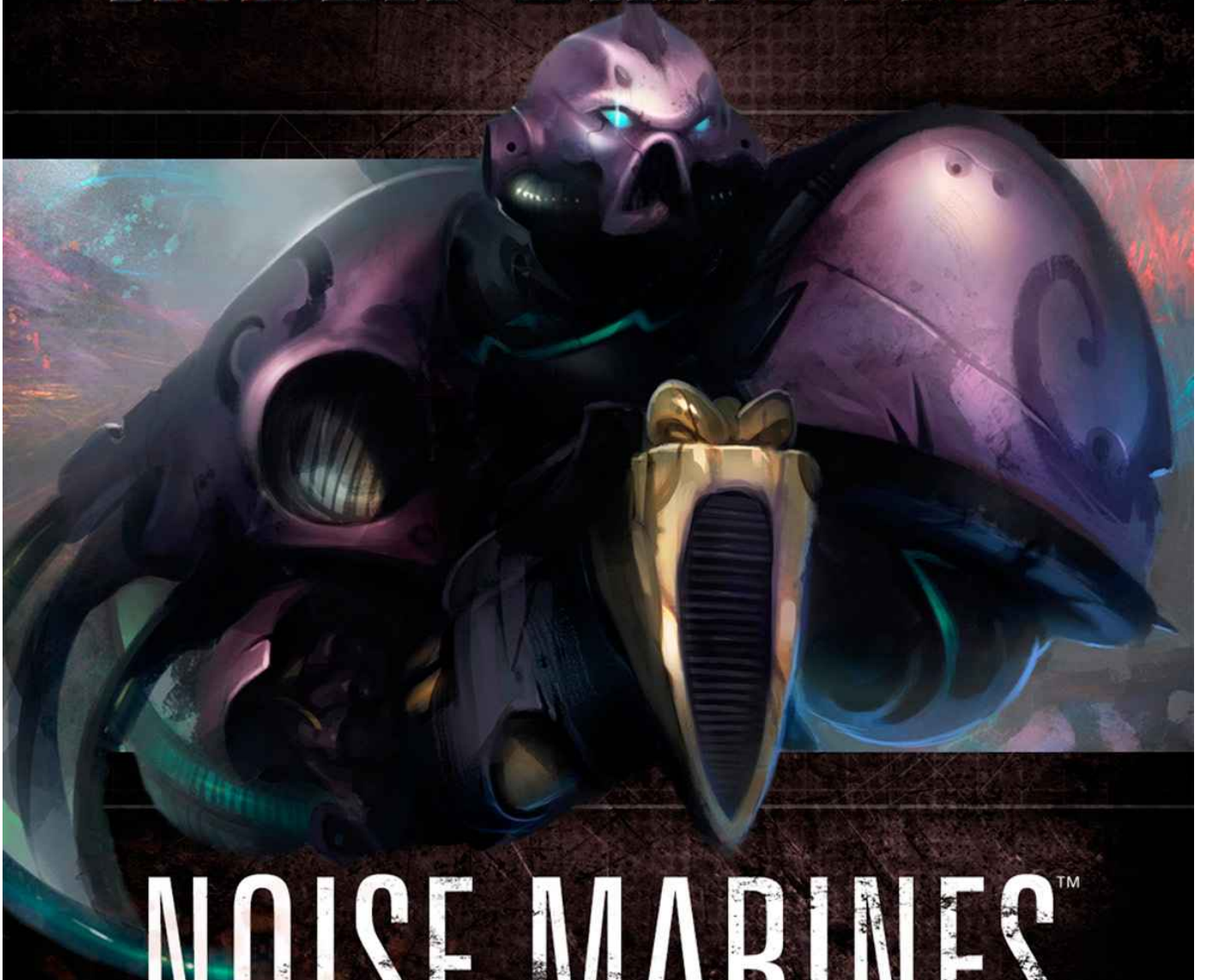






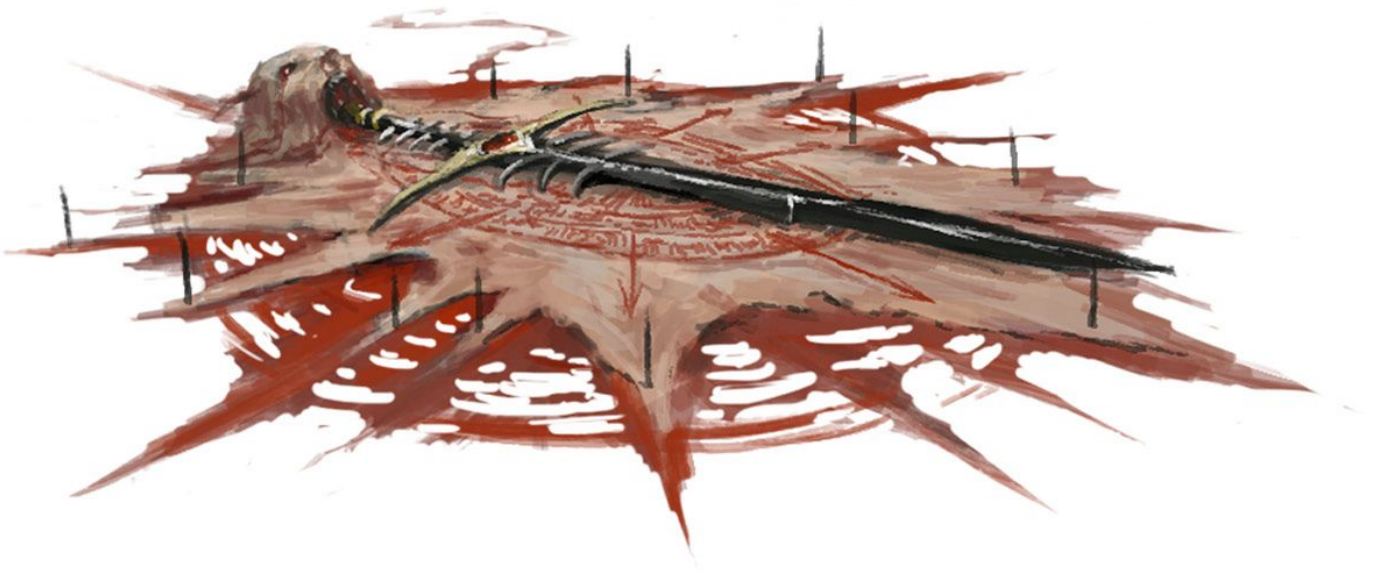
WARHAMMER[®]
40,000

INDEX CHAOTIGA[™]



NOISE MARINES[™]

INDEX CHAOTICA: --- NOISE MARINES ---



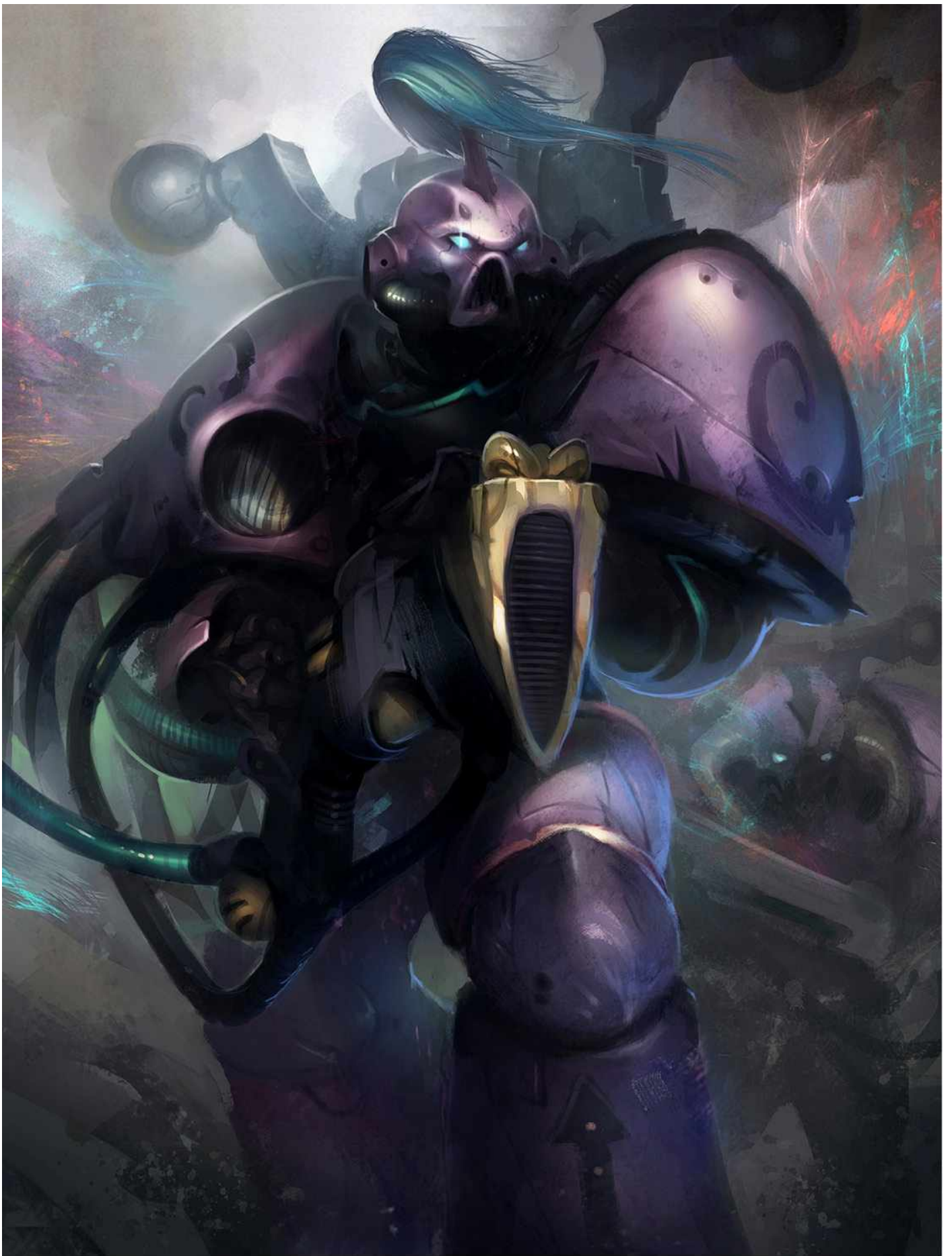
NOISE MARINES



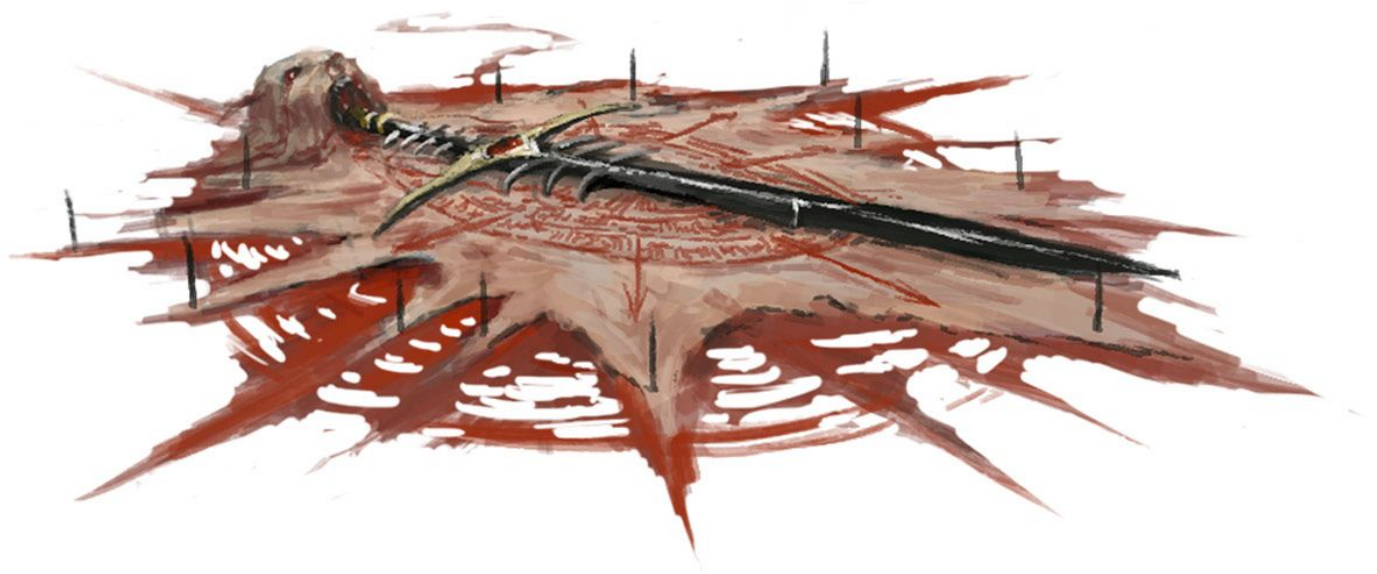
Noise Marines are twisted creatures addicted to fury and tempest. They are lost souls, only satisfied by the boom of explosions and the screams of the dying. It is difficult to believe, but once they were Space Marines – the selfless sworn defenders of Humanity. Now, rebelling entirely against everything they once stood for, the Noise Marines are self-satiating predators – a scourge upon the very Imperium they once professed to serve.

Noise Marines get their name from their trademark use of devastating sonic weaponry. These bizarre weapons send forth waves of sound – visible to the naked eye as purple-hued rays of death that can tear apart flesh – or even produce shrieking harmonics that can shake apart the armour of a battle tank. The Noise Marines have forsaken their old lives, instead dedicating themselves to heeding the silky whispers of the Dark God Slaanesh. They live only to destroy, to surpass their last decadent indulgence with some new act of purest depravity.

'Praise be to Slaanesh, for his rapture is upon your worthless souls.'



BACKGROUND



ORIGINS

The birth of the Noise Marines goes back to the dawn of the Horus Heresy. Of the twenty original Space Marine Legions founded by the Emperor himself, the Emperor's Children were Legion III. They were the only Legion permitted to use the Emperor's name and to wear his own symbol – the Palatine Aquila. Their leader – the Primarch Fulgrim – sought perfection in all his actions and led them on their quest to become the living embodiment of everything the Adeptus Astartes should be. They were noble, fierce in battle, yet civilized, and above all fanatically loyal to the Emperor.

'We are his children. Let all who look upon us know this. Only by imperfection can we fail him. We will not fail.'

- Fulgrim, addressing the Emperor's Children

At the height of their service to the nascent Imperium of Mankind, the Emperor's Children carried the banner of the Emperor to countless planets. Thanks to their valorous deeds during this Great Crusade, worlds enslaved to xenos or wickedness were brought under Humanity's rule once again. Beneath Fulgrim's meticulous eye, his Legion sought to honour the Emperor; with perfection as the ultimate goal, they obeyed battlefield doctrine to the letter, tactics and strategy were studied in minute detail and the Emperor's words and decrees were memorised and adhered to in every way. Their reverence and adoration for the Emperor bordered on the fanatical.

From this pinnacle, they fell far further than their brothers. It began just before the outbreak of the Horus Heresy. In the warrior lodges of the Davin tribes, the Warmaster Horus introduced Fulgrim and his chief lieutenants to all manner of elaborate feasting, including any number of exotic narcotics and other pleasurable diversions. Because of his respect and close ties to Horus, Fulgrim allowed the Warmaster to influence him, weakening his resolve enough for Chaos to lure him. Interwoven in this hedonistic assault was the silky whisper of Slaanesh – the Dark Prince of Decadence.

Entranced by the ecstatic celebrations, the officers of the Emperor's Children took these debased practices back to the rest of their Legion. Thus did a cult of perversion take root. Fulgrim and his Legion soon followed a new path. Fulgrim had always believed Humanity capable of perfection – now he saw that the Emperor would prevent this from ever happening. Seduced by Horus' words, Fulgrim turned to the promise of a new Humanity, free from oppression. Soon Fulgrim and his Legion showed Slaanesh the same devotion they had previously heaped upon the Emperor. But in contrast to their previous service, this time the Emperor's Children were rewarded...

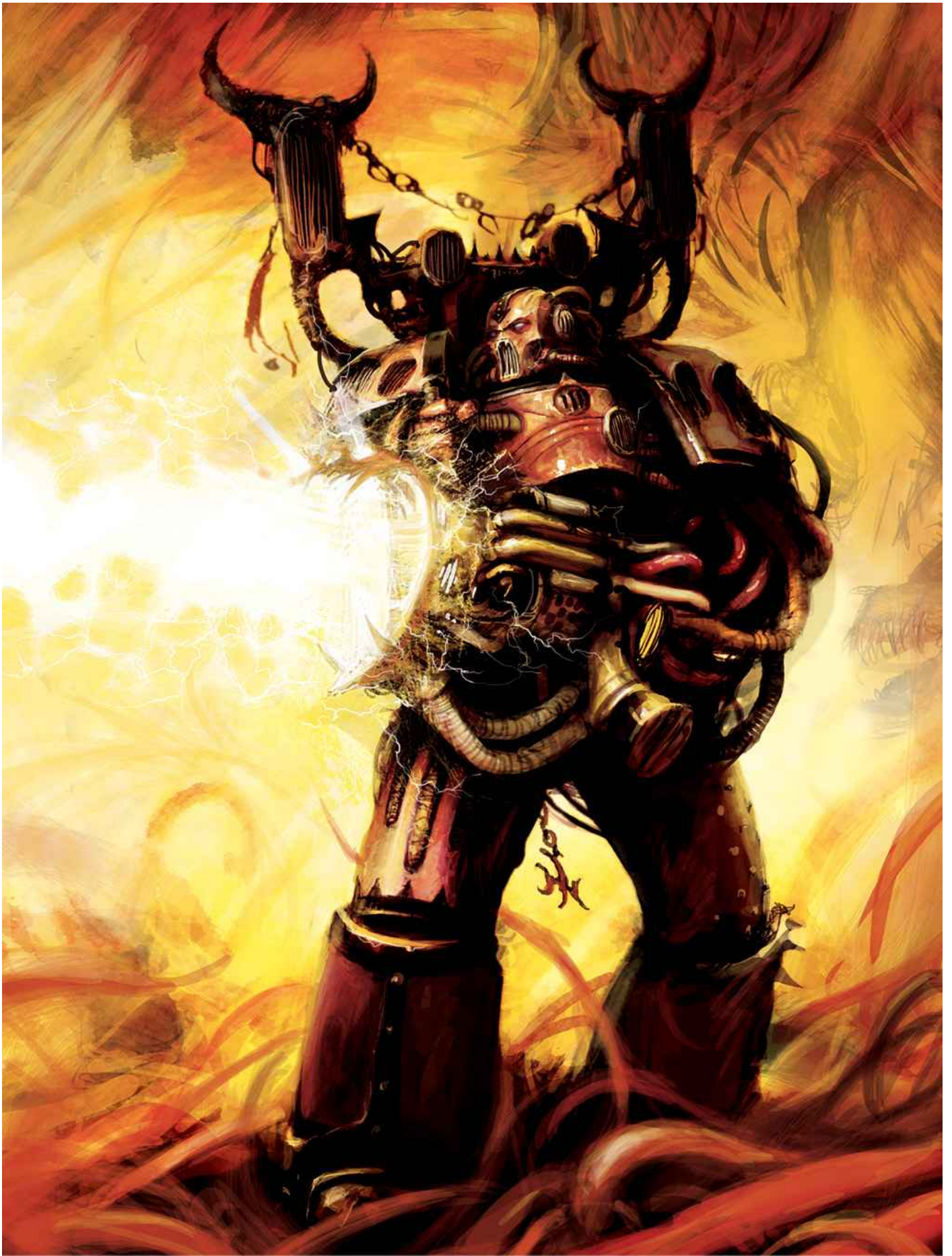
Slaanesh's gifts were winsome visions of paradise, a galaxy of ultimate freedom. The Emperor's Children were exhorted to savour every sensation and so, in their quest for perfection, they instead became the ultimate hedonists – their energies devoted to pushing the boundaries of their minds as far as they could, honing their bodies to the limit of blissful endurance.

Dedicated to Slaanesh and to seeking out every excess their bodies can experience, these Space Marines soon found their senses amplified. Most went on to become Noise Marines, twisted creatures addicted to extreme sensations.

