

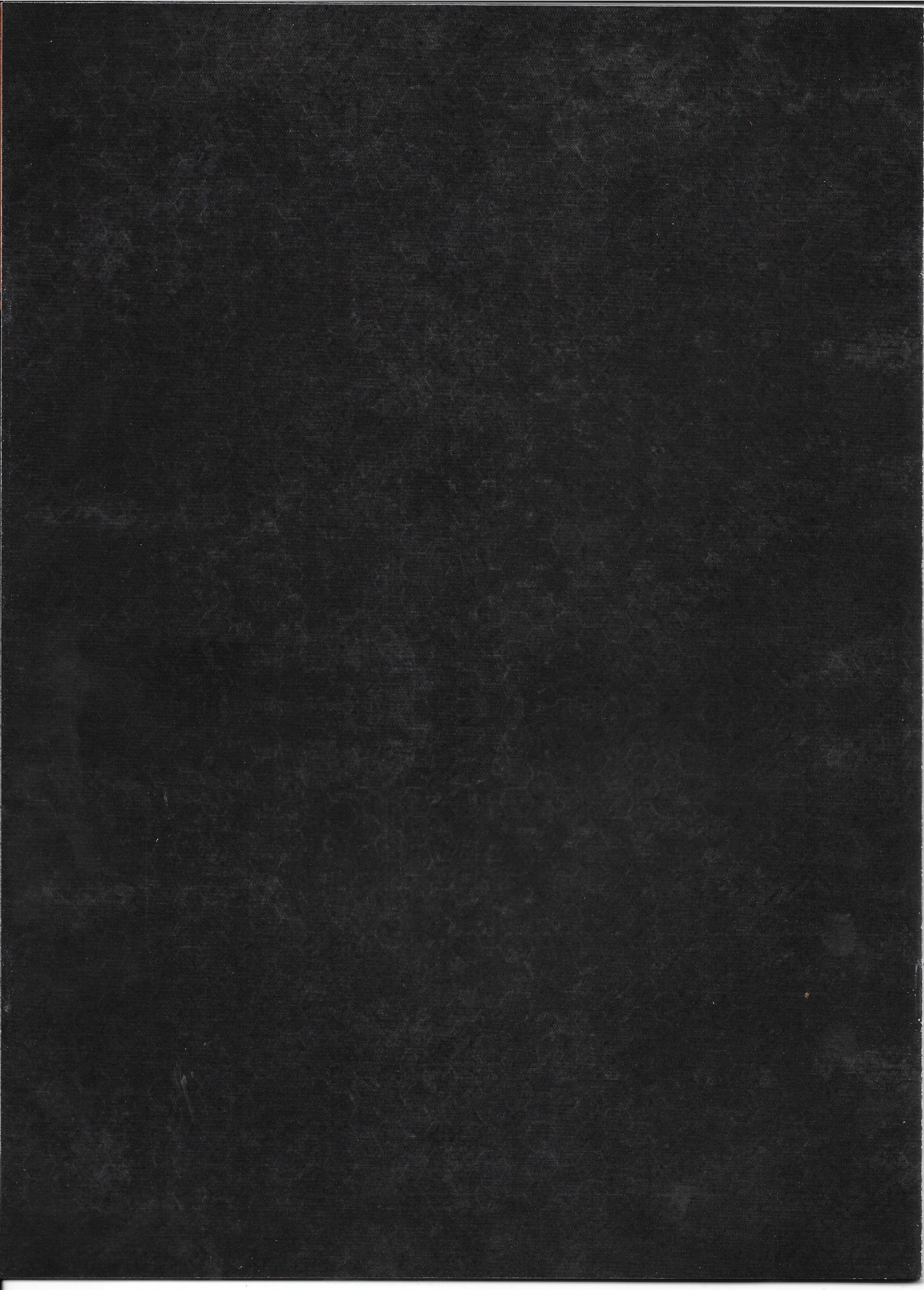
WARHAMMER
40,000

KILL TEAM™



THE SLICING NOOSE

WYCH KILL TEAM



INTRODUCTION

Let the games begin! In these pages you will learn the dark tale of the Slicing Noose, a mercurial kill team of vicious Drukhari whose hunt for megapredators to populate their gladiatorial arenas has led them to the Vigilus System. But first, to deal with the fools that stand in their way...

