

BLACK CRUSADE™

THE TOMES OF FATE™



A SOURCEBOOK FOR
FOLLOWERS OF TZEENTCH

WARHAMMER®
40,000
ROLEPLAY

BLACK CRUSADE™

THE TOME OF FATE™



ROLEPLAYING IN THE GRIM DARKNESS
OF THE 41ST MILLENIUM

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INTRODUCTION

"Your naïveté amuses me, child. There is no Fate. There is only the Will of Tzeentch."

—Verial Jenneque, Sorceress of Q'Sal

What is Fate? For many Heretics, Fate is what they have fought against their entire lives. It was cruel Fate that lead xenos raiders to burn their family to broken cinders, capricious Fate that caused their lesser sibling to gain the family title instead of themselves, uncaring Fate that lead the Inquisition to mistakenly torture them as a traitor and thus make them one. Fate has made them into Heretics, and Fate is thus hated as much as they hate the Imperium itself.

Others with a greater knowledge and appreciation of the True Mysteries know that Fate is never random or meaningless, no blind series of happenstance or coincidence. There is a Grand Scheme to all things, and thus a Grand Schemer. That Schemer is the Chaos Power known as Tzeentch. Those following this god strive to know his ways, and thus the hidden threads that bind all things to his will in the vast tapestry that is Fate itself. Such an effort is surely futile, for no mortal mind can possibly comprehend such infinite complexity, but even small glimmers of the Will of Tzeentch allow for more power than could be imagined. To gain such power, many Heretics are willing to risk all, including madness or mutation, for they know that either they must control their Fate, or Fate will control them.

WHAT'S IN THIS BOOK?

THE TOME OF FATE is the first of four books delving into the darkest secrets of the four Chaos powers and their role in the **BLACK CRUSADE** roleplaying game. Here players learn more about Tzeentch, the powerful God of Fate and Change. Tzeentch is also the God of Sorcery and the patron of psykers, even if they do not worship him directly. Players will also learn of his dark servants, both daemonic and mortal, and how his influence is felt across the Screaming Vortex. With new weapons and psychic powers to aid them, Heretics can go forth across that unholy stretch of stars and beyond into the depths of the fallen Imperium, ready to challenge Fate and make it their own.

CHAPTER I: TZEENTCH

This chapter is devoted to the Changer of Ways, the Chaos God known to mortals as Tzeentch. It includes revelations concerning his unfathomable nature, his Impossible Realms of fluctuating madness and change, and the myriad byzantine plots and schemes he uses to manipulate mortals across the galaxy. It also covers his minions, ranging from the powerful greater daemons and daemon princes to the lesser daemons of Tzeentch, and mortals from the ancient Legions of Traitor Marines to the humblest underhive dregs. All dance to the tune of the Master Puppeteer, and few can even begin to see the strings controlling their actions.

CHAPTER II: SERVANTS OF FATE

The second chapter introduces four new powerful Player Archetypes: Thousand Sons Sorcerer, Alpha Legion Chaos Space Marine, Q'Sal Magister Immaterial, and Idolitrex Magos of Forge Polix, all agents either knowingly or unknowingly of the Master of Lies. It also contains new armoury items and psychic powers, as well as new and expanded Rituals for Heretics to use in beseeching the Chaos Gods for favour.

CHAPTER III: ARCHITECTS OF DESTINY

Chapter III includes expanded rules for Heretics to conduct Investigations, the better to know the Will of Tzeentch. It also reviews planets of the Screaming Vortex that fall under his sway or concern, such as the Sorcerer World of Q'Sal and Dread Korvaska. Here also are the antagonistic Necrons, legions of undying metal warriors whose hatred of all living things drives them to conquer the galaxy again after awakening from their slumber of millions of years.

CHAPTER IV: TOPPLED SPIRES

The final chapter contains the adventure **Toppled Spires**, in which the Heretics venture to the world of Q'Sal. Here they must learn the ways of the bizarre city of Surgub, where warp-infused devices dominate the land. They must also contend with the hidden machinations of three rival sorcerer-technocrats, each out to use the Heretics to purge themselves of their hated foes. To get out of the city before these or other powerful beings decide the Heretics' souls should instead power Surgub's fabled warp charms, will take both intricate cunning and martial force.

PC WEAPON TRAINING AND WEAPON DAMAGE

In the cases of all NPC profiles, the GM should assume that they are proficient in any weapon they are equipped with and, in general, any weapon an adversary possesses is one he's prepared to use. In addition, all NPC weapon profiles have any damage bonuses from Talents, Strength Bonus, cybernetics, or other augmentations included.

INFAMY FOR NPCs

Certain dangerous and powerful NPCs possess Infamy, representing their particularly potent abilities and dread reputations. An NPC with Infamy has Infamy Points equal to his Infamy Bonus, and may be used as if they were Infamy Points at Level 2.



TZEENTCH



- THE CHANGER OF WAYS
-
- A THOUSAND AND ONE PLOTS
-
- SEARCHING A SHIFTING MAZE
-
- MINIONS OF FORTUNE
-
- TZEENTCH AND THE LONG WAR



CHAPTER I: TZEENTCH

"If Chaos is change itself, then Tzeentch, more than any other Dark Power, embodies Chaos in its purest, most primal form. Therefore, no other God of Chaos warrants more of our fearful respect, our tireless resistance, and our unflinching loyalty to the Emperor."

—Inquisitor Gallianus Dirk at the Jellico Conclave
(records declared Heretica Extremis)

The entity or sentient warp force known as Tzeentch is perhaps the most enigmatic of the so-called Chaos Gods or Dark Powers. Tzeentch, the Changer of Ways, is the god of sorcery, scheming, mutation, and change. He embodies mortals' desires for evolution, improvement, innovation, and progress as well as their dreams of wealth, prosperity, and a better tomorrow. While many perceive these motivations as healthy, wholesome, and perhaps even necessary to mortal existence, Tzeentch, the Great Conspirator, works to corrupt the aspirations and ambitions of humankind and xenos alike, and to leverage these hopes and dreams for his own nefarious ends.