'Can you hear the sweet prelude of our Lord? Can you hear how its cadences purify the soul, flaying skin from bone to lay bare the dark bosom beneath? Can you feel each motif as it touches the heart, rupturing veins, bursting through in a crescendo of perfect rapture? Then rejoice! Truly you are blessed!'

- Geon of the Emperor's Children





THE GIFTS OF SLAANESH

The Prince of Pleasure, Slaanesh, was pleased by his new followers and gave to them gifts that would better allow them to soak in the strange new sensations that they were craving. Like all such boons from the Dark Gods, these took the form of seemingly random mutations – twisted flesh, strange claws or additional eyes. There is one gift all Noise Marines share, however – enhanced aural abilities. It is theorized that their extraordinary sense of hearing has been magnified to a thousand times that of a natural unmodified human, and that their auditory acuity can distinguish the subtlest pitch in tone and volume. This dark blessing has also twisted the way in which the Noise Marines' brains interpret sounds, causing them to undergo feelings of intense euphoria and emotion that increase in proportion to the volume and frequencies of the sounds they experience. Noise Marines relish these sensations and quickly become addicted to louder and ever more discordant noise. Such raucous sensory input electrifies the Noise Marine's brain, causing extreme emotional stimulation that makes all other sensation pale by comparison. The more extreme the emotional reaction provoked, the better – an escalation that leaves them only satisfied by the din of battle and the screams of the dying.

Noise Marines cut down their foes with a relentless cacophony produced by their deadly instruments of death. Although the staccato bark of the boltgun and the blast of exploding shells is music to a Noise Marine's ears, many of their number specialize in the use of outlandish sound-based weapons. These hellish instruments of death produce deafeningly loud, psycho-sonically and pyrotechnically explosive attacks that shake and tear their foes apart. The appalling racket is the only thing capable of moving their jaded senses. Sonic blasters shriek out tightly focused beams of magenta sound which vary tremendously in pitch, one moment a wailing lament, the next a piercing shriek of ecstatic harmonics that penetrate living flesh and rend it apart. Blastmasters roar out quaking bass notes that build in intensity until their convergence strikes their target. The blastmaster's power is then discharged like a thunderclap, hitting the target's resonant frequency, causing organs to burst and bones to snap or turn to powder. The vocal accompaniment to this lethal auditory onslaught is provided by the tortuous serenades of the doom sirens. These anarchic arrangements of pipes, tubes, and amplifiers magnify the elated war cries of a Noise Marine into devastating sonic attacks capable of shattering solid objects.

'Unleash the dirge of hatred, discharge the pleasure howls. Let rip the cacophony until the very air bleeds purple. Let the requiem of pain begin!'

- Pharok, Champion of Noise

On the battlefield, a Noise Marine's brain ceases to function normally, but instead becomes a receptacle for the massive sensations ignited by the music of the apocalypse. In overwhelming bliss, the Noise Marines only increase the outpouring of their firepower, letting the sound waves of the destruction they are causing wash over them. Cruel and callous in the extreme, Noise Marines cannot deny their craving for the frenzied clamour of battle for long. They care not who dies or how horrific the slaughter; their only interest is in indulging their own pleasure-quests.



FOLLOWERS OF THE PRINCE OF PLEASURE

After the fall of Horus and the ensuing era known as the Scouring, the dissolution of the Emperor's Children was inevitable. The strong will of Horus no longer bound together the disparate Traitor Legions and they quickly fell into disarray. The Emperor's Children were scattered, their fleets broken up and pursued by the vengeful forces of the Imperium. The Imperial vessels that hunted elements of Fulgrim's warriors followed a trail of devastation, finding worlds where corpses were piled high, and survivors pleaded to be allowed to die in the hope of escaping their nightmarish memories of defilement. More ominously still, many thousands of Imperial citizens and troops were simply missing, never to be seen again.

Eventually, after many atrocities, the Emperor's Children reached the Eye of Terror where they hid from retribution alongside so many of their fellow traitors. They quickly exhausted their supply of slaves and playthings, and it was not long before they began to prey upon whatever victims were available, eventually turning upon their own ranks and the other Legions. The resulting wars were terrible and bloody, with the inevitable result that the Emperor's Children Legion was shattered. While other Legions still maintained some semblance of the command structure they once possessed, the Emperor's Children broke up into many competing warbands and cults.

Of the fate of Fulgrim himself, none were sure at the time – for he disappeared. Some say he was slain, while others insist he was rewarded for his devotion to pleasure, and that Slaanesh elevated him to become a Daemon Prince, Lord of a Daemon World. Many – both within and without the Eye of Terror – have sought Fulgrim's paradise planet of ultimate hedonism.

The broken remnants of the Emperor's Children, now leaderless, continued to pursue their addiction to ultimate pleasure. They found solace for the loss of their once-proud Legion only in the horror of war. As the sonic arsenal of the Noise Marines was deadly in the extreme, and their appetite for battle was never satiated for long, they were welcomed by any Chaos warband heading for action. Other Space Marine renegades devoted to Slaanesh began to join these vile crusades – for the Dark Prince's whispering song of seduction proved too strong for many to resist. The most corrupt of their kind soon became Noise Marines in turn. They were joined by untold billions of human cultists, sensation-craving lackeys that flocked to the lewd banners of the Slaanesh-worshipping Chaos Space Marines. They joined upon the promise of orgies of mayhem and destruction, little suspecting that they would often end up as the victims – for the loyalty of the Noise Marines was a fickle thing. On rare occasion an entire Emperor's Children army might take to the field, but most often their selfish ways and eternal quest for violent, sadistic indulgence quickly lead them to split once more into separate factions.

Regardless of their origins, Noise Marines wear armour painted in bold colours, often in dazzling or clashing patterns. Their senses are so distorted that only the most extravagant shades and flamboyant designs register in their perverted minds. The Chaos Space Marines of the Emperor's Children are known for sporting surgical modifications and possessing outlandish mutations, which they see as making them more 'perfect' in the eyes of their twisted patron.

'Take care, lest your protests grow tiresome. I have asked for so little! Anyone would think I had asked you to sacrifice yourselves and all your families! And yet, in Slaanesh's boundless and pleasing mercy, I have asked only for your firstborn. Surely you would not deny me my small enjoyments?'

- Tyrell, Renegade Lord of Arden IX



SONIC ASSAULT

Noise Marines are best known in battle for the deadly amount of firepower they can pour forth. If armed with boltguns, they will seek to advance within range before opening up in a spray of explosive shells, reveling in each cry of pain issued from their victims. Noise Marines prefer to do their damage up close and personal – for this not only ensures the optimum chance of devastation, but also better allows them to reap the gloried sounds of their handiwork. The exquisite ripping of flesh mixed to the backbeat of the chugging and growling retorts of their bolters is a symphony of which Noise Marines never tire. Ever attentive to the detail of their bloody work, the Noise Marines are known to use modified bolt shells – some of which scream, shriek, or howl as they plough towards their victim, leaving behind a contrail of gaudy purple tracer. Squads firing in unison will work hard to adjust the sequence of shell types to achieve refinement to their boltgun choir, a point of peculiarity unappreciated by any save their own sick kind.

If the Noise Marines forgo bolters to employ the more specialized sound-based weaponry of the sonic blaster, they increase their anti-infantry capability. By planting his feet wide and maintaining a solid stance, a Noise Marine can send a long discordant wail of crippling harmonics at the foe. When moving, firing from the hip, it is still possible to send forth waves comprised of short riffs, although this does reduce the sheer amount of sound they are able to generate. This aural assault is ideal for mowing down oncoming hordes of infantry, or can be used to blast foes out of dense cover, for the sound waves reverberate around all obstacles, penetrating their target no matter how deeply they are hidden in undergrowth or sheltered in trenches.

The most lethal of Noise Marine warbands include warriors who carry powerful blastmasters, the largest and most cumbersome of the sound-based weapons typically seen amongst the Slaanesh-worshipping Chaos Space Marines. By tweaking the frequency of its sonic attack, the blastmaster's wielder can use an explosive crescendo to burst eyeballs and wrack enemy infantry, or concentrate its frequency to project a hard-hitting cone capable of taking out heavy vehicles or shredding Space Marine armour.

Noise Marines often advance towards their foe whilst sending out a wall of noise before them. While this allows them to better savour the impact of their shots, it also leaves them prone to counter-attack. For followers of Slaanesh, this prospect is not without benefit. Their heightened senses and reaction time allow Noise Marines to strike down all but the most nimble of foes before they even get a chance to land their own blows. What is more, the Noise Marines delight not only in inflicting pain, but also in experiencing it. It is pure exhilaration to feel an Ork's choppa cleaving into the meat of your body, and the ripples of agony that accompany a Hormagaunt's slicing claws are a shudder-worthy delight to savour in their own right. Some of the Slaaneshii warriors opt for close combat weapons exclusively, enjoying the buzz of the chainsword and its shrill screams as it grates upon bone or armour.

One such formation was that led by the infamous Noise Champion Volupus. A son of Chemos, Volupus went off to form his own warband: the Flickering Blades. These warriors strode into combat wielding lithe swords that sung a song of death with every swing. From out of their twisted armour stretched numerous writhing tongues, each mutant maw licking its lips in lewd anticipation of the blood-splattering of close combat.

It is at close range that a Noise Champion can unleash his most formidable weapon. The doom siren can shoot out pure sound so horrible it can liquefy an opponent's innards and melt his very brain. The champion's warcry to Slaanesh is amplified into a soundwave that can blast a path of sonic death – its shriek bursting out of great grille-vents and vox-casting speakers surgically embedded or grown within the champion's skin.





ICONS OF EXCESS

The egotistical Noise Marines stride into battle wearing garish colours; these, and their exotic weapons, go a long way towards making them unmistakable upon the battlefield – important indeed, as only the most extreme appearances truly register in their sensation-addled minds. Yet many squads go one step further, and hoist aloft an eye-watering symbol of Slaanesh to court the gaze of their master. These Chaos icons are lewd and wicked symbols that identify the unit or warband on the battlefield. Their brazen nature is, in itself, a shock to the forces of the Imperium – a reminder that their most hated foes walk free. These symbols of perversion act as magnets, drawing in all those who would succumb to the Dark Gods. Some Noise Marines – such as the Pleasure Seekers – carry more than one icon, while others, like the Twisted, carry symbols so steeped in legend that the Noise Marines that fight beneath them will endure almost any amount of pain or injury inflicted upon them, for their adrenaline rush is so extreme they won't notice for hours that their life's blood has all but washed away.



THE QUEST ETERNAL

Noise Marines do not fear death, instead seeing it as glorious pain – however, despite the novelty and presumed pleasure of death, Noise Marines are in no rush to hurry that once in a lifetime experience. Instead, they prefer to continually refine and sample the myriad delights to be found in the service of Chaos. They readily accept the boons of Slaanesh and eagerly treat with any Daemon or Chaos Lord able to offer them delicious new opportunities for excess. Many even gaze with undisguised envy upon the immortal Daemon Princes who serve Slaanesh, for they have been gifted limitless freedom and a chance for unending pleasure-seeking. To win such glories for themselves, the Noise Marines would go to any lengths. It is with this goal in mind that they continually practice their bombastic arts, for only when their death choirs reach perfection will their divine Dark Prince take notice.

'The hearts of mortals harbour the darkest of desires.'





AMBUSH IN BLACKPASS

The Leman Russ battle tank rumbled along the pass, its tracks squealing in protest as the vehicle was driven at speed over the rocky terrain. The steep sides of the gorge rose up menacingly on either side, the black volcanic walls leaving the pass in permanent shadow. Behind the battle tank came a short column of Imperial Chimeras, the armoured troop carriers' multi-lasers swivelling to cover the sides of the pass in case of enemy attack.

Inside the Leman Russ, Tank Commander Rosman stared through the vehicle's sights at the boulder-strewn wilderness ahead of him. His mind was only partially occupied with thoughts of the Chaos force's attack on the fort. There were many such isolated outposts and the forts had been built by the frontiersmen of the planet to protect a series of mine-workings from the attentions of the local predatory fauna and belligerent tribesmen.

But why should the place so interest a Traitor Legion such as the Night Lords? Was it just another example of the mindless destruction and wanton havoc-wreaking that so characterized the Chaos Space Marines? Or did the twisted brethren of the Adeptus Astartes have a yet more sinister purpose beyond that of putting another defenceless world to the sword for their foul gods?

As soon as the Imperial Guard headquarters on Purgatory had received the report of the imminent attack on the fort and the request for reinforcements, Colonel Drax had immediately dispatched the tank unit under Rosman's command. Rosman had led numerous assaults on the enemies of the Imperium across the star systems of the Ultima Segmentum, from breaking a siege laid by marauding Orks to relieving a planetary defence force from an Eldar attack.

But Chaos Space Marines were something else. Rightly they were held in fear and awe by the soldiers of the Imperial Guard. These damned warriors had defied the Emperor for centuries, gaining invaluable experience in war through a thousand confrontations, and it was whispered that they marched into battle alongside grotesque creatures with flesh of living metal and blood of liquid fire.

'How far now?' he asked, trying to put the thought of such horrors out of his head.

'Four miles, sir,' the Guardsman replied, checking the instruments in front of him.

'Estimated time till arrival?'

'Eleven minutes, sir.'

A deep, rumbling blast suddenly shook the battle tank as a weapon was fired into the pass. Looking through the sights, Rosman saw a section of the gully wall to the right erupt. Much of that part of the gorge proceeded to give way, chunks of rock as big as the Leman Russ tumbling down into the pass, partially blocking their route.

A second blast, like a thrumming boom, rocked the tank. Over the comm-link Rosman heard a cry of anguish from one of the other vehicles. The tank commander scanned the sides of the pass through the tank's sights but could see nothing. Simultaneously the cliff-face behind the tank crumbled, separating the Leman Russ from the rest of the cavalcade.

'What's going on?' he shouted to his crew.

'Chimera 2's multi-laser has been hit, sir,' a gunner reported from his station.

'By what?' demanded the agitated commander.

'I...I can't tell, sir. Looks like it was some kind of heavy weapon.'

'All crew on standby!' Rosman ordered. 'If you see anything, fire at will!'

The back of the second Chimera dropped open and the armoured vehicle disgorged its cargo of Cadian troopers amid a cloud of oily smoke. The shot that had knocked out the troop carrier's multi-laser had resulted in a flashback that caused a secondary explosion inside the vehicle. Clear of the choking smoke, the Guardsmen immediately set about taking up positions amidst the rubble in the pass.

Trooper Lyle darted over the gravelly floor of the gorge, keeping his body low as he ran, and joined two of his fellows behind the great boulder they were using as cover while they tried to pinpoint the exact position of their attackers.

And then they saw them: Space Marines in brilliantly painted power armour standing on the lip of the gorge, the striking contrasting colours and bizarre patterns daubed on their battle-plate making them all too obvious against the grey skyline. Where the power armour of the Emperor's loyal Space Marines was a pure, uniform hue, the Chaos-distorted ceramite and plasteel plates of the Noise Marines were daubed with a mind-wrenching spectrum of colours. Spots and jagged stripes clashed with fluorescent streaks and bright swirls of colour. The perverse contrasts were enough to turn a sane man's mind.

It only took a second for Lyle to register all this, which was all the time it took for the Noise Marines to pick their targets. The Guardsman's ears were suddenly assailed by a cacophonous wailing that rose and fell in pitch with jarring abruptness. Harmonics formed within the metallic scream and the trooper grimaced in pain as the noise increased in volume. The ground was now vibrating in resonance with the sonic roar.

In showers of crimson sparks or rupturing explosions of white-hot metal shards, the weapons systems of several of the other troop carriers were destroyed under the Noise Marines' barrage. Lyle watched as a squad of shock troops, previously pressed up against the side of the first stricken Chimera, moved out to engage the enemy on the ridge above. At once, screeching howls from the Noise Marines' sonic blasters cut them down. Waves of torturous sound ruptured organs, snapped bones and ripped the Guardsmen's bodies apart.

A deep, resounding bass note assailed Lyle's ears and he was sure that the noise would deafen him. From where he stood, with his hands pressed over his ears to try and block out the banshee wails of the ambushers, the Cadian saw that several of his fellow troopers had wheeled out an autocannon from a motionless Chimera.

Before they even had a chance to use the gun, the Noise Marines were firing on them again. Lyle watched in horror, unable to tear his eyes away, as the barrel buckled and the cannon exploded pyrotechnically. Burning wreckage and charred flesh rained down onto the floor of the pass.

The Guardsman desperately looked for the Leman Russ battle tank that had been leading the column of reinforcements – but it was

trapped too, and under attack from yet more of the brightly painted warriors wielding heavy, long-necked weapons.

And then he was screaming himself, through clenched teeth, trying to drown out the sound throbbing inside his skull. With a crack like a thunderclap, the huge boulder he was sheltering behind shattered. Lacerated by jagged splinters of stone, Lyle stumbled backwards, no longer afforded any hiding place from the Noise Marines' sonic weapons.

The agonising frequencies of the blastmaster sent conflicting signals spiraling through his nervous system, throwing the Guardsman into a fit of thrashing spasms. Lyle felt one eye and then the other burst inside his head before he was granted merciful release as his body exploded in a red spray that drenched the surrounding rocks with a wet splash.

Inside the battle tank, Commander Rosman heard the thrumming bass notes building in intensity. He took in the scene of carnage through the tank's monitors, as his crew attempted vainly to repel the attackers. The Noise Marines were striding amongst the blazing wreckage and splattered remains of Cadian bodies. There were no signs of life from any of the troopers. Several figures, their armour patterned in orange and purple, were approaching the tank over the rubble of the landslide, huge weapons in their hands.

There was a sudden resounding boom, and the stranded tank was shaken by a shock wave of incredible force, throwing the men stuck inside around the cabin. Over a long distance the sonic weapons of the Noise Marines would have had little effect against a plasteel hull, but at short range the impact was like the punch of an anti-tank shell. Gears ground painfully as the gunner tried to rotate the turret, suggesting that something essential would buckle if he continued to do so.

'Damage report!' Rosman shouted over the discordant crescendo of the Noise Marines' assault and the chugging fire of the tank's heavy bolters.

'Lascannon's out,' yelled a crewman, blood pouring from his ears. 'And the turret's jammed! We can only fire forwards!'

'And the curs are behind us and to the sides,' Rosman hissed under his breath.

Howling in ecstasy, their screams of wild abandon reverberating through arrays of strange tubing attached to their helmets, the Noise Marines bombarded the battle tank with another round of ear-splitting pulses of sound. Rivets popped free and ricocheted around the interior of the armoured vehicle, inflicting more injuries upon its occupants. Whipping free of the Leman Russ, strips of track flew off through the air.

A heavy bolter exploded before the concussive waves, its ammunition detonating inside the chamber just as the vehicle's drive shaft fractured. As the great adamantium rod smashed through the motor systems and drive mechanisms, the tank was flipped over completely, crashing down to the ground on its crushed turret.

A great whoop of perverse pleasure went up from the Noise Marine squad surrounding the overturned tank. Under such a direct attack, and with one burst after another from the Noise Marines' mightiest weapons, the Leman Russ' hull was weakening. The sustained shots sent hatches and gun casings flying until the tremendous stresses were too much for even the hardy battle tank's sturdy chassis.