The Drukhari are a curse upon reality, a race of cruel blademasters slashing away at the edges of the Imperium. They have nothing but contempt for what they see as the lesser races of the galaxy, and go to war clad in lightweight armour or stylised wychsuits, for they favour speed over durability and precision over raw strength. A kill team of Drukhari Wyches is comprised of lithe, acrobatic gladiators who have been sent by the Succubus rulers of their cult to entrap, slay or steal away choice targets into the night. They use a variety of advanced alien weaponry that can poison, disable or drive a target mad with pain if needed, or simply kill them if they are judged to be fodder rather than prize.

Within this booklet you will find the account of one such kill team drawn from the Cult of Strife – the sadistic artisans of battle known as the Slicing Noose. These warriors can be built using the miniatures contained within this box, and to get you in the right spirit, this booklet includes a piece of short fiction that shows the Slicing Noose taking the fight to the Imperial defenders of Vigilus' neighbouring planet, Falsehood. Following this account, you will find detailed information on the Drukhari in this kill team, including

names and personalities that were rolled up using the tables found in the Kill Team Core Manual. Following on from this you will find a brief timeline highlighting the acts of flair and daring committed by some of the kill team's most impressively skilled members, as well as accounts of how they relate to one another and the battles they have shared since their inception.

Accompanying this in-depth background, this booklet also contains a showcase demonstrating how the Drukhari contained in this box can be built and painted to represent the Slicing Noose on the tabletop. These pictures detail the colour scheme of the Cult of Strife, as well as the names and roles of the Wyches themselves.

Should you wish to field the models in this box as the Slicing Noose, this booklet provides you with all of the storyline and visual information you need. Alternatively, you may prefer to have it serve as inspiration for your own unique kill team of Wyches. By rolling up the backgrounds and personalities of your fighters, and perhaps even writing your own timeline or short stories, you can help give character to the elite clique of warrior athletes you will field on the tabletop.



THE NOOSE DRAWS TIGHT

Vylekh the Untouched licked her lips, savouring the sickly tang of toxic pollen that lingered in Falsehood's humid jungle air. Everywhere around her were jagged, thrusting spines of steel-hard venomgorse trees. Throttlevines curled around their trunks, twitching as they detected the presence of nearby warm-bloods to strangle. Sharp plates of brainmelt fungus dotted each trunk and bough.

She stuck out her tongue and deftly licked some blood from one of the venomgorse's grasping branchtraps, taking care not to trigger its reflex. The blood tasted salty, thick with corpuscles, its immune cells tingling delightfully as they attacked the skin on the inside of her mouth. Good news for the clique. It was the semi-acidic blood of a megapredator, likely a creature that had grown impervious to anything short of having its head sheared off by the plant's snapping claw-petals. That same thick blood would look delightful spattering the Crucibael's sands.

'What a lovely place,' murmured Vylekh to herself. 'What a glorious, lovely place.'

Iu'athadan, they called it. The World Inimical. It had once been known by a different name, long ago, when it was more paradise than purgatory. But the ceaseless encroachment of the venomgorse, driven into overdrive by the windborne spores of a broken hive fleet, had long ago claimed dominion. Now it was a world where death was carried upon every razored leaf or barbed thorn.

It was hard to imagine a place more suited to the gladiatrixes of the Dark City. She was deeply indebted to Bithandrel for leading them here, not that she would ever admit it. If they captured yet another megapredator and got it back to the arena, Succubus Vysa would reward them handsomely, as she always did. But what they were really looking forward to was closing the noose on the human settlers that Bithandrel had located – or rather the sport of terrorising and then killing them in as imaginative a fashion as possible. It would give them sustenance and the pleasant tingle of reminiscence for a long time to come.

'Stay within spitting distance,' she said to her clique, the Slicing Noose. 'Let the others get there first, or what's left of them. Those few that don't impale themselves in their haste will meet with unfortunate accidents whilst they are distracted. We will make sure of it.'

