

Sabellus the Forsaken

By Darius Hinks

When the death of Xuthius Semiramis was first announced the most common response was 'How can they tell?'.

The aged governor of Sacer Mons had never been the most animated of men, and in his later years he had begun to take on the appearance of a badly stuffed corpse. In fact, there seemed to be close parallels between the planet's descent into anarchy, and the governor's descent into imbecility. As his ministerial buildings were being burnt to the ground by insurrectionists and thieves, the governor's only visible response was to raise an eyebrow. As a plague of mutations and deformities spread over his planet, Xuthius did nothing more than sigh disapprovingly. And as the Imperial Creed was trampled underfoot by a thousand heretical cults, the governor retired to his chambers with several large bottles of Priscian brandy to 'pray'.



In truth, most of the citizens of Sacer Mons had forgotten they had a governor, or for that matter an Emperor; but Xuthius's death was nevertheless significant. With his departure the last constraints of Imperial control were finally removed. The planet's government was replaced by a morass of feudal states and petty despots, each vying for control of its rich mineral resources, and within weeks the capital state of Sardanapalus had become nothing more than a smouldering ruin, with running battles erupting from its once beautiful gardens and boulevards.

Just as the planet's future seemed without hope, an unlikely saviour appeared in the form of one of its most infamous crime-lords: Sabellus the Forsaken. Sabellus was a name that most of the planet's citizens were acquainted with, in fact they knew him by many names, none of which were particularly endearing:

Sabellus the Beast;
Sabellus the
Pitiless; the Ogre
of Tarlati and the
Cannibal of
Valbona to name
but a few.

For many years Sabellus had seemed more legend than fact. The details of his gruesome deeds were told as fire-side stories to scare young children, but many doubted his actual existence. In the legends it was said that the crime-

lord was one of a pair of orphaned children – found somewhere near the Cadian Gate, and that his brother had climbed to a position of great seniority somewhere within the Imperium. But few adults had time for such fanciful nonsense. After the death of Governor Xuthius however, none could doubt the horrible reality of the man. One-by-one each of his rival crime-lords began to perish in the most horrifying ways, and at the scene of each murder, a gruesome signature was always left scrawled in the victim's blood: the sigil of Sabellus.

First came the death of Pholus Blake – or the Ripper of Sapphira as he was more affectionately known. With control of Sardanapalus's spaceports, Blake had been injecting a steady supply of narcotics into the planet's blood-stream for several decades, and he was one of the most feared criminals on Sacer Mons. However, Blake's brutal reputation did nothing to deter Sabellus, and the drug-dealer's henchmen found him one morning drowned in the blood-filled bladder of a dromeddon.

Then there was Oderigi the Dour – the gun-runner – whose head was found floating in the River Abel with a jester's hat sewn into his scalp. And then Brabant the Faithless, who was found nailed to a statue of the Emperor. And so it continued, until every criminal on the planet not in the pay of Sabellus was too terrified to come out of hiding, and, for the first time in many years, a kind of peace returned to the streets of the capital.

The planet was now, to all intents and purposes, his, but



Sabellus had his sights set on a more lasting form of authority. In a display of shocking arrogance, he hosted a ceremony in the city's central plaza. And in front of what remained of the Imperial palace, and several thousand amazed onlookers, he announced that Beatrice Semiramis was her father's rightful successor, and named her governor of Sacer Mons.

As Beatrice mournfully donned the robes of office, the people of Sardanapalus saw just how far the crime-lord's nerve had taken him. The governor's daughter had a long and shameful history with Sabellus, and with her as his puppet, he now had complete control of the entire planet. He installed his right hand man – the dreaded Xanthos of Ra'siel – as Beatrice's 'advisor', and settled back to watch the money flood in. It seemed there could now be no stopping him.

Finally however, Sabellus' run of luck deserted him.

After only two months as Governor, Beatrice could take no more. The sheer depravity of Sabellus' rule appalled her. He embraced every heretical creed with joyous abandon, and under his guidance, the people of Sacer Mons were soon devoting themselves to a lifestyle of debauchery.

Beatrice's fear for the eternal souls of her people overcame



her fear for her own life, and she decided she had to act.

Many centuries earlier, the remote binary star system of Rimini al-Sadat – which is home to Sacer Mons – had been part of a busy trade route between Nisus IV and Buoso del Geri. In those days the planet had been a bustling, wealthy and loyal outpost of the Imperium, and in the bowels of the ruined Imperial palace some relics of those halcyon days still remained. Searching through these artifacts, Beatrice's allies had discovered the remains of a signalling device. Beatrice saw a thin sliver of hope, and ordered her men to send out a distress signal.

To her great luck, an Explorer fleet was already on-route to the nearby Nisus IV, and hearing the plea for help dispatched a huge heavily armed force to reclaim the planet.

The fighting was fierce, bloody and brief. Sabellus' gangsters were no match for the Imperial forces, and a strict martial law was soon in place. The people of Sacer Mons found themselves once more in the benevolent, if slightly brutal, care of the Emperor.

As for Sabellus, his name faded once more into myth and legend. After the fierce battle for the palace, the crime-lord was pronounced dead by Imperial edict, but his remains were never found. To this day, his name is whispered in the darkest seediest corners of Sardanapalus, and rumours abound of his whereabouts. It seems unlikely that his hunger for power will have abated, and as the Imperial choke continues to tighten around their throats, many of Sacer Mons' citizens await with relish the return of Sabellus the Forsaken.

Sabellus the Forsaken

Sabellus is right-handed.

Equipment: Autopistol; 2 digital weapons (one ring on each finger) inferno pistol and hand flamer; conversion field; advanced bionic eye

Special Abilities: *Leader; Nerves of Steel*

	WS	BS	S	T	I	Wp	Sg	Nv	Ld
Sabellus	59	47	66	74	47	72	84	52	68