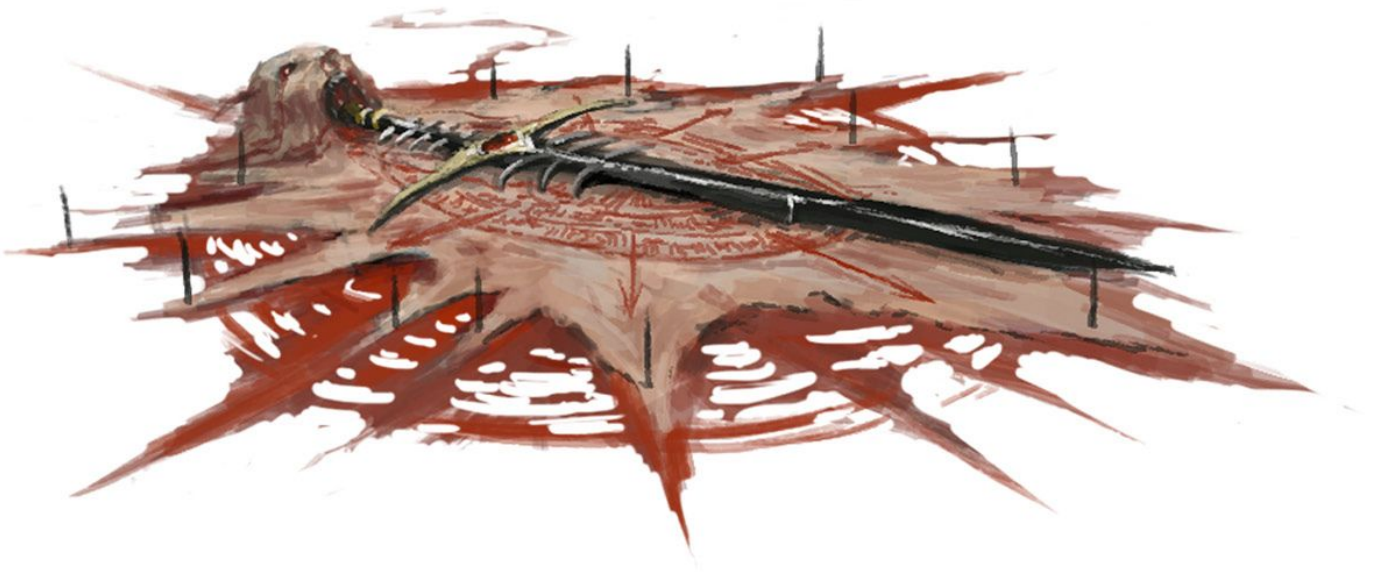
Metal warped, armour fractured, and the tank's hull was breached by the sonic assault. A few Guardsmen, blood gushing from ears, noses and eyes, staggered out of the wreck before falling to the ground as their brains turned to jelly under the constant tonal vibrations.

Slaanesh's Noise Marines celebrated their crowning achievement in one last mighty clashing cadence from their battery of sonic weapons, their screams of exultation melding with the discordant roar in a single cacophony of destructive sound. The Lord of Pleasure had rewarded them indeed with a spectacle of utter destruction.

No reinforcements would reach the fort. The humans holed up in there would have to fight off the hordes of Chaos unaided, or suffer eternal damnation.



MINIATURE SHOWCASE





Noise Marine with blastmaster



Noise Marine with sonic blaster

WARHAMMER[®]
40,000

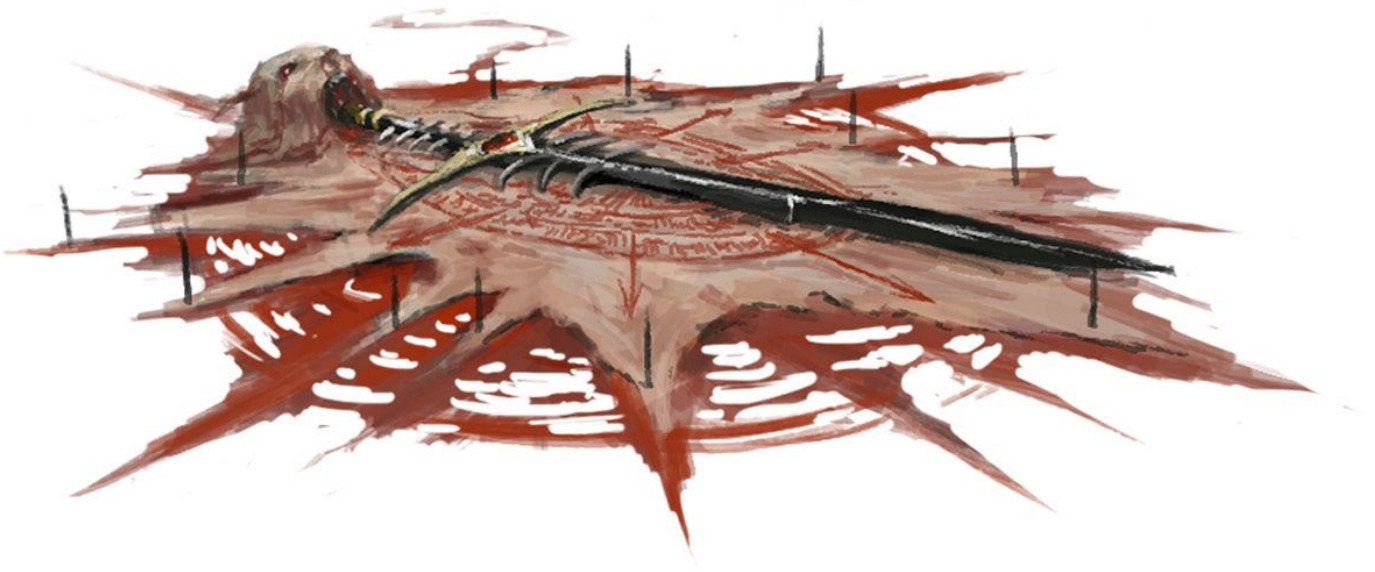
INDEX CHAOTIGA[™]



PLAGUE MARINES[™]

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PLAGUE MARINES

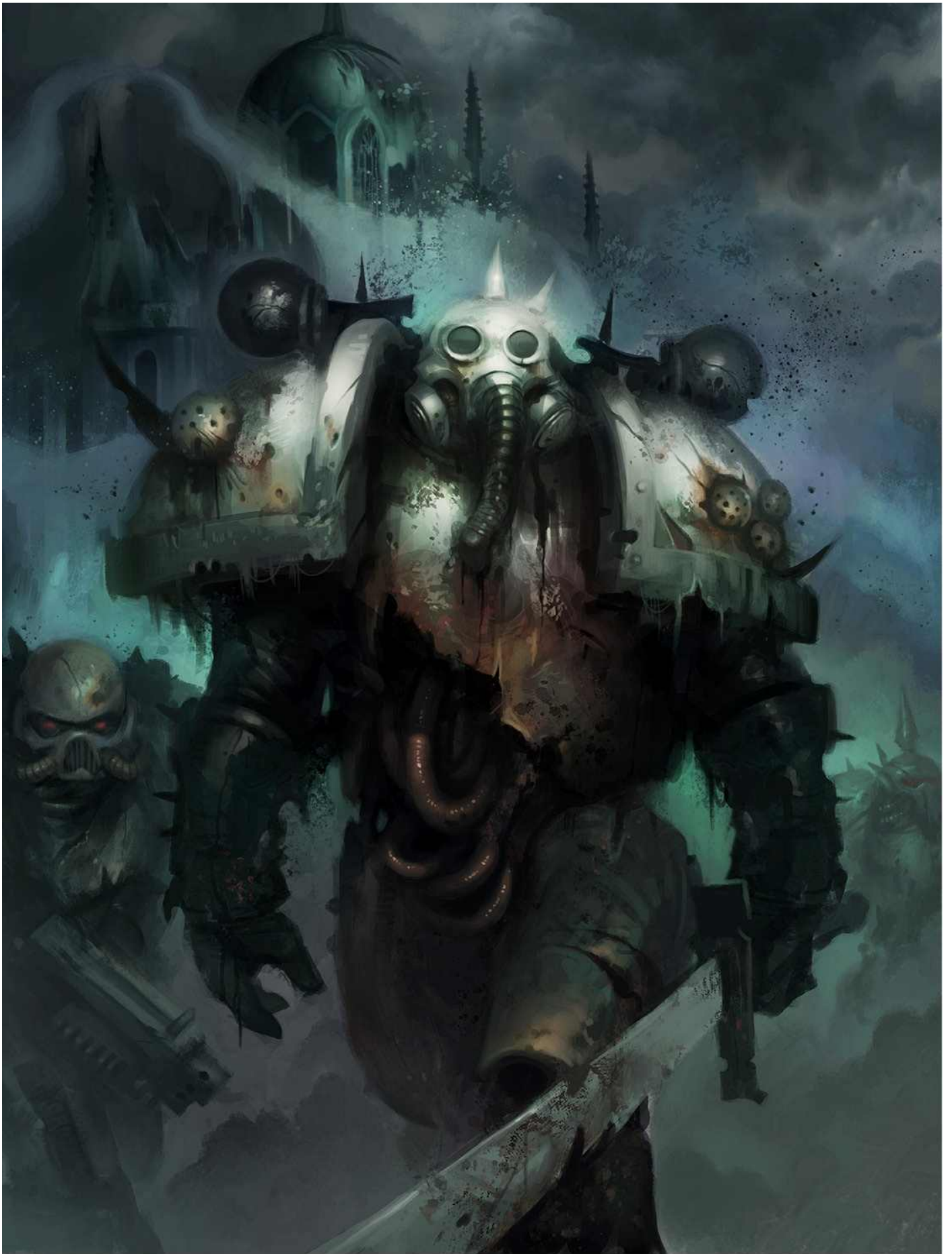


PLAGUE MARINES

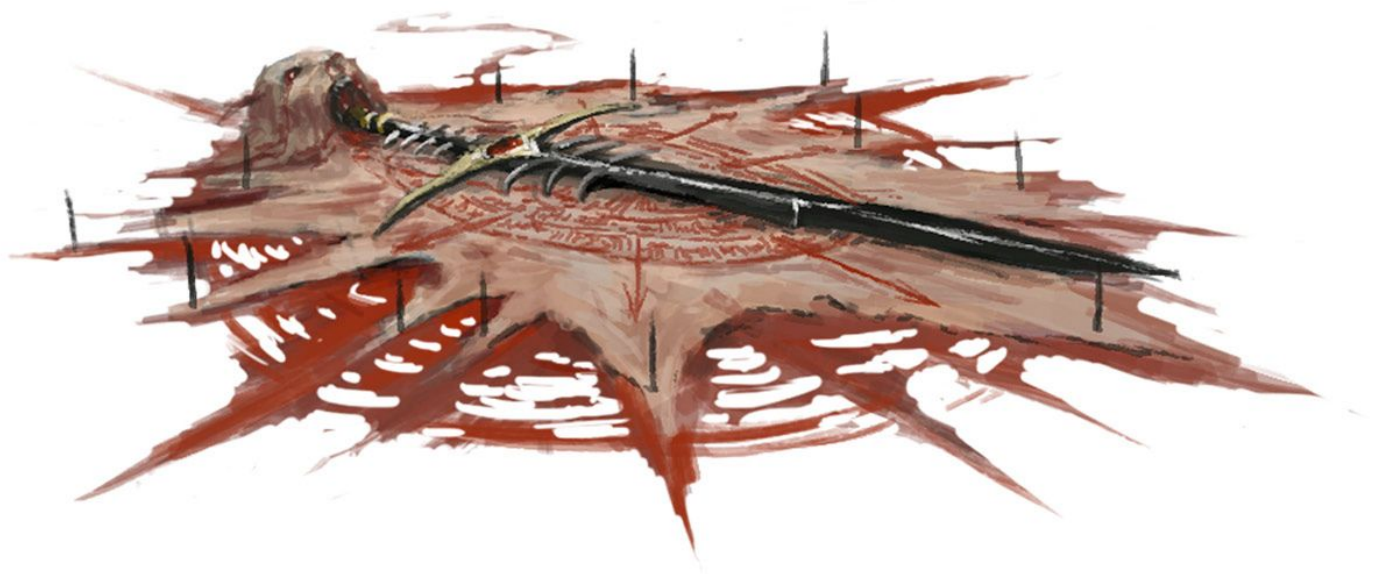


They are as relentless, remorseless and resilient as they are repugnant to the senses. Their rotten bodies are bloated and festering, but they fight with all the superhuman skills of a Space Marine. They are corruption personified; their every rasping breath taints the surrounding air so that living things putrefy in their presence. They are the Plague Marines, a deadly blight upon the Imperium of Mankind and a constant scourge to the galaxy at large.

Plague Marines are Chaos Space Marines who have sworn themselves wholly to the Chaos God Nurgle, the Lord of Decay and Master of Pestilence. Nurgle empowers those who would see every one of Mankind's accomplishments reduced to moldering ruin. His mortal servants, the Plague Marines, spread disease and contagion throughout the galaxy in the name of their festering master. They can be found fighting for renegade warlords or amongst the throngs that flock beneath the banner of Abaddon and his Black Legion. Whether part of minor raids or full-scale Black Crusades, the Plague Marines return to wreak vengeance upon the Imperium of Mankind, warring against the Emperor they once vowed to serve. Led by the most powerful of their foul kind, the Plague Marines will also launch their own assaults to assail the Imperium.



BACKGROUND



ORIGINS

The first Plague Marines were warriors of the fourteenth of the twenty original Space Marine Legions founded by the Emperor. They were originally named the Dusk Raiders, but when they were reunited with their lost Primarch, Mortarion, he renamed them the Death Guard – the name of the army he had created upon his home world of Barbarus. In their defence of Mankind, the Astartes of the XIV Legion had already gained a reputation as disciplined fighters, and were especially renowned for their ability to unflinchingly endure all hardships.

'You are my unbroken blades. You are the Death Guard. By your hand shall justice be delivered, and doom shall stalk a thousand worlds.'

- Mortarion, upon first seeing the XIV Legion

In the decades that followed their renaming, the Death Guard fought tirelessly in the service of the Great Crusade. Never once did they relent in battle as they pursued the liberation and reunification of Mankind with a steady fervour. Their restless fleet ploughed the cold void from one campaign to the next, resupplying on the move and pausing only to make war. The Death Guard did not garrison, they did not build – they only tore down and slew. They were not the fastest to respond, nor were they the most aggressive of the Legions. Instead, they were coldly determined and methodical. With inexorable progress, world after world fell before them like wheat before the blade of a scythe.

Their Primarch, Mortarion, was gaunt, grim and utterly driven. In the Legion made from his genetic material, he instilled his own determined and uncompromising vigour. With his breathing apparatus and great scythe, Mortarion was akin to death itself on the battlefield. In combat, he was a natural leader; when not at war, however, Mortarion was an outsider. Pallid and hairless, he never joined in any kind of camaraderie with his troops or with his fellow Primarchs. Only in two others did Mortarion find kindred spirits – Konrad Curze, the Night Haunter and dread master of the Night Lords, and Horus Lupercal.

Horus, the Emperor's favoured son and the Warmaster of the nascent Imperium, recognised the solid valour of Mortarion and his Death Guard. During the great battles of that age, Horus would often place Mortarion and his Legion in the centre of the fighting, counting on the enemy's inability to displace or oust them. In this way, the Death Guard became like an anvil – for under no circumstances would Mortarion be driven out of his immovable position. In his tactical genius, Horus would then use his most aggressive troops as the hammer – typically choosing his own Luna Wolves, the Space Wolves or the World Eaters. As proven by the many victories of the Great Crusade, it was a mercilessly effective combination.

In the charismatic Warmaster, Mortarion found a mentor. They grew so close that other Primarchs openly doubted where Mortarion's true loyalty lay. As it turned out, this was prophetic, for when Horus turned to rebellion and Chaos, he convinced Mortarion to join him. Indeed, Mortarion did not know that secret Chaos worshippers within his ranks – led by his honoured right hand, Calas Typhon – had already begun to take much of the Legion down the path of corruption. Little did Mortarion know the extent to which this decision would cost him.

Mortarion's first act of rebellion was during the Scouring of Istvan III, when he knowingly sent those whom he considered likely to remain loyal to the Emperor into Horus' trap. Once the loyalist Adeptus Astartes were purged, the Death Guard openly fought on the side of the traitors, firing upon their own brethren.

Horus planned for the Death Guard to form part of the invasion force he would lead to attack Terra. Determined to join the Warmaster's siege of the Imperial Palace, Mortarion led his fleet into the Warp. He did not know that he was entering an eternal nightmare from which he would never escape, dooming himself and his Legion to the powers of an ancient and malignant god.

The fleet was trapped and becalmed in the midst of an impenetrable Warp storm. No one could guide the ships through the murk, and they were unable to shift the fleet back into realspace. Few knew this was truly a part of Calas Typhon's plan. The entire fleet was forced to drift helplessly through the Immaterium.

Without hope of salvation, their warships moved aimlessly. It was during this time that the cloying infections of Nurgle began to silently assail the Death Guard. One by one, the Destroyer Plague and Nurgle's Rot – two of the favoured inventions of the Plaguefather – infiltrated their ships.

Had they been any other Legion, the Death Guard would have succumbed to the horrific maladies that beset them. Instead, the superhuman augmentations of the Space Marines proved their worst enemy; their own legendary resilience was rendered into a flaw for, despite the dire diseases which now polluted their every bodily function, they could not die. Instead, the Death Guard were slowly, sickeningly transformed...

At one time, Mortarion and the Death Guard had been warriors of the Imperium. They had been sent into battle in the most hostile environments yet discovered. They had been sent to worlds that unaltered humans could not dare step foot upon, much less fight on and win. Pestilence, contagion, toxins, rad-poisoning and worse – there had been nothing that the genetically modified Space Marines could not handle, and the Death Guard especially were praised even by their fellow brethren for being of a hardy and irrepressible stock. Now, as they were weakened and abused by the disease that ran rampant through their ships, they grew terrified. Their superior immune systems were rendered meaningless.

Frail and beaten, they dropped to their knees. The disease roiled in their guts, bloating and distending their bellies. Pustules blossomed on their bodies, sprouting out to pop with grotesque squelches. So many fat flies buzzed through the thickening miasma inside each warship that they appeared as black clouds. Wriggling, the flies could squirm under power armour to deliver stinging bites. Where their foul mouths sucked blood, the flesh withered to a gel-like consistency. Their eggs hatched and writhing worm-like maggots burrowed beneath diseased skin.

Day after day, what the Death Guard endured was unimaginable, yet none suffered more greatly than Mortarion. Time passes strangely in the Warp, but trapped in these torpid lulls, each hour felt like a year. Mortarion watched with growing horror as his proud Legion degenerated before his eyes. Whether he perceived, in those terrible and unending days, the loss of what he had once stood for, and the damnation he had wrought upon himself and his Legion, only Mortarion will ever know. Unable to endure the suffering any longer, Mortarion first offered into the Immaterium himself, followed by his Legion, and finally his very soul in exchange for deliverance.

A presence in the Immaterium answered, as though it had been waiting all along, biding its time. In the depths of the Warp, the great god Nurgle, Lord of Decay and Father of Disease, claimed that debt and accepted Mortarion and the Death Guard as his own.

Thus were born the first Plague Marines.





THE BLESSINGS OF NURGLE

What emerged from the Warp when the Death Guard fleet broke back into realspace bore little resemblance to what had entered. Few sights are more loathsome than the corrupted forms of the scabbed and infected Space Marines. Their oozing power armour has often burst from their extreme bloating, or rotted away in places to expose pestilence-filled innards. From out of these rents waft foetid odours so vile they can lay low the warriors' foes. Truly had the Plague Marines become walking pestilence-carriers.

Nurgle had upheld his end of the bargain, though in a way not intended by those who begged for his aid. He had delivered Mortarion and the Death Guard, saving them from their excruciating suffering. For now, the Plague Marines no longer felt the agony of their Warp-pox. Indeed, swollen with corruption, they were no longer capable of feeling any pain whatsoever. A bolter shell might penetrate his armour and explode within his rank guts, but a Plague Marine would feel no discomfort. Now they could fight on through loss of limbs or evisceration. Always resilient, now the Plague Marines were the toughest of their kind. Although some of their superhuman speed and agility was lost with their bloated forms, this was compensated for by their ability to absorb or shrug off damage that would slay another Space Marine.

Once, the Death Guard's power armour was gleaming white and grey, the colours they had worn when the Legion served the Imperium. No longer. Nothing was the same – their weapons, their engines of war, their fleet itself – all had been altered by the sickly sorcery of Chaos. Blasphemous iconography adorns their wargear – debased symbols of Nurgle that are loathsome to the eye. Their equipment is pitted with erosion, worn by rust, or the metal itself turned into diseased flesh. Weapons or armour might glow with a lambent green luminescence; the very starships that carried them to their fate now ooze gangrenous pus.



ONWARDS AND EVER VIRULENT

The Horus Heresy was eventually thwarted, but the Space Marine Legions claimed by the Chaos Gods were changed forever. After the Warmaster was cast down and slain by the Emperor, the remaining traitor legionaries retreated to the Eye of Terror. Unlike the other Legions, the Death Guard were not splintered; Mortarion's befouled troops made an ordered withdrawal, loyalist Space Marines and Imperial Guard breaking themselves upon them again and again.