The plan had been simple. She and her fellow Hekatrixes had each taken a clique of lesser Wyches to the planet, emerging through the webway portal in the midst of its shattered ruins and purposefully splitting up as they closed in on the settlement of the human travellers. Bithandrel had taken their Venom

into the heart of the waystation and planted haywire grenades on each flight-capable craft, trapping the humans in their little fortress before returning to the hunt.

According to Vylekh's Corsair allies, the great livid scar of the Dathedian had cut off the humans' means of psychic communication. They had no way to call for help. The Noose had left the grisly remains of those human rangers they had found thus far hanging from high trees, the better to announce their presence. That was days ago now. The humans would already be ripened by terror, and the great feast was close at hand. Vylekh could almost taste it.

There was a sharp crack in the distance, that of a root or bone. It was too isolated a sound to be the passage of an indigenous beast. Could it be another breed of predator stalked this forest? That Vylekh and her clique were not only hunters, but hunted?

Vylekh motioned for her clique-mates to stop moving. The Hekatrix activated her mirrorfield and adjusted it to see through a gap between the trees. Nothing. She checked her appearance whilst she was at it, a pre-battle ritual, and was glad to see her bleeding-edge hairstyle hadn't wilted in the heat. She shared a glance with Bith. The scout made a warning sign and held up five fingers, pointing to the north west. Vylekh angled a delicately pointed ear in the direction of the sound. There – a low hum, and a whirr of servos. Like those of...

'Move!' shouted Vylekh, triggering her wychsuit's combat-stimm injectors. 'Move and dose up!'

The venomgorse erupted around the clique of Drukhari as a string of deafening explosions tore through the forest. Vylekh was already moving as the air was filled with long, fibrous splinters that pricked the flesh, and stifled a wild laugh. It would take more than crude explosives to catch her. She cartwheeled over a puddle to spring with both feet from a frond-stem, somersaulting high into the air even as she activated her whip-like agoniser. A volley of crude bolts shot beneath her, each as thick as her wrist. They detonated on the trunks behind her in such a violent string of explosions that she heard a groaning, tearing snap as two of the venomgorse trees came down.

Thrilling at the feeling of hyperdrenaline coursing through her veins, Vylekh lashed her agoniser, the tip cracking out to wrap around a thick bough. She swung beneath the canopy, alighting on a jutting spar of ancient Aeldari architecture before jerking her whip free and sliding gracefully down its smooth angles into the lee of an ironwood tree. Below her she caught sight of Nyx Bloodslyk extruding blades from her hydra gauntlets as she

weaved through the foliage. Shexen was already outrunning her as he sprinted headlong for the source of the attack in as straight a path as possible. Having caught a bullet in the face last time they had hunted, and having to wear a mask ever since, had not dulled Shexen's enthusiasm for the kill at all.

A massive black-armoured figure burst from the foliage at a thumping run. A Space Marine. One of the armoured apes the Imperium of Man considered holy warriors. It barged through a thicket of shardwrack spines, turning its shoulder to deflect Thrensine's splinter pistol fire. She dodged its sweeping blade, jabbing a knife hard into its temple, but it smashed her into the mud with its pistol and impaled her through the chest with its energised sword before she could recover. Vylekh could see why they were so revered. They fought well, these ones, even in the arena, and always fetched a high price no matter which cult they were sold to. Despite their lack of subtlety, they were as deadly as a mace swung hard at the head. If there were more than a handful of them, the plan would need to change. If not, the hunt just grew a lot more interesting.

Vylekh sprang up, catching a high branch and using her momentum to swing up to the bough beyond. She leapt from tree to tree with an acrobat's agility, startling a nest of pterasquirrels that scattered screeching into the air. She impaled one of the blood-drinking creatures on her dagger for the thrill of it before leaping through a gap in the canopy, landing nimbly on an outstretched branch and swiftly scanning the sky. She could see none of the near-vertical smoke streaks that usually accompanied a Space Marine drop insertion, only a pair of thin contrails that headed away to the human frontier town. They had come in a single craft, and a small one at that.