Within the Eye of Terror, Nurgle elevated the Primarch Mortarion to Daemonhood and gave to him the world that would eventually become known as the Plague Planet – a festering orb of poison and virulent gases that was a horrific parody of his home world of Barbarus. In a way, he had come home and he was now gifted or cursed to a deathless state, a Prince of Decay ruling beneath his Master, the Plague Father, King of Disease. From there, Mortarion would have much to do...

Since that time, many traitorous Space Marines have dedicated themselves to Nurgle. Those that are strong and brave enough will make their way to the Plague Planet. Upon that harsh and deadly world, those who can prove themselves resilient enough to survive can join the most foetid of cadres if they swear loyalty to the Primarch Mortarion and his lord, Nurgle. Only then will they be blessed with the exact corrupting strain of disease that will make them a full-fledged Plague Marine.

Besides Mortarion, only a few rot-minded Sorcerers of Nurgle know the arcane secrets required to create a Plague Marine. The rituals themselves are dangerous to attempt, and even the slightest mistake – chanting an incorrect word or failing to cover the tokens with enough mucus – can be enough to gain not the Plaguefather's blessing, but his ire. Even if they are performed correctly, not everyone who is so blessed survives the dreadful becoming process, their bodies unable to contain the disease and shed the pain. It is known that Abaddon the Despoiler, the Warmaster and leader of the Black Legion, has won many of these spellcasters to his cause. In return for fealty, blight-mages will bestow the great, pestilent gift in the Warmaster's name, filling his ranks with Plague Marines.

'Decay and corruption of the flesh are their secret joys, and they are abominations in the eyes of men.'

Anonymous Inquisitor





THE MOST BLESSED OF ALL

Typhon, having orchestrated the grand corruption of the Death Guard, was rewarded in the Warp with the most defilement by Nurgle. While the others turned into Plague Marines, Typhon swelled in size, his skin and armour becoming one. Great funnels of pestilential bone burst from his body. Into these poured thousands of Nurgle's Daemon-flies, gnawing him from the inside out until his rotten shell teemed and heaved with squirming life. Typhon became a hollow colony of disease-carrying insects. He was transformed into the host of the Destroyer Plague.

Now known as Typhus, he that was once Typhon had no wish to remain on the Plague Planet like Mortarion. Instead, taking with him those Death Guard whose hearts still blazed most with vengeance, Typhus launched his Plague Fleet back into realspace to carry on the Long War against the Imperium of Mankind. Like a wound that never heals, to this day, Typhus continues that war – and he remains the most feared and destructive of all the Plague Marines.



PLAGUE MARINES IN BATTLE

As if the sight and smell of the Plague Marines was not dreadful enough, they are further gifted. Their rot-ridden bodies, scab-filled brains and necrotic flesh make them inured to the agony of battle. They feel no wound nor suffer the debilitation of pain. In helpless fury, Imperial Guard platoons have found themselves pouring all available firepower into a squad of Plague Marines only to find their foes' plodding advance unhindered. Even when hit multiple times, the disease-toughened armour-hides of the Plague Marines either deflect the shot, or simply absorb it with no adverse effect. Although they might jerk, twist or momentarily go down as las-beams sear through their corpulent bodies, the Plague Marines relentlessly continue their attack. Those who have faced the Plague Marines and lived to tell the tale, such as some among the Guardsmen of Cadia, have learned to concentrate their firepower. One especially effective tactic they have learned is to direct weapons normally reserved for taking out armoured vehicles at the Plague Marines, though nothing less than a demolisher siege cannon will ensure that those monsters of corruption will not get back up again when the smoke settles.

Plague Marines themselves prefer close-ranged firefights, advancing so that the spray of shells from their boltguns inflicts maximum damage. Should any enemy dare to assault the Plague Marines, they will find themselves confronting two weapons unique to these bloated warriors. The first is the plague knife. The pitted metal blade of this jagged weapon is beslimed and dripping with the most virulent of viruses. It is said that each blade is blessed and dipped into vats of liquid death within the domain of Nurgle himself. Perhaps it is true, for even a scratch from such a lethal weapon has been known to inflict utter agony, slaying the most monstrous of enemies in mere seconds. The second terror weapon of the Plague Marines is more horrible still – blight grenades. Sometimes known as 'death's heads', for they are made from the severed heads of fallen enemies, these grenades are filled to the brim with a cocktail of disease before being sealed with ancient wax or melted body fat. When thrown with force, these shrunken heads explode in a burst of septic juices and toxic pus. A cloud of blinding spores and pure contagion is released from the explosion, hanging in the air like death itself.

The Death Guard were organised around the principle of disciplined heavy infantry and, to this day, the Plague Marines are still typically used in that role. The Imperium has learnt on many battlefields that, short of employing overwhelming firepower or the dedicated support of super-heavy vehicles, Plague Marines are difficult to shift. They wear aged power armour, are incredibly resilient and their immunity to pain ensures they cannot be panicked. They readily form the immovable anvil to hold foes in place while a cunning Chaos Lord lines up the hammer strike. Their ranks provide a stable firebase from which assaults can be launched, or prove a reliable unit to hold defensive positions indefinitely.

In the street to street fighting amongst the hab-blocks that characterised the Siege of Noxtia, a few squads of Plague Marines were able to delay the Blood Angels counter-attack for so long that contagion was allowed to spread across the whole of the planet. When the dead rose up as Plague Zombies the Imperium abandoned all hope of saving Noxtia, marking it instead for Exterminatus. The Imperial Navy armada tasked with the deed never completed their assignment, however, as they were intercepted and boarded by a Plague Fleet headed by Typhus himself. In such close confines as ships' decks, tunnel fighting or the claustrophobic streets of a typical overcrowded hive city, the Plague Marines have proven near unbeatable. Even the most stalwart of foes will hesitate before launching an assault against the most resilient Chaos Space Marines in the galaxy. The prospects of breathing the same foetid air, or advancing through a hallway where the clouds left by blight grenades cannot disperse is daunting indeed.



THE PLAGUE FLEETS

Many Plague Marines are scattered amongst the forces of the Chaos Space Marine Renegades. These diseased warriors have given allegiance – at least temporarily – to a warlord and fight in his name. However, there is always another duty for a Plague Marine. It is their charge to spread corruption across the galaxy in the name of Nurgle. This they do, releasing their bilious concoctions and spreading the blessings of their corrupt god.

The best method to spread a new disease, short of a daemonic incursion, is to launch a Plague Fleet. The warfleets of Nurgle, better known as Plague Fleets, are a mournful sight. They are twisted armadas, largely composed of starships that have succumbed to disease. The stale, recycled air and long periods of time within trapped confines that accompany interstellar travel are ripe breeding grounds for disease. Add to that the entropic element of Warp travel and the associated dangers of contamination, and it is little wonder that entire spacecraft and their crews never reach their intended destinations. In a weakened and blighted state, some will go to any lengths to survive. At this point, Nurgle might spare them the sorrow of death and pain for their eternal servitude, and another craft is added to the fleets, swelling their number.

Not all of the ships in a Plague Fleet are made of such flotsam. Some, the very largest and oldest, predate the Imperium itself. Vessels like the *Terminus Est* are unique ships, in a class by themselves, engines of war whose secrets were lost in Mankind's Dark Age of Technology. Their kind will never be seen again. Whether a relic of a bygone age or a simple cargo barge, the longer a ship is in service to the Plague Fleet, the more grotesque it becomes. In the Warp, decay and disease do not only affect the living; even the metal hulls of the vast starcraft become sickened. Twisted and pockmarked as if stricken by some malady, the ships themselves reflect the bloated Plague Marines that sail upon them. To metal, Nurgle's Rust is every bit as contagious as Nurgle's Rot is to flesh. The Plague ships bear such disease scars with pride, as

plasma coils and radiation conduits seep magma-like pus, or the steel-plated hull blisters with iron cankers.

When a deadly new contagion is ready, the Plague Fleets will slip anchor from the Warp. Led by one of the oldest and most powerful of ships, captained by some powerful plague-ridden Daemon Prince, Chaos Lord or Sorcerer, they will leave the Plague Planet with holds full of Plague Marines and disease. These Plague Crusades penetrate deep into the heart of the Imperium, bringing with them fire and battle. When they depart, they leave behind something other than simply vengeance-wrought ruin. The Warp-pox, the Black Wither, the cruel Tentacle Scurvy – each has run rife across planets and covered whole star systems in despair in the wake of such an attack.

Famous Battleships

Terminus Est - Capital ship of Typhus.

Reaper's Scythe - Battle Barge of Mortarion during the Great Crusade. Now the capital ship of the Plague Fleet under Plague Lord Scabarlous the Virulent.

Pitted Iron - Battleship class, commander unknown. Last seen in Ultima Segmentum.

Greenbottle - Escort class. Despite its relatively small size, the Greenbottle has proven able to slip through defences to release orbital virus bombardments on several Imperial hive worlds to devastating effect.

'Attention Citizens: Ware the Zombie Plague. All deceased must be burned within six minutes of death to prevent re-animation.'

- Propaganda Poster seen on Cadia

FALL OF A HIVE

Something about the orbiting cargo ship *Wayfarer* had set off the alarms, the klaxons blaring loudly. The *Wayfarer* had been denied any landing rights at Greaveport. That part wasn't so strange – such things happened routinely. Most often it was paperwork that was needed, and in a few days, at the most, the situation would be resolved. Naturally, it was widely speculated that bribery was involved in such transactions – no one really trusted offworld traders upon Selbus. But this time was different. Despite orders to stand down, the *Wayfarer* had launched three of its shuttlecraft. They had refused to pull back, shutting off their comm-channels so that buzzing was the only response to the planetbound authorities' demands.

The planetary defence force had no choice but to fire warning shots as the craft streaked into the lower atmosphere. This had no effect and it finally dawned upon the port officials that they might be under attack. Ork raiders had come through three or four times before in living memory, and Eldar pirates were known to hunt the space lanes. But Selbus was a planet of eighteen billion lives and the rattletrap shuttles coming down couldn't hold more than a few hundred; they weren't even military in nature. It was either a mistake, or they were facing the least subtle and most desperate raiders yet encountered. PDF officers and sergeants alike shared a wry smile between themselves.

Still, ignoring a refusal of landing rights was a serious offence and the port master ordered the flak batteries that surrounded the landing sites to open up. The skies blazed and two of the approaching craft were hit – one exploding in a ball of fire, another spiraling downwards to crash in the ash wastes south of the hive spires. The last of the ships landed, however, and PDF forces scrambled to set up perimeters around its touchdown point.

Where it had travelled from was unknown, but the landing craft was so ramshackle and unclean that it might have been of Ork origin. A dark substance leaked from between its metal panels, and it was so rust-ridden that its armoured hide seemed to have blisters and bubbles upon it. The loading ramp declined and a dark cloud issued forth – as if the ship had been on fire. At first, the PDF forces reckoned this was the reason for the desperate exodus from the mother ship in orbit – an internal fire would send the crews scrambling. Then it became apparent that it was not smoke, but rather clouds of black flies that spread out, buzzing and biting, amongst the curious populace. What emerged down the ramp next might once have been Space Marines, but there was no doubt what they were now... Plague Marines had come to Selbus.

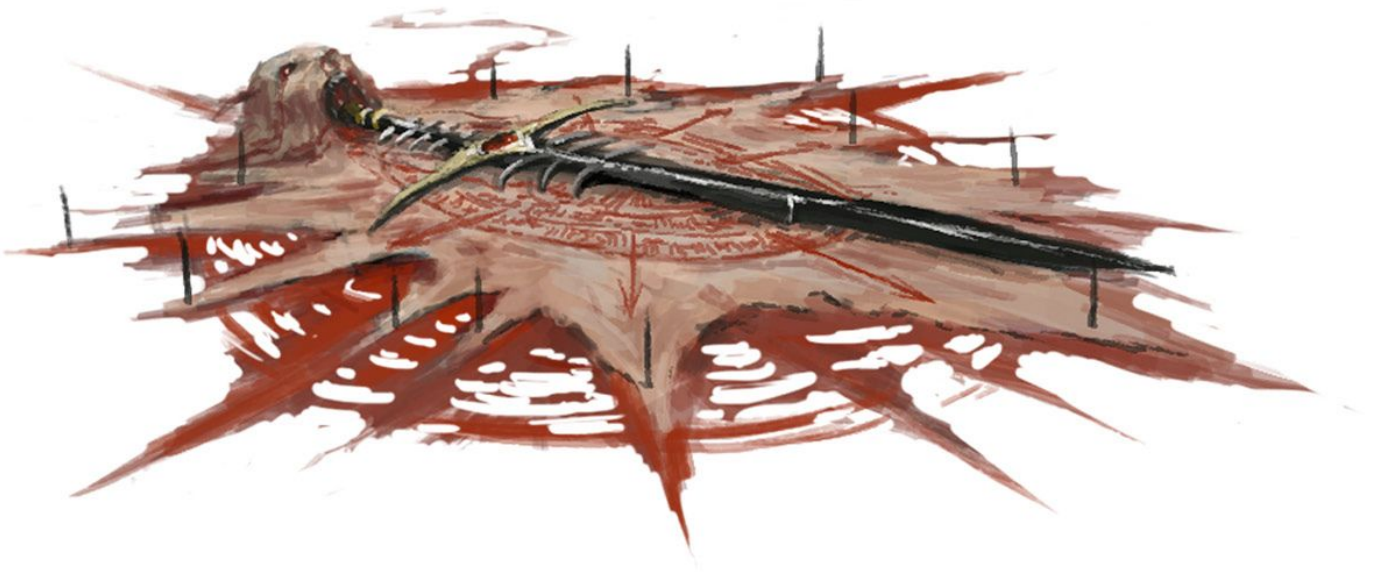
Instant fear gripped the PDF, but they remembered their training and opened up with everything they had. They might as well have welcomed them with kindly words for all the good their lasguns did. The Plague Marines moved like they were under no pressure, calmly advancing. A few jerked backwards as beams of las fire struck them, but they soon resumed their steady pace. When they reached the halfway point to the defensive line formed in front of them, they too began to fire. The effect of their shots was immediately seen, as bolter fire ripped up and down the PDF line, tearing bloody gaps in the formation. When one of the Plague Marines threw some sort of gas grenade, that was enough to send the remaining PDF running.

The mayhem that followed was horrific but short-lived. The Plague Marines mowed down PDF warriors and dock workers alike, shooting until they ran out of ammunition. With none to impede them, they marched back to their shuttle and returned to their orbiting ship. But none of that mattered anymore; the damage was already done.

It was not the slaughter at the docks that concerned them, but rather the plague that was now raging across the city. In less than a week, Selbus fell.



MINIATURE SHOWCASE





Plague Marine with boltgun





Plague Marine with plasma gun

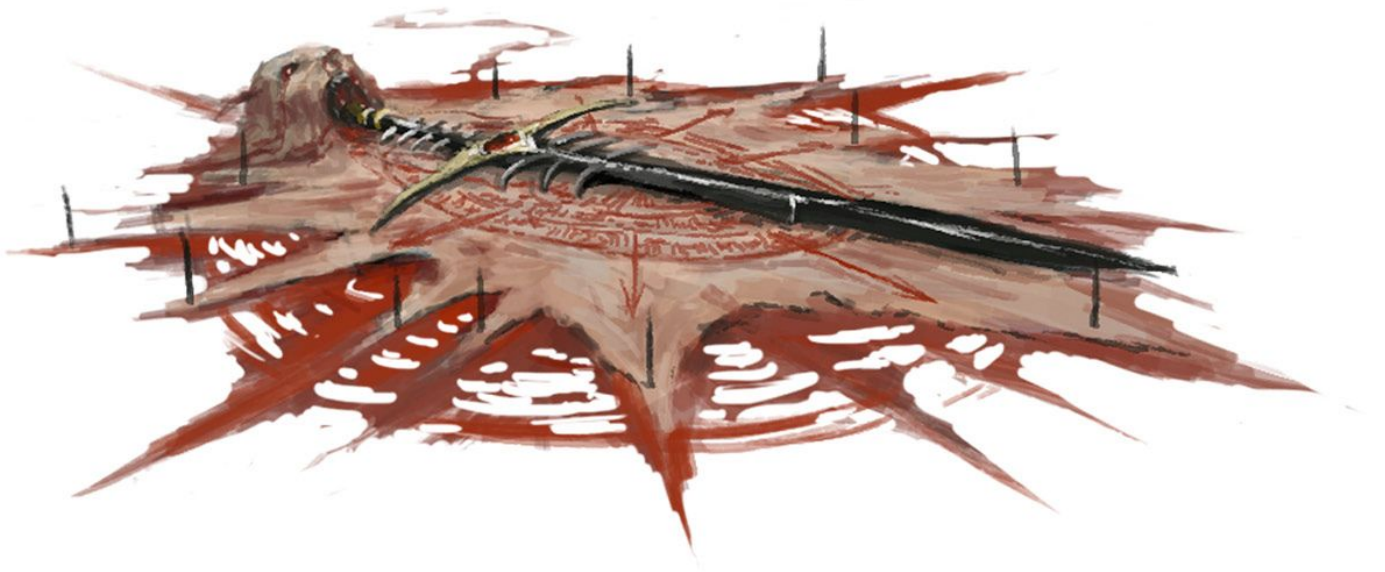
WARHAMMER
40,000

INDEX CHAOTICA™



POSSESSED™

INDEX CHAOTICA: --- POSSESSED ---



POSSESSED



THE DAEMON WITHIN

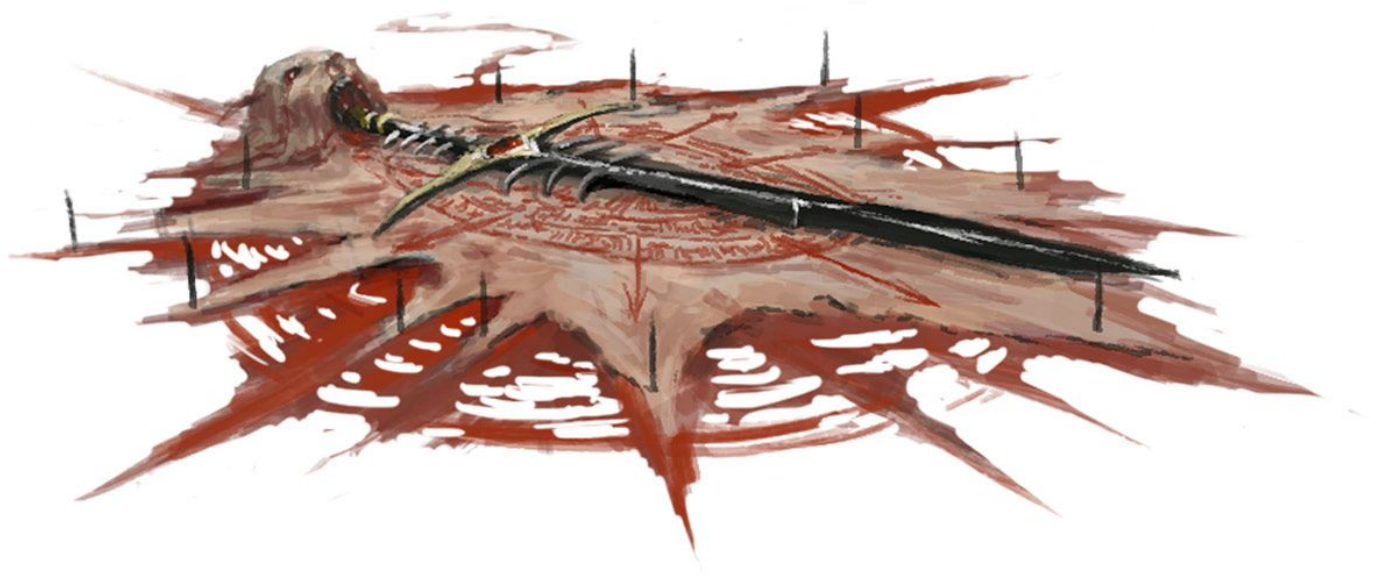
Chaos Space Marines who have been claimed by Daemons are known as the Possessed. They are depraved and bestial warriors, capable of feats of brutal strength and unnerving speed.

Though all traitors who fall to the lure of the Ruinous Powers are corrupt, a Possessed is especially fanatical and savage. This is because a Chaos Space Marine Possessed has completely given himself over to a Daemon of the Warp. Such a creature utterly consumes its host's soul and, ultimately, his body.

The results of this unholy union of mortal and Daemon are manifested in hideous mutations, meaning that no two Possessed look alike. Deadly claws, membranous wings, misshapen limbs, unfurling tentacles or gaping maws burst through the flesh of a Possessed to better echo the nature of the Daemon within. So thorough is this conquest of a Chaos Space Marine that the horrors of the Warp even blend with and reshape power armour.



VESSELS OF CHAOS



THE MANY FORMS OF CHAOS

Along with unnatural and debased augmentations, a Possessed gains heightened senses. As a consequence of its enhanced perception, it is able to track its prey across ashen wastelands or through toxic swamps. When one finally gets close to its prey, be that in the front line of battle or a stealthy assault deep behind enemy lines, the Possessed unleashes the full force of the Daemon within. Any weapons that the Chaos Space Marine once carried have long been discarded, for a Possessed has little need for conventional tools of destruction. A Possessed stands ready to rip its foes limb from limb with newly sprouted claws and barbed appendages.

The forms of the Possessed are boundless, but the mutations they undergo are not limited to their physical forms. Their former personalities are also subsumed, giving rise to increasingly inhuman behaviours. Whatever sentience the Chaos Space Marine displayed before possession by a Warp Entity – whoever strode into battle with his bolter roaring – is forever lost to the Immaterium, for his entire mind has been surrendered to a Daemon. Only a dark echo of their original essence remains.

Those Chaos Space Marines who were of a more devout nature end up slaughtering their foes whilst screaming the names of their gods. These Possessed are relentless hunters, roaming ahead of their traitor brethren. When they kill, such is their devotion to the Ruinous Powers that their victims are often arranged into ritually significant contortions, or have heretical runes carved into bloodied foreheads, the Possessed chanting debased litanies all the while. Chaos Space Marines who were sadistic killers in their previous existence are transformed into frenzied and uncontrollable slaughterers. They fight with wild abandon, gleefully carving wide bloody paths through advancing infantry, delighting in the carnage they bring.

After they have been bonded with a Daemon, the Possessed will still march to war clad in the same colours as the warband or Legion in which they previously fought. They can often be found fighting alongside others of their Possessed kin. It is thought that this is simply because such formations of Chaos Space Marines are more effective in battle, or perhaps they share some bestial pack mentality.



ENDURING THE MORTAL REALM

Daemons are only able to exist in the material realm for a short time, unless they are bound to a mortal host. While a Daemon might be able to terrorise a city or even a world while bound within a human host, a Chaos Space Marine provides a Daemon with the means to endure indefinitely outside of the Warp, inhabiting the body of a peerless killer with the means to cause immense damage across numerous Imperial worlds. Therefore a Chaos Space Marine is a highly-prized vessel for the horrors of the Warp. These warriors prove to be hardy hosts, and can endure mutation and torment that would easily tear apart the weak flesh of an unworthy cultist.

To harbour a Daemon within, a Chaos Space Marine must prove their unflinching loyalty to the Chaos Gods. Yet service alone is not enough to warrant possession. The destruction of flesh and souls are quotidian acts, and duly expected of any individual in the service of the Ruinous Powers. Therefore, the journey to possession by a Daemon requires a Chaos Space Marine to commit to a specific sequence of actions. It culminates in a debased act conducted by either a Sorcerer or Dark Apostle.



THE RITE OF THE RESHAPER

It is suggested in the copy of the *Heretica Daemonica* held within the vaults of the *Ordo Malleus* that there exist several methods through which the Daemon may materialise within the body of a Space Marine. One of the few rituals known to be detailed in the forbidden volume, and certainly the most common method through which a Chaos Space Marine may become a Possessed, is the Rite of the Reshaper.

The ultimate stage of this blasphemous ritual is performed by either a Dark Apostle or a Sorcerer skilled in communing with the creatures of the Warp. However, before either can conclude the ritual, eight worthy and potent blood trophies are required to be taken by the Chaos Space Marine who seeks possession. These specimens may range from the intact corpse of a prized Eldar seer to the head of an Adeptus Astartes warrior. It is said that the Chaos Gods whisper the names of sought-after victims into the head of the Chaos Space Marine – and that there exists some order of preference in the business of possession.

Accordingly, a Chaos Space Marine who seeks the blessings of a particular god may hunt out appropriate victims to please the deity. Consequently, those who seek possession by Daemons of Nurgle ravage plague planets for rancid trophies. Likewise, those who wish for a Daemon of Khorne seek out the vilest murderers in the galaxy. The *Heretica Daemonica* suggests that each possession is unique, with its own particular trail of blood.

A Chaos Space Marine who seeks a Daemon may travel for years to find the correct components for the ritual, scouring planets, boarding long-forgotten ships and uttering corrupt hymns as he disembowels those who protect his target. To celebrate his depraved progress, the Chaos Space Marine engages in orgiastic feasting at tables within ransacked gubernatorial castles, with only the bloodied corpses of its previous occupants for company. It is a path of excess and slaughter. Yet, ever craving a Daemon, the Chaos Space Marine remains focused on his next debased act. Fanatical and devoted to the cause, only he will know when he is ready to complete the ritual.

The final step of this path often takes place in the location of a former atrocity, though it does not need to have been one conducted by the traitor warriors themselves. The site is often an execution ground for rogue psykers or a former battlefield where the air is still thick with the wails of the dead.

The harvested trophies, the most powerful of which will always remain alive until the last possible moment, are then laid out on the ground, forming eight points of a blasphemous sigil.

As a Sorcerer or Dark Apostle conducts the dark Rite of the Reshaper, uttering foul litanies in shifting cadences, the living trophy is killed by the whip of a Warp-blade across its throat. Standing amidst the thick gouts of blood, the Chaos Space Marine seeking possession will press the tip of the tainted blade into his own armour and flesh. His skin itches beneath his ceramite shell. His body throbs with pain. His mind aches under the scrutiny of a thousand roiling Warp-forms, each competing to conquer his flesh-form and alter it. As the ritual of reshaping concludes, the marks of the Daemon begin to manifest – tendrils, curved horns or wings, all dripping with gore. The Possessed rises, forever changed by

the powers of the Warp.





A DAEMON BANISHED

It is not unknown for a Daemon to be banished from the mutated form of the Chaos Space Marine. The reasons for this are always unclear, but it is seldom long that such a prized vehicle for carnage stands empty.

When a Daemon is banished, other creatures from the Warp jostle to occupy the former Possessed. The strongest Daemon burrows into the Chaos Space Marine's physical form and reshapes his flesh in hideous new ways. There is nothing that the Chaos Space Marine can do to influence this. All the while, his mind howls with the pain of the new possession. His skin shudders as a new Daemon's grip closes once again on his form. But these are pains to be relished rather than just endured, for the Possessed knows his form is becoming faster and stronger, gaining sharper senses still.

On rare occasions, a Possessed Space Marine may be void of a Daemon for a sustained period of time. Whether this is because they have not caused enough mayhem to satisfy their patron gods, or for some other reason, remains a mystery. Once empty of a Daemon, though, a Possessed Space Marine becomes a husk of his former self, weaker in battle and craving to be a vector for the power of the Chaos gods once again. Some have been known to re-attempt their original rituals and continue to stray throughout the galaxy in search of ways to bring back their former powers.



THE DAEMON WITHOUT

The origin of Possessed Chaos Space Marines within the history of the Imperium remains murky at best, and information remains scarce. On a single piece of parchment crafted from human skin, which can be found only in a forgotten library within the Eye of Terror, the foul, heretical words are written in blood. This same parchment explains how Daemon forms materialised within the bodies of a band of Word Bearers – the so-called Gal Vorbak – yet their acts and deeds are lost amidst ten thousand years of bloody warfare. Likewise, a single venerated bronze plaque deep within the sacred halls of the Adeptus Custodes, which is tended to by auto-cantillating servo-skulls, tells of noble warriors who fell to these same Daemon-possessed traitors within the dark days of the Heresy. These are the earliest fragments of knowledge that concern the first Possessed Chaos Space Marines. But their heinous deeds soon became all-too familiar.

One of the first recorded incidents of the raw potential for violence of the Possessed occurred on Ptolemax XI. In 674.M31, a Night Lords warband veered out of the Eye of Terror to raid the city's treasury and reclaim the treasured Black Claw. Among the Warband, eight Possessed in particular fought with a ferocity and rabid violence hitherto unseen in the sub-sector, let alone the planet. With the Possessed at the front of the attack, the Night Lords punctured the city's defenses with raw daemonic fury. The Possessed smelled out the planet's governor, Ang Mantral. Ransacking his mansion, it was those eight warriors who slaughtered all of his bodyguards and administrative menials. With fevered delight, the Possessed seized the Black Claw and the Night Lords vanished into the Eye of Terror once more. Only bodies and nerve-shredded menials were left in their wake, and Ang Mantral's skinless corpse stood in place of the Imperial banner.

Later, raids including bands of the Possessed became more frequent. By mid-M32, there was scarcely a star system that did not suffer the brunt of Warp-borne Chaos incursions that featured the Possessed.



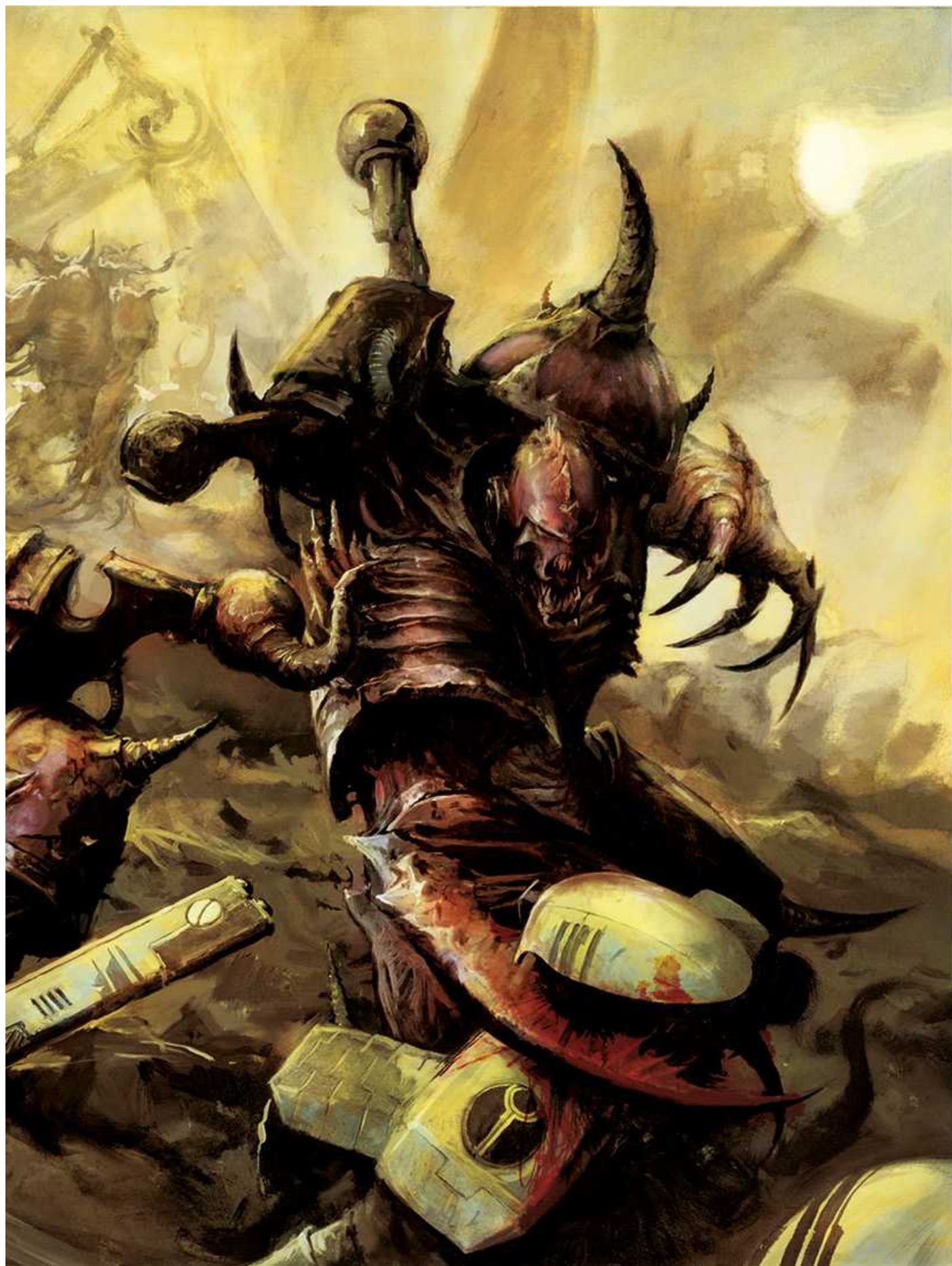
THE DAEMON'S GRIP TIGHTENS

As the Ruinous Powers seduced more Chaos Space Marines into offering themselves as hosts for Daemons, the Possessed became firmly established among the Chaos warbands and Legions. Their depraved and loathsome acts grew to become frequent sights across the galaxy. The Possessed soon stood at the very front of each Chaos assault. With their Daemon-enhanced senses, they navigated the violent tides of the Immaterium, guiding Chaos fleets out into the mortal realm to embark upon reigns of terror. At the deformed hands of the Possessed, the structures and settlements of the Imperium suffered greatly, and their foul deeds have become infamous.

During the events of the 5th Black Crusade, while the Imperial forces battled against Abaddon's relentless assault, a Flawless Host warband led by squads of Possessed tormented the agri worlds of Galvan II and IV. Not only did they smash their way through Imperial defence emplacements – woefully undermanned as Abaddon's forces kept reinforcements from reaching the beleaguered worlds – but they went on to massacre the populations of several cities in a horrifically violent fashion. They raided temples and sacred shrines, leaving with powerful artifacts requested of them by Abaddon. Not satisfied with their haul, before the Flawless Host exited the planet's orbit, they destroyed its shipyards and major manufacturums, delivering a critical blow to the Imperium during a dark hour.

During 982.M41, in the shrine slums of St. Harrod, an enormous horde of the Crimson Slaughter Possessed spread great devastation. The Daemon Space Marines came from out of a dawn sky with no warning, great winged, rib-horned and betentacled monstrosities clad in crimson ceramite. The reshaped creatures proceeded to pillage the cities' temples, committing acts of violence with lustful savagery. Members of the Ecclesiarchy were slaughtered in the cathedral-lined streets. Senior Ministorum Priests were impaled on sky-puncturing spires. Others simply fell to their knees and babbled litanies of faith; they were swiftly beheaded by monstrous claws, the expressions on their rolling heads forever agog at the horror before them. The horror of these events was accentuated by the tendrils of the Immaterium that leaked through in wake of the Crimson Slaughter's attack; manifesting around the corpses of the slain and causing their blood to drip upwards like a red rain in reverse.

It is worthy of note that the Possessed are involved in a disproportionately large number of atrocities involving the Ecclesiarchy. Some suggest that so powerful is the devotion of the Possessed to the Ruinous Powers, that their anger is focused on those most likely to speak against their foul gods.



DAEMONIC DEEDS

As the Long War rages ever on, the forces of the Imperium must endure endless assaults from the Ruinous Powers. The Possessed have been involved in a number of incidents of note, many of which have been recorded in the archives of the Inquisition.

688.M37 A Ritual Interrupted

On the cemetery world of Ballios, a squad of Salamanders interrupts a traitor warband as they seek to debase a holy mausoleum by performing the Rite of the Reshaper amongst its ranks of grim tombs. Though they kill the Sorcerer before he slaughters one of their battle-brothers – the final sacrifice – a gaping hole to the Immaterium is opened. Numerous Daemons crawl into the mortal realm and tear into the Space Marines, enraged at being denied their prize. It takes the full fire and might of the 4th Company to rid the world of the misshapen horrors.

884.M40 The Purge

Possessed Chaos Space Marines guide a fleet of the Purge's rusted plague ships through a squall of unnavigable Warp storms to seed the agri worlds of Bellru and Fealty II with vile diseases. Given their small numbers, the Purge spread an impressive amount of death and destruction. On each world, they send their ships plunging down into the oceans and onto land. The broken hulls empty out deadly spores into the atmosphere, infecting billions of inhabitants. The destruction of these important food-producing planets is a blow to the Imperium, and the populations of two star systems border on starvation.

237.M41 The Ire of the Iconoclasts

A warband of Iconoclast Chaos Space Marines spirals out of the Eye of Terror and raids shrine worlds in the Fallsreach system. With Possessed at their helm, they sniff out all members of the Ecclesiarchy, flaying them and burning their cathedrals. It becomes apparent that these fallen warriors, once of the Altar Brethren, are on a mission to purge all shrine worlds from the Imperium, and nearby planets are quickly reinforced by Imperial forces to avoid their spiritual violation.

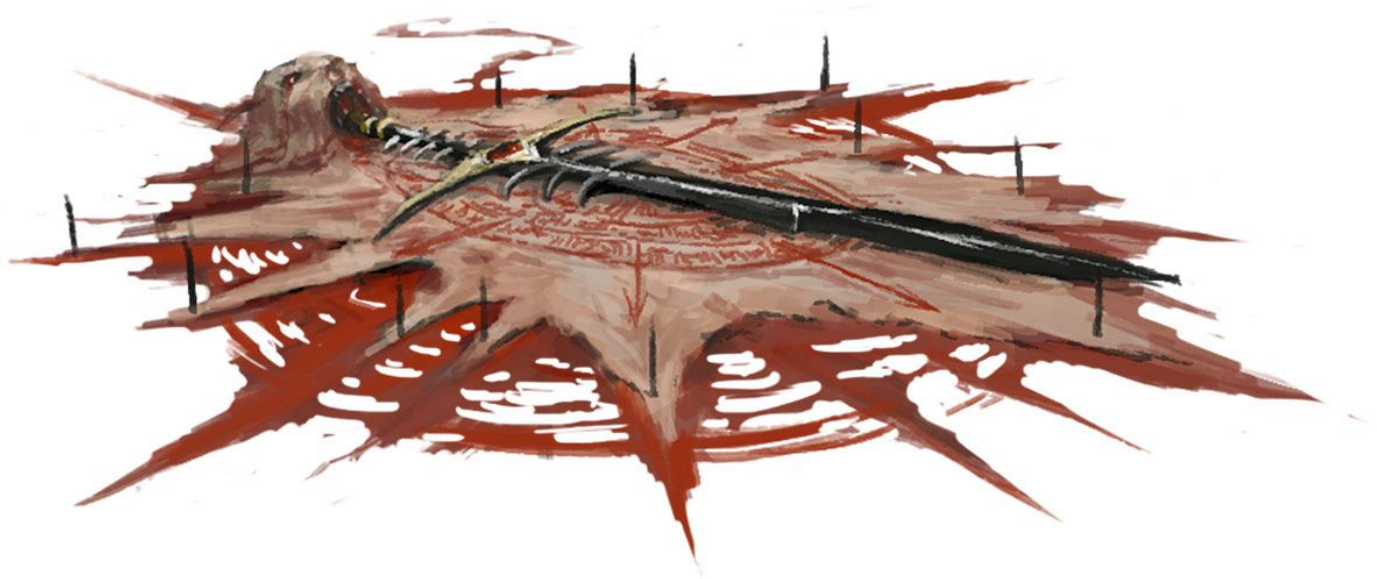
999.M41 Screams of the Dying

Legionnaires from the Emperor's Children spill out of the Immaterium and into the hive slums of Ichorax. All manner of outlandish, betentacled daemonic horrors take unnatural pleasure in hearing the mingled screams of billions of souls. Among the traitor warriors are thirty Possessed, who make easy work of the defenceless citizens before them. They slaughter their way through the various urban strata over a period of ten days, basking in the final wails of the fallen.