Vylekh's killer smile grew broader as she saw one of the brutes lumber through the trees below her, the barrel of its crude shotgun seeking a target. She jumped, narrowing her profile as leaves and thornspines pricked at her flesh with delightful intensity before slamming with both feet into the Space Marine's neck. The impact drove the Space Marine to its knees, and a split second later she had her agoniser around its throat, throttling it with the neuro-whip before it could recover. With its pain centres driven into overdrive, the creature blacked out, and she let the monstrous thing slide insensible into the mud.

There was another deafening explosion from the left, chunks of ancient Aeldari stonework flying through the air as one of the Space Marines took a point-blank shot at Nyx. The gladiatrix dodged and rolled low, a good half of the blades of her hydra gauntlets breaking off as she shielded herself from the worst of the explosion. As she vaulted upwards she embedded the largest of the remainder in the gunner's

abdomen. He grunted like a stuck razorboar, snarling in his guttural language. Nyx snapped the blades off and ducked under his wild swing, the rest of the crystalline blades already regrowing as she darted on to her next target.

'Keep moving!' shouted Vylekh. She danced out of the way of a crackling blade that burst from the foliage to her right. As she dodged away from the backswing she caught her right arm on a disc of brainmelt fungus. She felt the stinging rash in her arm travel up to her head as her hyperdrenaline burned its toxins away. The blade came back in. She caught sight of the grotesque, animalistic visage of the human savage that wielded it as he swept in again. She fought the urge to parry; the energised blades used by the Imperium would cut straight through even Drukhari alloy. Instead she swept her agoniser around the creature's eyes. It screamed in pain, lashing out on reflex.

Somehow the creature caught her a lucky blow on the temple, sending her sprawling. In an instant it was above her, turning its blade point-down as it plunged it towards her sculpted abdomen.

Shexen came from between two trees at a sprint. He slammed into the creature with his shoulder, jamming his splinter pistol under its neck to fire three times in quick succession. He slid around the human thing like a snake and whipped his dagger around its throat. He was already gone by the time the creature stumbled after him, wounded but still roaring like a bull.

Vylekh sprung up to her feet, blood pounding through her veins and a manic grin plastered across her features. These ones fought hard, and gratifyingly so.

'Take them slowly,' she called out. 'I want to make the most of this.'

The Hekatrix heard a death cry from one of the humans, abruptly cut short. As if in answer, it was followed by a shrill scream – Mellyx, instantly recognisable by her hoarse tones. Vylekh drank in the delicious notes of her despair as it turned to a death rattle.

Another one of the clique down, and so soon. No matter, she thought. Provided at least one of them survived the engagement and made it back to the Dark City with flesh-samples of the fallen clique-mates – and a few choice specimens of human war-creatures with them to sweeten the deal – then all would be well. Succubus Vysa had enough sway with the Haemonculi that the Slicing Noose would be regenerated in their covens and riding high once more before too long.

A third death scream rang out in the distance – another Drukhari, but not one of hers. Vylekh smiled again, running her tongue over her teeth in dark glee. There was more than one manner of dish in a feast, after all, and she intended to savour every one.

WYCH KILL TEAMS

The Wyches of the Drukhari – also known as Dark Eldar – are vicious and cunning, their fighting style based on a foundation of deceit and raw speed. They can dodge an enemy's blade as easily as if it were moving through treacle, artfully lopping off limbs and heads as they dance through the melee.

The Drukhari see themselves as a race that deserves nothing less than total dominion over the stars, but until that day comes, they are content to persecute the lesser races at their leisure. They do not fight as a military force, for such notions are beneath those whose lives are so thoroughly devoted to decadence. Instead they pick their targets with an epicurean's focus, attacking with such speed and alien vigour that they cut off all hope of reinforcement or counter-attack. In the case of the Slicing Noose clique, that inhuman focus is put to the cause of hunting and capturing the most dangerous beasts in the galaxy. It is a mark of their contempt for Humanity that when they were hunting for bestial predators on the planet of Falsehood they considered Space Marines amongst their number.