999.M41 A Possession Denied

The Crimson Slaughter Space Marine once known as Arral Tuk carves his name into history in a most foul manner. Seeking possession, on his quest for trophies he manages to kill Archon Vyle Ullth, two Imperial Fists Scouts, and a Harlequin Troupe Master. It is a mission of supreme dedication, but he is denied access to his gods at the very last moment when his ship is destroyed by the Dark Angels Strike Cruiser Salvation. It is said by scholars of the Inquisition that if Arral Tuk had become Possessed, he would have been one of the most powerful threats in the sector. However, Feddral Marnu, on a quest to avenge his former traitor brother, is carving an equally violent path. Moreover, he seeks a Dark Angels Space Marine from the Salvation to be used in his final ritual...

RULES



	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Possessed	4	4	5	4	1	4	2	9	3+
Possessed Champion	4	4	5	4	1	4	2	9	3+

130 Points

UNIT TYPE: Infantry. Possessed Champion is Infantry (Character).

WARGEAR: Power armour, close combat weapon.

Power Armour: *Power armour confers a 3+ Armour Save.*

Close Combat Weapon:

RANGE: -

STRENGTH: User

AP: -

TYPE: Melee

Melee

Weapons with the Melee type can only be used in close combat.

SPECIAL RULES: Champion of Chaos (Possessed Champion only), Daemon, Fearless, Fleet.

Champion of Chaos: A model with the Champion of Chaos special rule must always issue and accept a challenge whenever possible. If there is more than one model in a combat with this special rule, you may select which model issues or accepts the challenge. Whenever a character with the Champion of Chaos special rule kills an enemy character, you must immediately check to see if the Dark Gods reward him. To do this, roll a D66 on the Chaos Boon table opposite – by this we mean roll two D6, one after the other, counting the first dice as 'tens' and the second dice as 'units'. Then refer to the table opposite to see what boon (if any) your champion has gained. So, if you roll a 3 on the first dice and a 5 on the second, you would get a D66 roll of 35 – your champion would now benefit from the Mechanoid Chaos Boon. This boon lasts for the rest of the game; make a note of it on your army roster next to that character's entry. If a boon is rolled that the character already has, the roll has no effect. If an enemy character dies as a result of multiple Wounds being allocated to it simultaneously, and one or more of those Wounds were caused by the champion, that champion still rolls on the Chaos Boon table. Note that destroying models in a Sweeping Advance does not confer a roll on the Chaos Boon table.

Daemon: Models with the Daemon special rule have a 5+ invulnerable save, and also have the Fear special rule.

Fearless: Units containing one or more models with the Fearless special rule automatically pass Pinning, Fear and Regroup tests and Morale checks, but cannot Go to Ground and cannot choose to fail a Morale check due to the Our Weapons are Useless rule (pg 26 in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook).

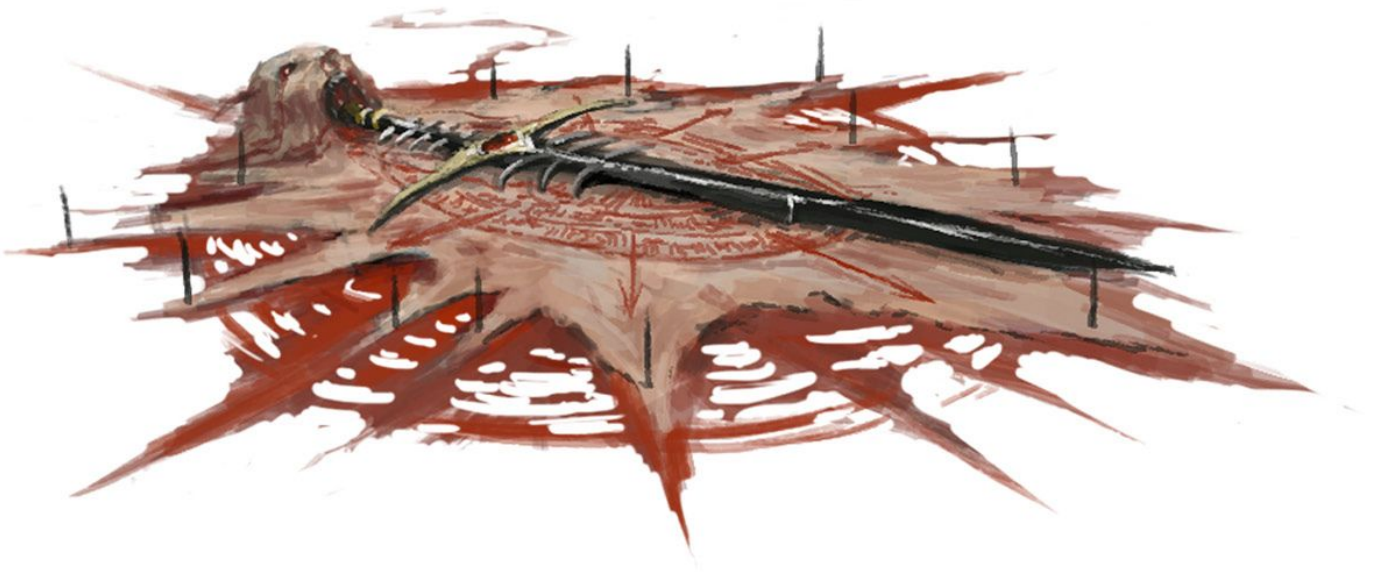
Fleet: There are many variants of this rule: Fleet of Foot, Fleet of Claw, even Fleet of Hoof. Title aside, all models with these abilities are treated the same. A unit composed entirely of models with this special rule can re-roll one or more of the dice when determining Run moves and charge ranges (such as a single D6 from a charge range roll, for example).

Vessels of Chaos: At the beginning of each Fight sub-phase, roll a D3 on the table below for each friendly Possessed unit that is locked in combat. The mutation affects every Possessed model in the unit and lasts for the rest of the turn.

D3 MUTATION

- 1 **Strength of the Damned:** The Possessed re-roll all failed To Wound rolls.
- 2 **Vorpal Claws:** The Possessed's Melee weapons are AP3.
- 3 **Supernatural Speed:** The Possessed gain +1 Attack and +1 Initiative.

MINIATURE SHOWCASE





Black Legion Possessed



Black Legion Possessed



Black Legion Possessed



Black Legion Possessed



Red Corsairs Possessed



Red Corsairs Possessed

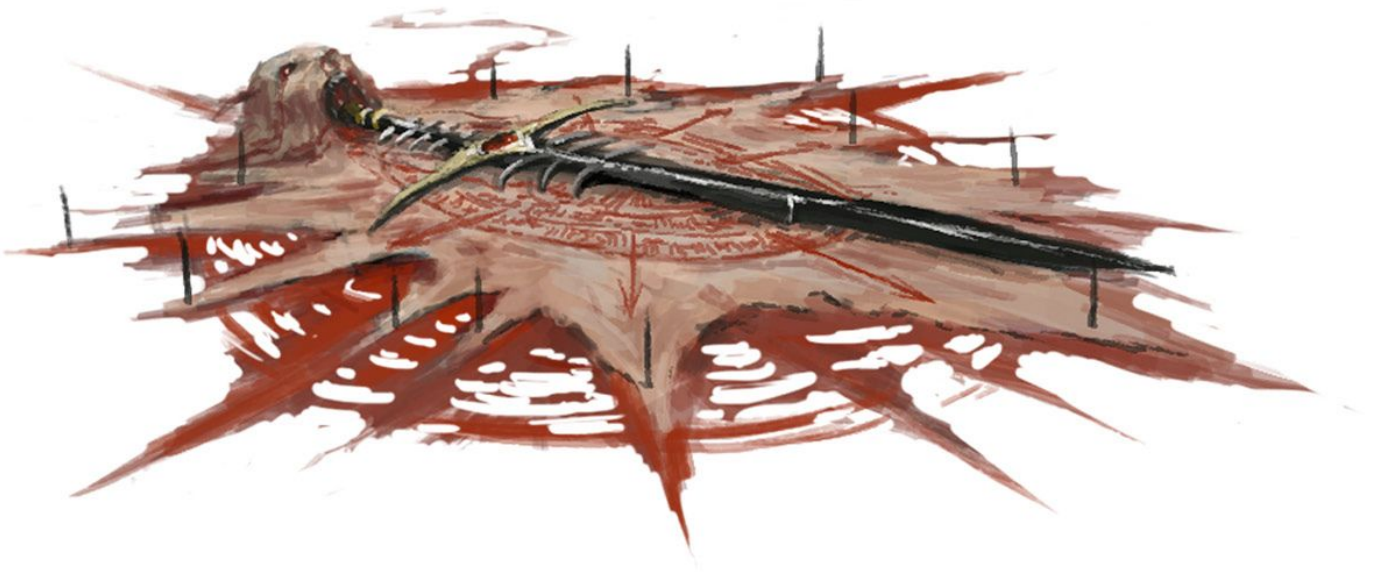
WARHAMMER[®]
40,000

INDEX CHAOTICA[™]



RUBRICAE[™]

INDEX CHAOTICA: --- RUBRICAE ---




THE RUBRICAE



Striding in perfect cadence, the Rubric Marines – also known by the High Gothic term Rubricae, are like moving bulwarks of gunfire. With the same steady tread as machinery, the Chaos Space Marines advance implacably through enemy fire. They shrug off mortal blows, even those that penetrate their power armour. When the Rubric Marines return fire, they do so with methodical efficiency, spraying out a steady stream from their blazing boltguns. Their shots, accompanied by multi-coloured muzzle flashes and iridescent tracer fire, send a hail of bolt shells that burn with sorcerous energies. Upon striking their target, these shells explode with eldritch blasts that can sear the minds and souls of their victim as easily as they melt through armour and flesh.


The Rubricae are deadly foes, although to function properly they need either to be in the fire of battle or near a Sorcerer who can direct them. For within the ceramite and adamantium armour, the bodies of the Chaos Space Marines have been reduced to bone-dry dust. They are little more than automata due to a sorcerous curse performed many millennia ago.

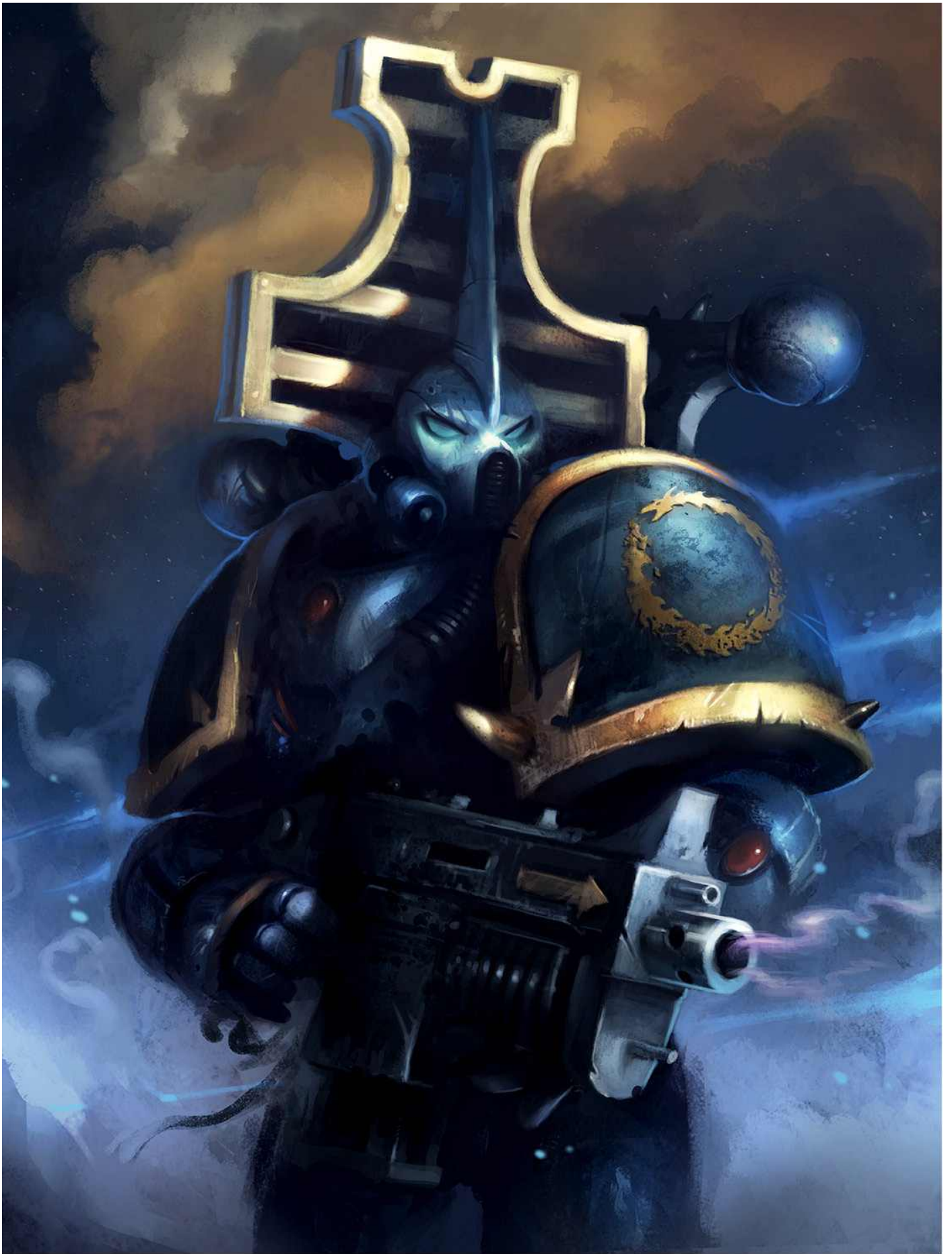
The story of the Rubricae and how they came to be forever damned is a tragic one – a tale of loss, betrayal, and the treacherous powers of Chaos.



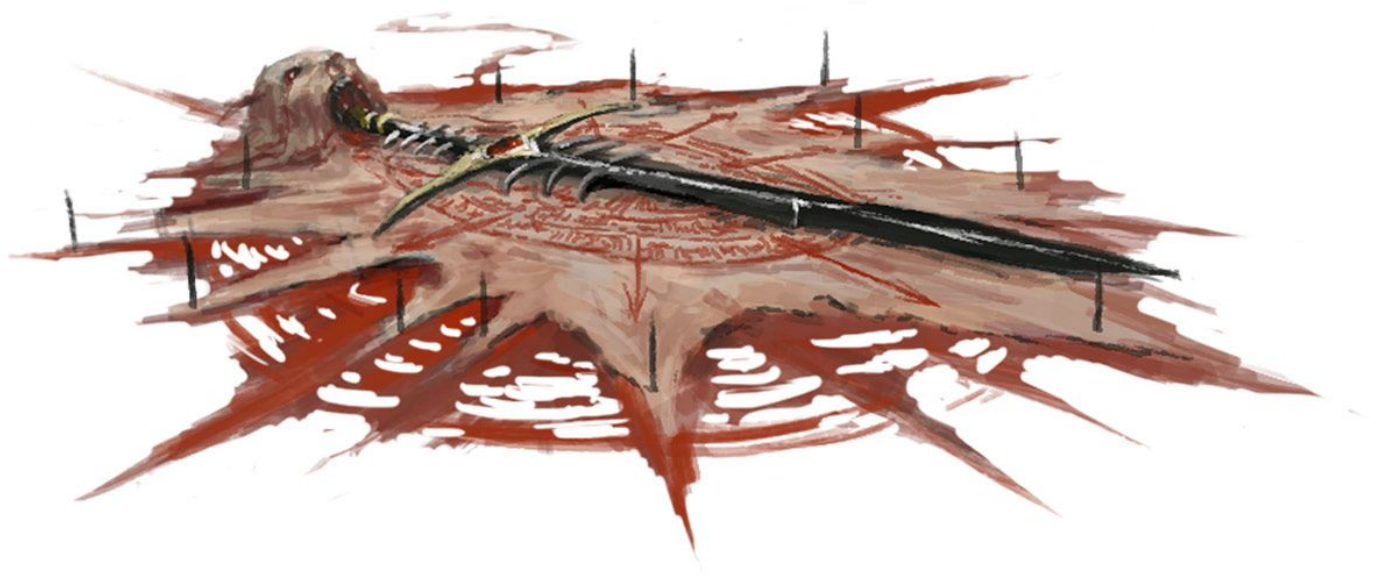
'Enlightenment is not enough, for one must master knowledge or risk becoming enslaved by it.'

- Magnus the Red,
Primarch of the Thousand Sons





BACKGROUND



ORIGINS

The tale of how the Rubric Marines came upon their unique fate is a twisted one. It has its beginnings in the time when the Emperor's Primarchs were mysteriously scattered from their incubation upon Terra. The one who would be called Magnus came to rest upon the remote colony world of Prospero. He could hardly have been more fortunate: Magnus was a ruddy-skinned mutant who would have been feared and most probably slaughtered had he arrived on any other world in the Imperium. Instead, he was delivered upon a hidden planet of kindred spirits, because, as fortune would have it, a commune of outcast human psykers had settled the planet Prospero.

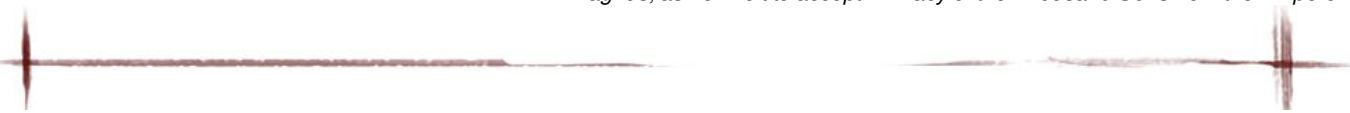
Magnus quickly reached maturity, having grown into a giant in the psychic, intellectual and physical senses. He lived in the lone city upon Prospero, which was nestled deep in the planet's ventral mountain range. Tizca, the so-called City of Light, was a glittering metropolis with silver towers, soaring obelisks and majestic pyramids. Its citizens devoted themselves to the pursuit of knowledge and the mastery of their psychic powers. Magnus too showed great psychic attributes. He did not just channel power from the Immaterium, however, but instead the Primarch could see into that very realm. Magnus the Red quickly went from adept to absolute master. And then, one long foreseen arrived upon the isolated world of Prospero.

The Emperor had perceived and recognised his prodigy through the Warp and made haste to find him. It was said that the two knew each other immediately – their minds having long since found each other across the Immaterium. The Emperor immediately granted Magnus the command of the XV Legion of Space Marines – the Thousand Sons. They had been created from his own genetic profile and thus far had already shown a strong tendency towards psychic mutation.



'As I am your son, they shall become mine.'

- Magnus, as he knelt to accept Primacy of the Thousand Sons from the Emperor

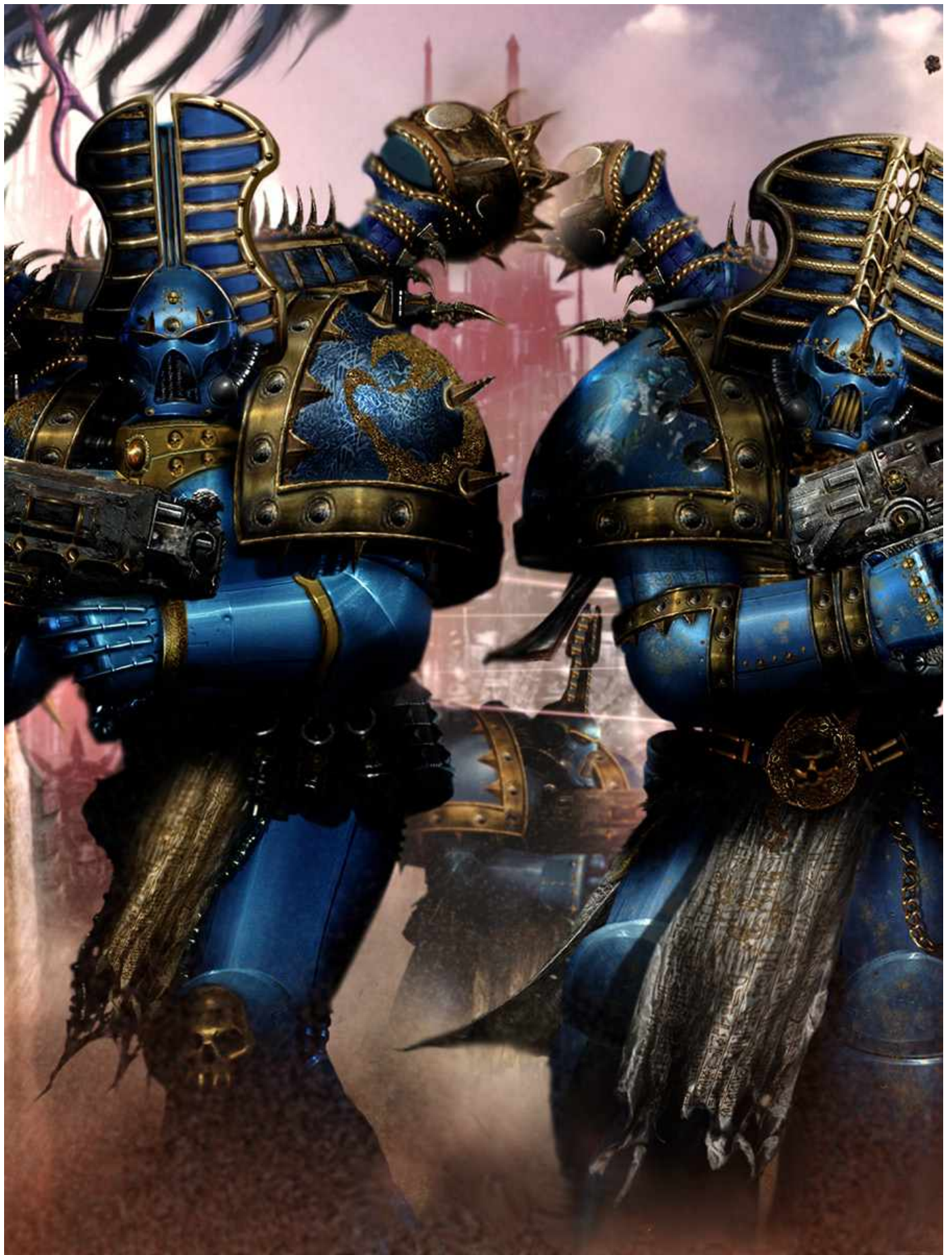


The first thing Magnus did upon taking over the Thousand Sons was to halt the flesh-curse mutation that had swept through the ranks – although finding the knowledge in the Warp to achieve this cost Magnus an eye. Next, Magnus led the Thousand Sons to join the Great Crusade – the epic campaign that swept outwards from Terra. It was the Emperor's plan to reclaim humanity's lost colonies and to establish a galaxy-wide Empire. During the far sweeping conflicts, the Thousand Sons made extensive use of their psychic powers. In battle, it was their way to avoid close combat, instead relying upon their sorcerous ways to carry the day. Guile, feints, confusion and misdirection were their hallmarks. The Thousand Sons were very successful, achieving via arcane means what many Legions lost vast numbers of troops to achieve.

That the Thousand Sons accomplished their triumphs through deception as often as by strength of arms did not initially draw concern. Victory was victory, after all. However, the further out the Emperor's new realm expanded, the more tenacious grew the opposition. More and more frequently, the Legions of Space Marines would make planetfall and find not colonies of Mankind eager to join the fold of the Imperium, but societies of mutants and psykers who violently opposed them. Many of those they encountered were enthralled to daemonic forces from the Warp. These new foes were granted powers that few could fail to notice were much akin to those wielded by the Thousand Sons of Magnus.

Gradually, it emerged that there were some amongst the Imperial court that were suspicious of the Thousand Sons' methods. Paramount amongst them were Mortarion, Primarch of the Death Guard, and Leman Russ, Primarch of the Space Wolves. Throughout the fledgling Imperium many called for the purging of all psychic mutations, save the third eye of the Navis Nobilite. The growing schism threatened to undermine the foundations of the nascent Imperium. To solve the growing dilemma, the Emperor himself convened a meeting on the planet Nikaea to debate.

In the end, neither Magnus nor those who opposed him prevailed, and instead a compromise was adopted. Human psykers were to become a priority – those that proved they could serve Mankind would be rigorously trained and sanctioned. Outright sorcery – summoning and incantations – was to be outlawed forevermore. To many non-practicers this was a very fine line, for all such powers seem as witchcraft to those who are most suspicious. It was not the decision favoured by Magnus, and the Emperor himself halted the Primarch before he could storm from the hall in protest. During that fateful face-to-face confrontation, the Emperor bade Magnus to cease the practice of sorcery and the pursuit of all knowledge related to the arcane arts. It is said that the cyclopean Primarch's face appeared as stone as he received his father's command. Magnus bowed, pledging that he and his Legion would obey.



THE GREAT BETRAYAL

The threat to the Imperium resolved by the Emperor's council and the Edicts of Nikaea served to mask other, darker deeds already in motion. On the world known as Davin, events were reaching their tragic climax as Horus, first amongst the Primarchs, Warmaster and right arm of the Emperor himself, fell under the manipulative sway of Chaos. This impending doom would not be resolved by any debate or decree.

Staring into the depths of the Warp from his sanctum upon Prospero, Magnus beheld a vision of Horus' pledge of fealty to the Dark Gods. Every detail was laid bare – for Magnus saw the foibles of his brother Primarchs, seeing all too clearly how Horus would play upon them, turning them to his unjust cause. He saw the trap being laid upon Istvan V, and the decoy that lured away the Ultramarines and Dark Angels. Alone in the entire galaxy, Magnus saw more clearly than any what tragedy was about to unfold. He understood each consequence and every role, save for his own.

In this precognitive vision, Magnus thought he had found certain proof of the value of his magical studies. He would need yet more sorcery in order to warn the Emperor in time. With the combined power of his fellow sorcerers, the Primarch set about casting a spell across time and space. Breaching all protective wards on the Imperial Palace of Terra, Magnus projected his warning of impending revolution into the presence of the Emperor himself, naming the Warmaster as traitor.

If Magnus hoped that this would be his moment of triumph, it did not turn out so.

The Emperor, his own works ruined by the breach caused by the Primarch, judged Magnus' blatant use of arcane powers the worst sort of oath breaking. Magnus' continual pursuit of forbidden knowledge was deemed tragic proof that he had fallen under the sway of the very powers the Emperor had warned him about. It was said that the Emperor broke contact with Magnus' projected visions with such force that psychic wards through the palace arced with lightning and shattered. Magnus' warning was delivered but unheeded, and the Emperor directed Leman Russ to lead his Space Wolves to attack Magnus upon Prospero.


THE FALL OF PROSPERO

There are many accounts of the Space Wolves' assault upon Prospero – some of which contradict each other. What is beyond dispute, however, was the massive destruction they brought down upon Magnus' homeworld. The City of Light was being ravaged, many of its libraries already burning, half of its silver towers toppled. It was the ultimate horror for the scholarly Thousand Sons, as Russ and his Space Wolves rampaged through their city of learning. Pyres of books, parchments and ancient scrolls lit the night.

Everything that mattered to Magnus was burning to the ground – but he knew he could still save his Legion, still save what was left of his accumulated knowledge. By turning fully to the powers in the Warp, Magnus knew he could salvage much, but the Primarch at last realised that the true power of magic was not something he could master – but rather one that he must submit to.

Magnus hesitated, but even as he debated within his superior mind, his city, works, and Legion were being reduced by the howling brutality unleashed by the Emperor. In the end, Magnus felt he had no choice at all. With that, the Primarch of the Thousand Sons changed his allegiance.

In that instant, to the amazement of Leman Russ and his Space Wolves, their foes disappeared. In a flash of blinding furor, the City of Light – all its remaining towers and libraries, along with the Thousand Sons and their cyclopean leader, vanished forever from the face of Prospero.



'The minds of gods are not for mortals to know or to judge. Accept that Tzeentch has a place for all of us in his grand scheme, and be happy in the part you have to play.'

- Proclamation of Magnus the Red



THE RUBRIC OF AHRIMAN

After the Battle of Prospero, the Thousand Sons were not encountered again until much later when they were sighted fighting alongside the arch-traitor Horus. Feeling he had little choice in the matter, Magnus had pledged himself to one of the fell Gods of Chaos – Tzeentch, Lord of Sorcery, Changer of the Ways. He and his Legion had been denied the pursuit of knowledge, betrayed by their Emperor and attacked by their own brethren, the Space Wolves.

At first, the Thousand Sons seemed protected against the corrupt mutations of Chaos. Even when the Horus Heresy failed and the Legion was forced to retreat within the Eye of Terror, their members did not suffer the horrible fates of so many others. Instead of wandering lost within that realm, guided by his patron Magnus led the Legion to a new planet – a world rich in magical power. It was hoped that it would become a haven of knowledge and research within the Eye, but the ways of Tzeentch are capricious...

No sooner were the Thousand Sons ensconced upon their new homeworld – the Planet of Sorcerers – than many of their members became afflicted with grotesque mutation. These were much like the mutations that had beset the Legion before they were reunited with Magnus – only more prolific and horrible than ever. It was a bleak time – after the destruction of Prospero and the failure of the Horus Heresy, the Thousand Sons were losing what little they had left of their own humanity. Some few embraced these new manifestations, but the more senior members of the Legion were aghast. Their valiant pursuit of knowledge had resulted in little more than madness and abomination. The Chief Librarian of the Thousand Sons, Ahriman, would not stand idle – even if Magnus seemed resigned to such a dismal fate.

Organising a cabal of the Legion's mightiest sorcerers, Ahriman was determined to counter the Warp's corruption. They laid the foundations of a mighty spell, protecting their workings with wards of secrecy – for they knew that Magnus would not approve of what they were attempting. By sealing dozens of fell pacts, they would dispel the mutations and render the Thousand Sons magically immune to the effects of Chaos. The spell they wrought was of such unimaginable power that even daemonic horrors fled before the roaring maelstrom. The Planet of Sorcerers was enveloped in impenetrable storms of blue and yellow, forks of titanic energies arcing across the planet to strike down each of the Thousand Sons. Those that possessed the greatest psychic powers found their abilities augmented, and they arose from the lightning strikes as the most dangerous sorcerers in the galaxy. The majority of the Thousand Sons, however, had a much more sinister fate.


Struck down and engulfed by the flames of magic, the remaining Thousand Sons were turned to dust inside their power armour. With every clasp, joint and seam welded tight by infernal fire, their spirits were now bound irrecoverably within. In a multi-coloured flash, they were

transformed into little more than automata for all time. But still, the storm did not stop, and raged on over the entire Planet of Sorcerers.

Who knows what might have happened had not Magnus intervened. The former Primarch was now an immortal Daemon Prince, and his rage was terrifying to witness, his anger generating new storms in that raged across the Warp. Using powers beyond the ken of mortals, Magnus banished the arcane tempest.


Although the spell had worked, after a fashion, the effects of the Rubric of Ahriman were nothing at all like what the cabal had hoped for. In a single stroke, the Thousand Sons had been destroyed utterly, while simultaneously preserved for all time. Magically fused into their armour, and with no physical bodies to speak of, they were never again to suffer mutation. The Legion that Magnus had sired, the ones for whom he had sacrificed everything, was no more. In their place were ghost-haunted armoured shells, mindless servants ready to obey, their thirst for knowledge wholly extinguished.

So great was Magnus' wrath that he would next have obliterated Ahriman and his cabal of Sorcerers, when Tzeentch himself intervened. Who can fathom what that most enigmatic and capricious of entities intended – perhaps this was the plan all along. Forced to stay his hand, Magnus instead banished Ahriman, condemning him to wander in a hopeless quest to understand the nature of the Changer of the Ways. With this done, Magnus ascended the tallest tower on the Planet of Sorcerers. Everything he had ever done, every decision he had made had been founded on two beliefs: that knowledge was pure, and that he was its master. Now, with everything he had sought or cared for beyond him, he cast his bitter cyclopean gaze outwards, and watched as the galaxy burned...



'All is dust... All is dust... All is dust... All is dust... All is dust... All is dust...'

- *Battle-cry whispered by the Thousand Sons*





THE RUBRIC MARINES

The suits of armour that once were worn by proud Space Marines from the Thousand Sons Legion can magically move and function thanks to the Rubric of Ahriman, but the mindless shells need orders to do so. They respond to the mental commands of a Sorcerer, obeying him to the letter. Upon completion of their task, however, the sentience of the Rubric Marines will once again lapse. Without a Sorcerer nearby to issue new directions, the Rubric Marines freeze in place – appearing for all intents as statues, mere displays of ancient power armour.


The Thousand Son Sorcerers have many uses for the Rubric Marines. When they travel from the Eye of Terror in search of arcane knowledge, or to acquire slaves to fuel their magical experiments, they take with them the silent, relentless warriors. They make excellent enforcers and bodyguards. In the midst of combat, something of their former selves returns. During such actions, the Rubricae are able to move with clarity and purpose for as long as the battle lasts. They are formidable fighters and can shrug off horrendous wounds. There are countless reports of the Rubric Marines sustaining great rents in their armour – their breastplates blown apart by plasma blasts or run through with power blades. The arcane power that surrounds and animates the armoured shells allows them to sustain the damage better than any being made of flesh and blood could ever manage.

When the Rubric Marines fire their bolters, they do so with ensorcelled shells. Writhing with rune-inscribed fury, the shells burn a blue-white contrail of flame and hit with the ability to blast through power armour and sear their target's very soul. While the automata provide a solid bastion of firepower, the Sorcerer himself is free to work his incantations – sending out his own arcane doombolts.

As they are empty vessels, Rubricae make excellent guardians for the libraries of grimoires and vaults of ancient knowledge hoarded by the ancient Sorcerers. The Rubric Marines contain not a spark of curiosity and are utterly loyal without exception. They will stand on guard for a day, weeks, months, years or centuries – yet should any breach the wards of their Sorcerous masters, they will lurch into action as if mere seconds had passed. Their enchantments ensure that their armour never rusts or malfunctions, and they do not suffer the weakness of the flesh, having no need to ever eat or sleep.

The Rubric Marines are almost impossible to destroy, and only the total destruction of their power armour tombs is enough to release the spirit trapped inside. With an audible sigh, a cloud of dust escapes and drifts away into nothingness. How, or even if, the Rubric Marines are reinforced is a secret only the Sorcerers of the Thousand Sons and Tzeentch himself know. It has been theorized that Sorcerers can use spells of reincarnation to reinstall those spirits freed by the destruction of their armoured forms – rebinding them within new tombs of power armour. Or perhaps Ahriman himself has had his hand in recreating his infamous spell of old? For Ahriman remains the most powerful of the Thousand Sons Sorcerers, and has been endlessly active since his banishment. Over the millennia, he has raided more magical knowledge and stolen more arcana than any – his guarded hoard nearly as sizable as that of Magnus.

However they are sustained, the Rubric Marines remain relentless enemies of the Imperium, as they have been for nearly 10,000 years.



'Twisted are the paths of change and none may discern exactly where each differing route will lead. The only surety is that there will be change...'

- *Tzeentch Cultist proclamation*





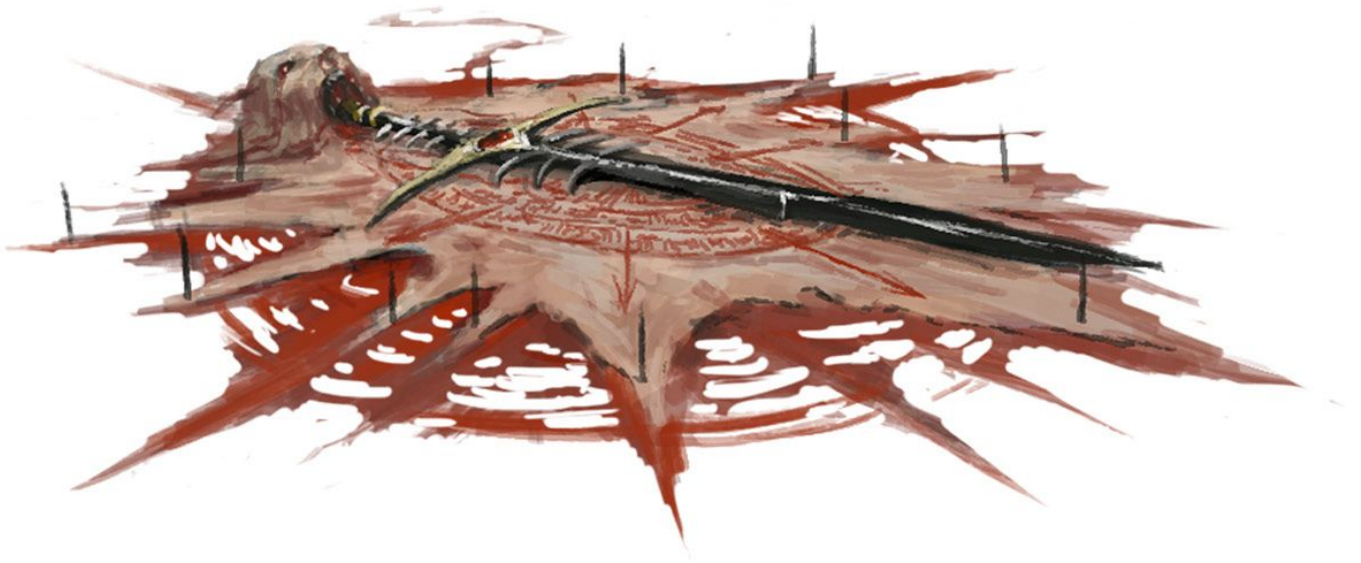


998.M41 - SANCTITY BREACHED

Furious battle erupts in the twilight realm of the webway as Chaos Space Marines of the Thousand Sons Legion fight their way to within sight of the Black Library. Protected by the indomitable advance of their automata Rubric Marines, the Sorcerers wreak terrible havoc. Their leader, the Master Chaos Sorcerer Ahriman, is only thwarted when a powerful force of Eldar Harlequins and allies from both Craftworld Ulthwe and Craftworld Luggarnath counterattack. Several major arteries of the webway are choked with the dead before the warrior-psykers of the Thousand Sons are driven from the secret path. The breach is runically sealed, but many neighbouring sections of the webway are lost to Chaos forever. It can only be a matter of time before another such attack is launched...



MINIATURE SHOWCASE





Thousand Son with boltgun



Thousand Son with boltgun

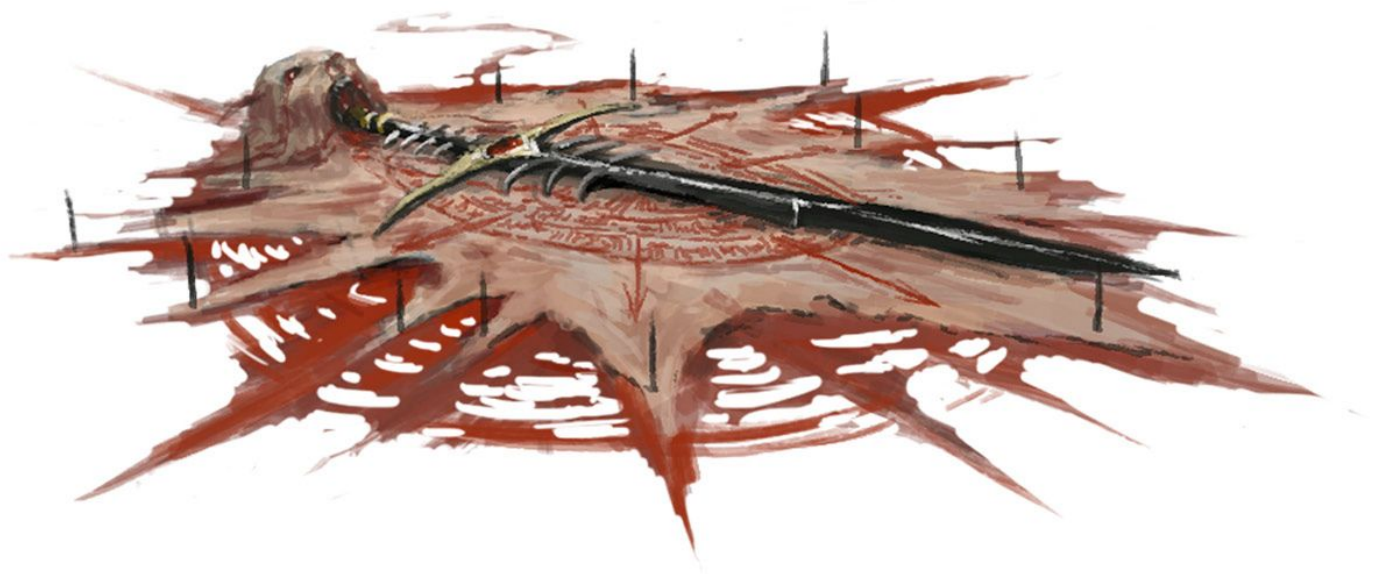
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TERMINUS EST



Few vessels conjure such dread in their foes as does the *Terminus Est*. Its very name is a curse upon the lips of Imperial ship captains and commanders across the Imperium. It has been present at some of the greatest betrayals and bloodiest days in Imperial history. The Chaos Lord Typhus sits upon its command throne, overseeing its filth-encrusted cannon and infected crew. The *Terminus Est* has become a harbinger of the Plague God, its appearance above a planet heralding disease and ruin for the citizens below. From its bloated launch bays and pustule-studded holds, rusting dropships are vomited down in putrid brown waves. Inside, Death Guard Plague Marines hunch over corroded blades and pitted bolt guns, waiting for their chance to carry out the will of Nurgle.