Each Drukhari strike force is hand-picked for quality alone – not through some martial hierarchy or chain of command, but through a dark meritocracy where only the most lethal rise to the top. They hunt the lesser races not only for the thrill of it, but also for sustenance – pain and fear is like meat and drink for these nimble slaughterers. Those who hail from the bloodsports arenas of the Wych Cults fulfil a vital role in their society, and the Slicing Noose is no exception. They lay on ever more grandiose spectacles so their fellow denizens of the Dark City can drink in the suffering of those on the wrong end of the Wyches' razored blades. Under the rulership of their Hekatrix leader, the famously callous Vylekh the Untouched, they are sent out from their twilight city on realspace raids, their mission to capture exotic or especially dangerous specimens to fight in the arena spectacles to come.

The clique of Wyches known as the Slicing Noose embody the role of hunters, for being exemplars of the arena, they excel in fighting creatures larger and apparently more deadly than they are. They have brought countless giant beasts and warrior champions from the lesser races into the Crucibael, the famous and dizzyingly massive arena of the Cult of Strife. Sometimes, if their patron Succubus Vysa deigns to impart a special gift to her favourite strike force, they are sent into the spotlight to duel those very same creatures that they fought to bring back to the arena in the first place. Vysa gets a thrill out of the irony of seeing the captors of a particularly deadly specimen taken down by their former prey, but recognises what she has in the Slicing Noose, and has close enough ties with the

Haemonculi that she can have them regrown from even the most violently torn cadaver after the battle.

Vylekh the Untouched, as her moniker suggests, has yet to die and be regrown – a point that only adds to her towering arrogance. She likes to maintain that she has never been cut, or even so much as touched, by an opponent's blade. The scout Bithandrel, her trusted ally and sparring partner both on and off the arena sands, knows the truth – they first met in the duellist's arena, where he landed a good blow across Vylekh's back. Knowing how touchy and defensive his partner can be, Bithandrel has the good sense never to bring that up. In fact, good sense is something Bithandrel has in great supply. He is a consummate scout and ranger, able to thread a path even through the convoluted and poisoned jungle of Falsehood by watching, learning, and taking his time before acting. He has been compared to a bird of prey on the hunt more than once, for he possesses a gift rarely found amongst his Drukhari kin – patience.

The mad killer known as Shexen the Faceless could not be more different in temperament from his old rival Bithandrel. He joined the Cult of Strife as a youngster, and reveres Lelith Hesperax – the belladonna of Commorragh, as she is known in the Crucibael – as a living example of the Dark Muses. Once, everything he did was intended to impress his fellows so that word might get back to Succubus Vysa – and perhaps even Lelith herself – of Shexen's skill. That all changed when the clique raided the Grand Menagerie of Tharluz lyn Darakkath. Shexen was critical in breaking out the betentacled Ursidoth that was Darakkath's prize exhibit, but was felled by a precise headshot in the process. He was regrown in the Haemonculi oubliettes, but it was done in a hurry, and he has hidden his scars with a helm ever since. Now he fights with the boundless, untempered rage of the berserker, his dagger stabbing over and over like the stinger of a cornered scorpion.

The weapon style of Nyx Bloodslyk relies not on fury, nor on a perfectly landed strike, but on the sheer profusion of crystalline blades jutting from her hydra gauntlets. These weapons allow the wearer to blast through the foe's defences with multiple attacks – and if one knife breaks off, it regrows at an uncanny pace. It is not unheard of for Nyx to stab her victims a dozen times at once before moving on to the next victim.





Vylekh the
Untouched, Kill Team
Leader with agoniser



Bithandrel Khaur,
Scout Specialist



Veshtari the Cruel



Peiythia Berrebaal



Mellyx Veluxis



In the mists of a humid death world forest, the Wyches of the Slicing Noose burst from the undergrowth to fall upon a startled T'au patrol.



Uless of the
Screaming Blade



Thessa Khrono



Nyx Bloodslyk,
Combat Specialist
with hydra gauntlets



Xela Vexx



Shexen the Faceless,
Zealot Specialist



A GALAXY OF PREY

Using the extensive network of the ancient webway tunnels that provide rapid transit across the galaxy, the Slicing Noose have attacked scores of worlds in their constant quest to capture ever more exotic opponents for their bloodsports.