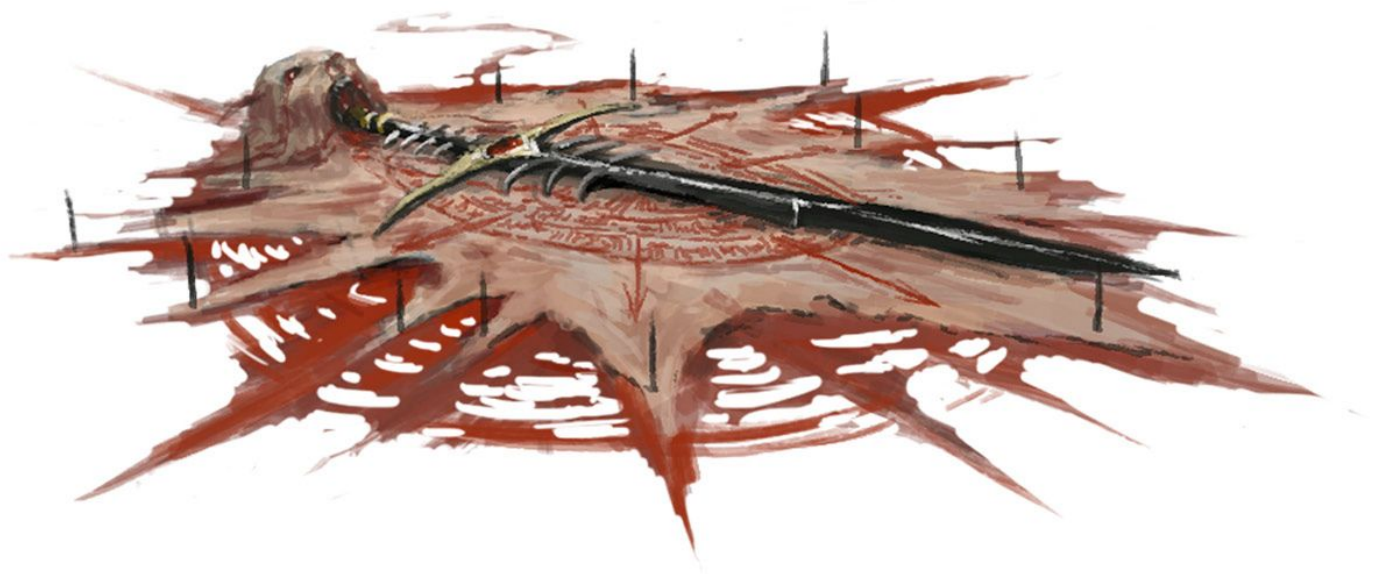
More than merely a vessel, the *Terminus Est* is a vile legend and symbol of fear for the people of Imperium. Even a whisper of the ship's presence in a sector can send planetary governors and system lords screaming to the Imperial Guard and Imperial Navy for protection. However, when the *Terminus Est* darkens the skies of a world, there is little that can save its people – their fate sealed as the terrible attentions of the Plague God fall upon them.

'The Terminus Est is an abomination against the Emperor, an open wound that has never healed, a constant reminder of betrayal and treachery. That it still stalks the stars is a dark omen sent by the gods, a reminder that while our lives are fleeting, the power of Chaos is forever...'

- Fleet Admiral Horst Palye, Battlefleet Solar (Executed for Heresy 127.M39)



BACKGROUND



TYPHUS' FLAGSHIP

The *Terminus Est* was built in the years before the Great Crusade in the shipyards of Luna. Its unique design was larger and more powerful than any previously constructed pattern, but also more cumbersome. The Emperor created the vessel for his Space Marine Legions, gifting the ship to the Dusk Raiders, later to be known as the dreaded Death Guard. The *Terminus Est* was a huge battleship, miles in length with the firepower to lay waste to entire cities. Specially crafted for the Space Marines, it incorporated decks of launch bays capable of carrying hundreds of Stormbird Dropships. Its distinctive forked prow allowed it to act as both launch bay and gun deck, meaning it could send out assault craft while bombarding a planet from orbit, making it ideally suited to the needs of the Legion. Such was the success of the *Terminus Est*'s design that it would be later reproduced in great numbers by the Imperium. These copies were designated Despoiler Class, and were used extensively for planetary assaults.

It would be the influence of its captain Typhon – as Typhus was once known – that would eventually see the *Terminus Est* become a tool for Chaos, his own corruption infecting the ship he captained. Typhon's fall to Chaos happened before the rest of his Legion, before even his Primarch, the promises of Nurgle taking deep root within his soul. When the Death Guard finally sided with Horus, the taint of the Plague Father had already begun to seep into the hull of the *Terminus Est*. During the Heresy the vessel made a bloody name for itself, taking a heavy toll on the loyalist fleets and bringing fire and death to dozens of worlds. As part of the Istvan V Dropsite Massacre, the *Terminus Est* was central to the fierce battle that raged above the planet, destroying the Raven Guard flagship Shadow of the Emperor and sending its flaming hulk tumbling into the void.

The vessel was to be the site of Typhon's transformation to Typhus; from a Space Marine into a true servant of Nurgle. While returning to Terra the *Terminus Est* became becalmed in the Warp, utterly at the mercy of the Dark Gods. It was here that the Lord of Decay visited his most virulent gift upon the ship: the Destroyer Plague. The Warp-borne disease struck down every soul on board, save Typhus, who swelled with the gifts of the Plague Father, becoming his Herald and host to the Destroyer Hive.

Perhaps the most infamous appearance of the *Terminus Est* came during the Siege of Terra. By this point in the Heresy the vessel had already begun to change, the blessings of the Plague God firmly upon it. When it appeared as part of the traitor fleet its hull was teeming with rot and decay, rust-blood and plasma-puss leaking out into space from the corroded seams in its hull. Legend has it that the vessel was the first to bombard the Emperor's palace, those initial titanic explosions marking the beginning of the siege. While the Death Guard Primarch Mortarion fought on Terra with the Legion, Typhus commanded the *Terminus Est* for much of the siege, and when Horus was slain, it was Typhus and the *Terminus Est* that covered the Legion's retreat to the Eye of Terror.

In the millennia after the siege, the *Terminus Est* would appear again and again across the Imperium, alongside Death Guard invasions and daemonic incursions. M35 was the first confirmed sighting of *Terminus Est* after the Heresy, and coincided with the outbreak of the Destroyer Plague in the Agripinaa Sector. A wasting disease of terrible and lethal speed, it depopulated a dozen worlds within the space of a month. Each time the shadow of the *Terminus Est* was sighted lurking at the edge of the affected system.

In 497.M36 it stained the skies above Yermoth VIII as the Cult of Septica burned pyres of screaming Ministorum priests, while in 299.M37 it blasted the Dominus Aquila star fort to flaming fragments on the edges of the Celstorian Nebula. In 834.M37, during the assault on the asteroid cities of the Emperor's Halo, the *Terminus Est* fired plague-ridden torpedoes through the defenders' force domes. Finally, driven mad by the rot and death drowning their citizens, the Imperial overlords opened the domes to space. On thousands of worlds across a hundred centuries, the *Terminus Est* has become the spectre of death incarnate, the very will of Nurgle made manifest.

'The Terminus Est is a gift from the Plague Father, a piece of his divine realm made manifest in the galaxy, so that we might understand and revel in his glorious putrescence.'

-Typhus, Herald of Nurgle

PLAGUESHIP OF CHAOS

Once, the *Terminus Est* – while in a class of its own – was like other warships of the Imperium, its slab-sided hull festooned with guns, its armoured prow bearing the emblems of the Emperor. However, nothing that succumbs to the power of Chaos will escape its mutating effects for long, not even a mighty battleship of the Imperium. Now its ancient bulkheads are held together only by rust, its corridors are choked by the eternally rotting corpses of its crew, and indescribable foulness drips, oozes and dribbles from its every inch. Where once proud plasteel, ceramite and adamantium plates covered its decks, now a living, slick layer of infected flesh dominates. Festering bone shards, rotten fangs and malformed teeth project from every surface. The trapped souls of all those that have served and died upon its decks distort the fleshy walls with their rotting faces, screaming and wailing from their pestilent prisons within the hull.

Over centuries in the Warp it has soaked in the very stuff of Chaos; it has become a living thing, its decaying form crawling with Nurgle's minions. The halls and chambers of the *Terminus Est* have been transformed into a reflection of Nurgle's realm. Bloated flies fill the foetid air, while soupy puss drips down from overhead like warm rain. The repellent, twisted things that shamble through this miasma of corruption are barely human any more, bloated with disease and riddled with weeping sores. These 'crew' tend to the ship's needs, feeding decaying corpses into its engines or nurturing its gardens of shining boils and pustules until they are ready to burst. Only the Death Guard Plague Marines are unhindered by the vessel's contagions, marching about its corridors silent and grim as the ship bears them across the stars. However, in truth, the *Terminus Est* needs neither crew nor captain to guide it, having taken on a dark sentience from its daemonic patron.

The Plague Lord's gifts have also found their way into the gun decks and weapon batteries of the *Terminus Est*, and where once macro cannon hurled vast plasma warheads into the void, now strange and horrific growths take their place. Dribbling sphincters line the side of the ship, periodically belching filth out into space; when an enemy ship comes into range they spasm and cough out meteoric torrents of caustic debris. Each discharge is capable of blinding sensors and burning through the hull of enemy vessels. These Warp weapons are just as deadly as any macro cannon or lance turret possessed by the Imperium, and make the *Terminus Est* a deadly opponent. The rotting hull and distended gun decks of the Chaos vessel have fooled more than one Imperial captain. Only when the Imperial warship draws too close to escape does *Terminus Est* release its full fury, fleshy cannon yawning wide to bathe its foe in a viscous surge of bile. Worse than the catastrophic hull damage the daemonic weapons can inflict is the contagion they impart. Able to live in the cold emptiness of space or leap through vacuum to infect new hosts, the Destroyer Plague carried by Typhus and the *Terminus Est* is capable of killing the crew of a compromised ship in mere hours.



Typhus and his flagship are inextricably linked, and the *Terminus Est* is as riddled with the Destroyer Plague as its captain. Warp-flies fill its corridors and chambers, a seemingly unending stream of glistening insects buzzing across every deck. These same swollen minions of Nurgle also protect the *Terminus Est* from enemy ordnance or boarding craft, forming a writhing, undulating cloud around the warship. From a distance across the gulf of space this carpet of Warp-flies distorts the shape of the vessel, making it hard for gunners to lock onto a section of the *Terminus Est* or target any of its vital systems. Any ship foolish enough to try and dock with the Chaos vessel or initiate a boarding action will become enveloped by the Warp-fly cloud, the tiny horrors choking augurs and spilling through hull breaches and cycling torpedo tubes.

Typhus almost always captains the *Terminus Est*. He sits at the helm of the warship, his heavily armoured form hunched atop a throne of rotting bone and skin, the funnels of the Destroyer Hive buzzing with Warp-flies upon his back. Centuries of void-borne warfare have made Typhus a master of ship to ship combat, with the added advantage that he shares a symbiotic relationship with the *Terminus Est* and need not rely on fallible mortal officers or crew. When the battleship appears it is often at the head of a Plague Fleet, comprised of dozens of other vessels that have suffered the touch of the Lord of Decay. It is whispered that when a ship's crew suffers a from Warp-borne sickness the *Terminus Est* will appear on the edges of its augurs. For days the Chaos vessel will shadow the ship as the infection culls its crew and weakens their resolve. Only when the survivors cry out to Nurgle for salvation will the *Terminus Est* approach, welcoming them into the service of the Dark Gods.



HERALD OF DEATH

The *Terminus Est* is a truly ancient vessel, more than ten thousand years old. It has been witness to much of the Imperium's history, from the Siege of Terra to the dawn of Abaddon's 13th Black Crusade against the Imperium.

c.M30 The Emperor's Gift

After the alliance between Terra and Mars, the Emperor commissions the creation of a vast fleet to retake the stars and reunite Humanity's lost children. Some of the most skilled tech-artisans of the age create the *Terminus Est* in the shipyards of Luna. Its hull, armaments and engines incorporate countless advanced designs recovered from the Dark Age of Technology. The Emperor gifts the vessel to his Dusk Raiders Legion, as a reward for their loyalty. The *Terminus Est* becomes the Legion's flagship as they embark upon the Great Crusade to unify the galaxy under the rule of Mankind.

c.M31 Shadow Falls

In one of its first acts of betrayal, the *Terminus Est* is present during the Isstvan V Dropsite Massacre. The battleship participates in the virus bombing of the planet and turns upon the loyalist fleet. In the chaotic and brutal space battle that ensues the *Terminus Est* racks up an impressive tally of enemy kills, Typhon proving himself more than a match for his loyalist counterparts.

c.M31 Siege of Terra

After the battle on Isstvan, the *Terminus Est* eventually embarks for Terra to aid Horus in his assault on the Emperor's Palace. Typhon slays the ship's Navigator, promising his Primarch that he can personally lead the Death Guard fleet to Terra. Unbeknownst to his Legion, this is all

part of Typhon's plan to offer them up to the Plague God. Ultimately, Typhon becalms the *Terminus Est* in the Warp, leaving it to the mercy of his new master.

When the warship appears above Terra it has changed, the mark of Chaos clearly upon it. The warship rains devastating bombardments and virulent contagions down upon the fighting around the Emperor's Palace. In the Warp, Nurgle cackles with glee to see thousands of defenders succumb to his gifts.

545.M35 A Nightmare Returns

Having been mistakenly thought destroyed after the Heresy, the *Terminus Est* descends upon the Imperium once more. The cursed vessel proves a formidable foe, more than a match for the Imperium's finest vessels and most skilled captains. Worse still, when a battle is lost to the *Terminus Est* it heralds only more suffering to come as plague and sickness spread out of control.

216.M36 Mission to Barbarus

In response to Imperial Naval encounters with the *Terminus Est* the Adeptus Mechanicus seek out the ship's ancient schematics, gifted to the Death Guard after the vessel's creation. An expedition to Barbarus, the scoured remains of the Death Guard home world, finds the data the Mechanicus seeks and the Imperium creates the first Despoiler Class warships inspired by the formidable *Terminus Est*.

It is only much later that the Imperium realises that the design holds a fatal flaw, its Geller fields vulnerable after extended exposure to the Warp. Over the centuries, almost every Despoiler Class warship is lost to Chaos, its crew and captains subverted or corrupted by the Dark Gods.

018.M38 A Deadly Corpse

The long range Imperial scout ship *Sword of Truth* encounters the crumbling remains of an unknown ship drifting on the edges of the Segmentum Solar. Believing the vessel to be a relic of the Great Crusade, the crew assemble a boarding party to search for valuable salvage. Only when their landing craft draw close do they see the mutated steel and repellent, mouldering growths covering its hull. By the time the captain realises his mistake Warp-flies are already swarming over his vessel. When the *Terminus Est* appears again, the *Sword of Truth* has been added to its Plague Fleet.

620.M39 The Dust War

On the edges of the Ork Empire of Octarius the Death Guard and the Overfiend's hordes fight over the Urgorn Dust Cloud. A vast asteroid field of psychokinetic rock, the cloud coalesces around the space hulks and scrap-fortresses of the Orks, creating tiny worlds with micro-atmospheres. The *Terminus Est* wreaks havoc by infecting the environments with its Warp-fly miasma, the ship choking their tiny atmospheres with the bodies of billions of insects. Orks die in their millions, their green corpses bursting into rotting puddles of virulent disease. Yet the war rages on for months as more and more of the aliens spill out of the Octarius Empire looking for a good fight.

139.M41 Encounter at Anvil 206

The *Terminus Est* is encountered during the Gothic War, in the void around Anvil 206. The damage done by Typhus' Plague Fleet weakens the hive world's defences and seeds a Warp-born virus that lies dormant for years. One of the mysterious Blackstone Fortresses, a lynchpin defence for the system, later falls to Abaddon the Despoiler. Its defenders are struck down by a virulent contagion as the Warmaster's fleet bears down upon them.

755.M41 The Devotion of Skarlak

A powerful blood-seer is born upon the world of Skarlak, the gene-tribes rejoicing at the gift of future-sight once again within their reach. However, as the blood-seer grows to adulthood she is tormented with dreams of a ship that sails across the stars, pocked and scarred by a disease of steel and iron. By the time the blood-seer reaches the height of her power the entire planet has descended into the madness of worshipping the nightmare ship, painting their bodies with profane symbols and building huge statues to a god they cannot name. When the *Terminus Est* arrives in the skies of Skarlak the populace cry out their devotion, as Typhus and his Death Guard descend to harvest their souls.

923.M41 The Lamented Hunter

Lord-Captain Virator Hax makes a vow before the lords of Segmentum Obscura to hunt down and destroy the *Terminus Est*. His fleet scours the stars around the Eye of Terror, seeking the vessel, Hax following every sighting or rumour of the cursed craft. Finally, the captain believes he has found the hiding place of the ship, in the shattered remains of an Eldar crone world. Hax leads his fleet into the great fissures that web its airless husk. In the dark confines of the planet's rocky heart Hax confronts the *Terminus Est*, his ship, the *Glorious Lament*, unleashing weapons fire at point blank range. Only when the first shots strike home does the captain realise the ship he faces is made of Warp-flies, scrap and acres of frozen skin. Out in the void, Typhus bombards the planet, collapsing the fissures and sealing Hax and his fleet within its core.

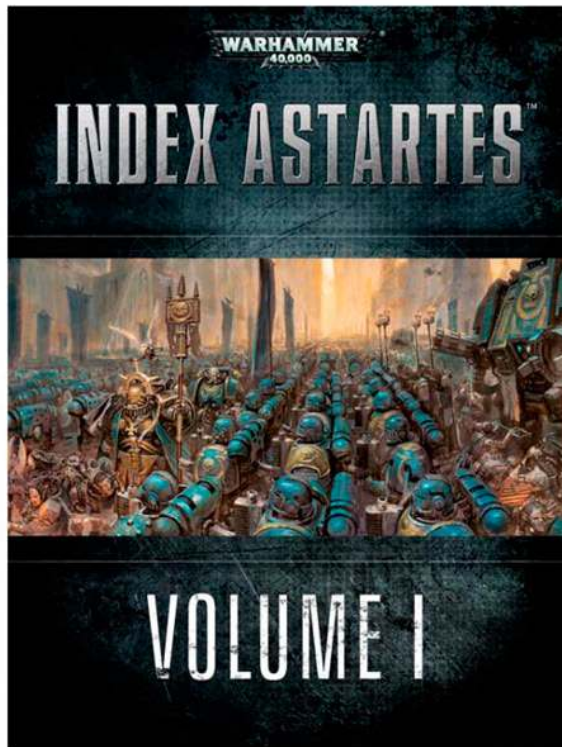
999.M41 Herald of the Plague God

In the final hours of the 41st Millennium the Eye of Terror disgorges a massive Chaos invasion fleet led by Abaddon the Despoiler. In its vanguard the *Terminus Est* and its captain Typhus have been spreading disease and destruction to worlds in the path of the Warmaster, including a new and deadly contagion capable of animating the dead.



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