M40 ON THE FRINGE

The Arachen Attack

Using an ancient and unstable webway gate that opens in the Western Veil of the T'au sept worlds, the Slicing Noose take their hunter's quest deep into the empire of the giant, many-legged Arachen. They use shardnets to capture one of the enormous, chitin-clad Arachen Oestromystics from the heart of its swarm, blasting their way clear of its scuttling young with copious use of plasma grenades before dragging it behind their Raider back into the webway gate. The gate collapses soon after, its masonry tumbled by the massive Oestromystic's thrashing legs, but Vylekh drags her prize all the way back to Commorragh.

Trouble in Paradise

The Exodite world of Haranduis is a paradise of succulent plants patrolled by scaled saurian goliaths. When Vylekh learns of the isolationist Aeldari that live there and their desire to be left alone, she prioritises it as her next target. Calling in a few favours with a roving band of mercenaries, she takes her clique via a corsair frigate to Haranduis. There the Wyches subtly wound hundreds of scaled beasts whilst remaining hidden all the while, the slow-acting poison on their splinter pistol ammunition and dagger blades seeping into the bloodstream of a select group of creatures. Only after they leave, having bound a clutch of choice saurians in unbreakable alloy mesh, does the poison in the veins of those they left behind activate. The saurians go berserk, turning upon their Exodite masters and savaging hundreds of peace-loving Aeldari.

M41 THE TIME OF PLENTY

The Devil of Catachan

Seeking to prove themselves the deadliest of all their contemporaries, the Slicing Noose make their way to the famously hostile death world of Catachan. There they plan to hunt a renowned and fearsome prey – one of the giant centipede-like creatures known as a Catachan Devil. It is a big world, however, and not easily negotiated, so a halfway point is needed. Bithandrel guides them through thickets of mind-eating brainleaves, past the nesting ponds of the shockingly explosive Catachan Barking Toads, and through the punji pit traps of the native Astra Militarum before capturing an Imperial sentry and extracting the information they need. The sentry is only too happy to send them towards the lair of the Catachan Devil he calls Old Many-Legs. Though a full half of the Noose dies in the attempt, the clique successfully uses a Haemonculi-bred neurotoxin to capture the revolting creature. Upon returning it to the oubliettes of the Dark City, Vylekh is rewarded handsomely with some of the most valued combat stimms in all Commorragh.

Taking the Bull by the Horns

In the process of raiding Catachan, the Slicing Noose become aware of the lumbering abhumans known as Ogryns – or more pertinently, their armoured equivalents. Seeing great fun to be had in slowly taking apart these dim-witted creatures in the arena as an aperitif to the main feast of violence, Vylekh orchestrates a bait-and-switch tactic that sees them engage a whole platoon of the great brutes in vicious combat. Acting in

concert like sabre-wolves harrassing a herd of grox, they break three of the lumpen abhumans away from the rest before goading them into the punji traps set by the Ogryns' allies. When the rest of them wander off, intending to get their tanker allies to haul the stranded abhumans out of the pits, the gladiatrixes use hypertoxins to knock the captive Ogryns out, before hauling them away, strapped to the prows of their raiders like the corpse-trophies of a crude Ork racer.

The Red Truths of Falsehood

The clique take their quest for ever more dangerous predators to the Vigilus System – in particular the death world of Falsehood, a long-lost Aeldari stronghold that has been all but overgrown with invasive strains of barbed venomgorse and throttleweed. Their plan to have a little fun with the persecution of the human settlers there is undone when they find themselves hunted in turn by a Deathwatch kill team of experienced xenos killers. Only three of the Slicing Noose make it off planet, but they do so with three Space Marines caught in the vicious grip of an animus vitae trap given to them by their Haemonculus contacts for just such an occasion.

Blood in the Snow

After the glow of her triumphant return to the arenas of Commorragh wears off, Vylekh makes haste back to the Vigilus System, for the webway portal on the polar continent of its principal planet is stable and well-hidden by constant blizzards. There the Slicing Noose hunt for giant white ice mantids, feeding on the human glacier-miners whenever their prey grows scarce.



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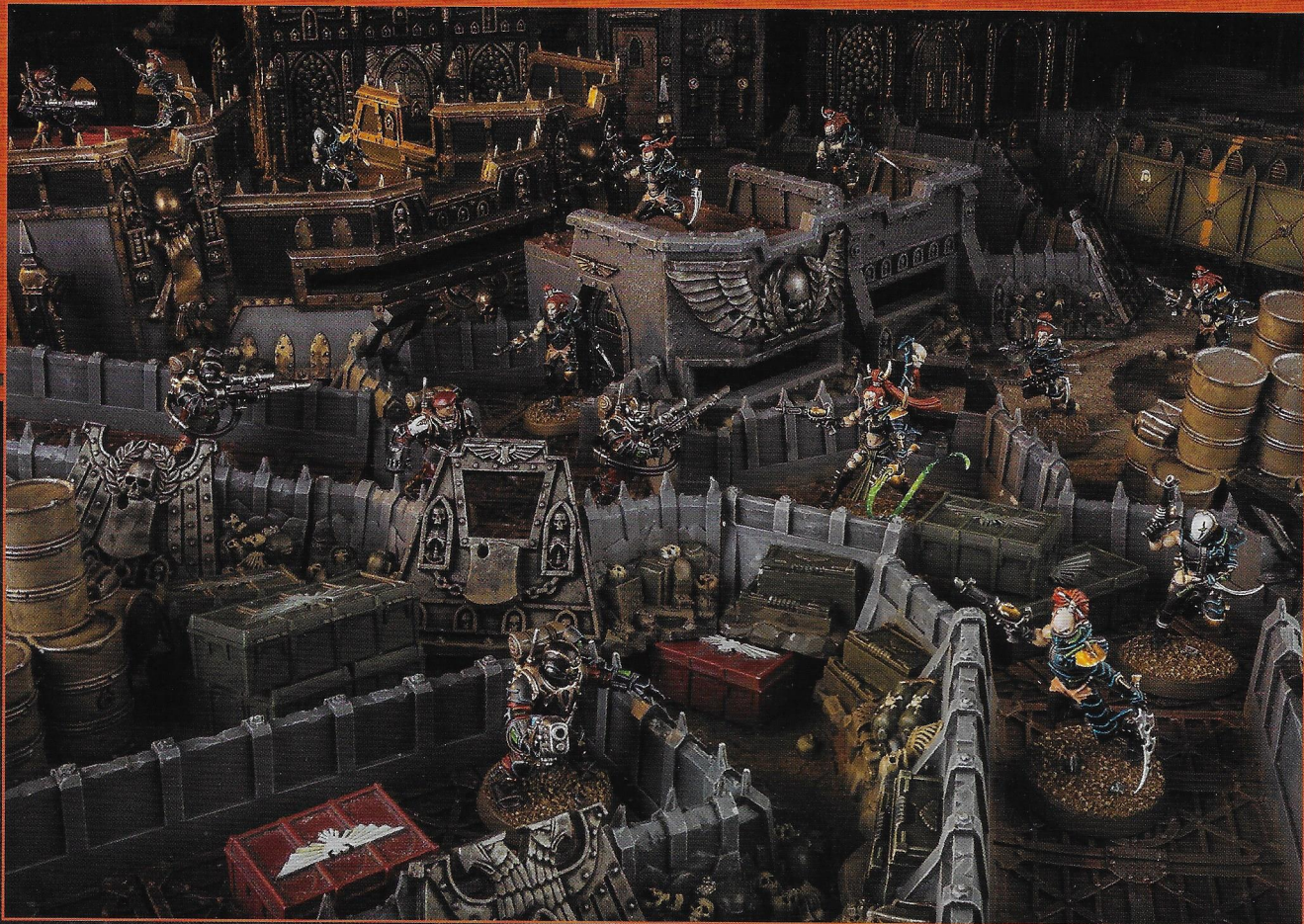
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The Slicing Noose is a clique of lethal Drukhari Wyches – lithe, arrogant warrior-athletes that live to inflict pain on those they hunt.

The Drukhari are predatory killers that believe all other races to be inferior. They thrive on suffering. Wielding exotic and terrible weaponry, their Wych Cults go out into realspace to capture monsters and warrior specimens with which to fill their bloodsports arenas in the Dark City.

This booklet details the hunts of the Slicing Noose, a viciously fast kill team from the Cult of Strife. It explores the history of this elite group of warriors, providing a look at their most notable encounters and famous monster-hunts.

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