The other Dark Powers tend to act upon mortal society more directly: Khorne with bloodshed and slaughter, Nurgle with disease and decay, and Slaanesh with the allure of ecstasy and decadence. However, Tzeentch and his servants—human, xenos, and daemon—scheme and conspire quietly and stealthily to guide and influence the machinations of mortal society. The Changer of Ways favours subtle weapons: flattering words, enticing temptations, healthy ambitions stoked to traitorous or immoral ends, and above all, schemes within endless schemes. Many a politician, scholar, military officer, or other mortal leader has begun a promising career, altruistic project, or worthwhile intellectual investigation only to find himself—perhaps prompted by a seemingly well-intentioned colleague who secretly served the Great Conspirator—making compromises, moving up the hierarchy at the expense of others, or taking ethically questionable shortcuts. Even with the best of intentions, or perhaps because of them, these people are vulnerable to the machinations of Tzeentch, who conspires to turn such individuals into cogs in his infernal machine, fuelled by endless schemes, lies, plots, and deceptions.

Many are the followers of Tzeentch. Some willingly and knowingly follow the Architect of Fate. Others, deceived by the Father of Lies and his servants, believe themselves to be advancing their own agendas, while, in actuality, they blindly serve the Changer of Ways. Many of the rogues, renegades, heretics, and Chaos Space Marines also serve Tzeentch. The reach of the Architect of Fate is long, stretching across the galaxy with special attention to regions such as the Eye of Terror and the Screaming Vortex where the warp and reality become one. He is the Master of the Thousand and One Plots, each more intricate and devious than the next, and none save for Tzeentch himself can possibly imagine, let alone fathom, them all. Such is the Changer of Ways, and such is his control over the foolish efforts of all mortals.

THE CHANGER OF WAYS

"He cannot be known. He cannot be described. He cannot be understood, for he is change, constant change, constantly changing, never ending."

—Herodotus Black of Taloma Nova,
later declared Hereticus Extremis

Tzeentch is one of the four major Chaos Gods, and his areas of influence include sorcery, scheming, change, and knowledge. He is known by many names: the Changer of Ways, the Great Schemer, the Father of Lies and Deception, the Great Mutator, the Master of Fortune, the Great Conspirator, the Architect of Fate, the Great Eagle, the Shifting Breeze, the Master of Fate, Tchar, Shunch, Chen, and countless other titles and names from the millions of dialects spoken throughout the galaxy. For every name by which the Master of Deceit is known, he has a thousand guises and plots. Everything related to the master of change shifts, mutates, evolves, and transmogrifies. One can go mad—and many have—trying to study even the smallest threads of the Great Schemer and to perform the impossible: to describe him and to fix him to one shape, one form, one motive, one truth. Perhaps the closest manner to characterise Tzeentch is not to describe him at all, as over time, he differs from himself more than he does any other being. Tzeentch, like his endless schemes, constantly shifts, morphs, and transforms.

While the other Dark Gods adopt fixed forms much of the time, Tzeentch manifests in a multitude of guises. Nonetheless, over the aeons, certain traits have emerged in his appearance, his associated iconography, the material presence of his daemonic followers, and the nightmares his visage implants in the minds of those who witness him. Such descriptions often

EXCERPTS FROM THE OFFICIAL DIARY OF MIINIUS NOVACOR, PLANETARY GOVERNOR OF RASHAD PRIME

DATE: 242812.M41

Long-range patrols of the 134th Company of my Planetary Defence Force have reported suspicious activity in Sector 35-Alpha, the northern coast of the eastern continent. Though the region is of little tactical, economic, or industrial importance, as the planetary surveillance grid also detected a possible xenos landing in the sector, I have ordered Colonel Max Acario to dispatch scouts to identify and assess the threat, if any.

Derridian Septima, my newly appointed personal assistant, is handling arrangements for my annual Awards Ceremony with diligence and some efficiency. While she currently demands more nurturing and supervision than the off-world blooms I struggle to grow in the Palace Gardens, I remain hopeful that she will become a valued member of my staff.



I: TZEENTCH

reveal Tzeentch as a thin, lanky sorcerer, either male or female, in robes that continually change colour. Tzeentch's head hangs low, beneath his shoulders, and his arms are long and spindly. Some descriptions posit that Tzeentch's skin is covered in faces and mouths that whisper secrets dark and terrible or comment upon and subvert the words uttered by the entity's primary or natural mouth. The faces and mouths that cover the daemonic form shift, slide, emerge, and are subsumed back into the unnatural flesh. Some of the *Ordo Malleus* daemonhunters, however, realise that these perceived consistencies, like so many things associated with the Great Deceiver, may constitute a ruse of one kind or another. After all, consistency is often part and parcel of the most convincing lies and confidence schemes.

Although many have described Tzeentch in this way, others have portrayed the Dark God as coloured smoke, crackling energy of an unknown type that burns or mutates the objects it touches, faces in mist, a writhing mass of fleshy protoplasm, and burning runes that hang in space and sear the very air—sometimes all within the same observation. Others show malformed birds, fish, or perverse hybridised versions of the two that swim through the air and fly through the sea. Indeed, birds and fish figure heavily in descriptions of Tzeentch, in his iconography, and in the shapes taken by many of his daemonic and mutated mortal followers. For instance, Tzeentch's most powerful followers, his greater daemons the Lords of Change, resemble giant humanoid birds; his Screamers and the Discs that carry his champions to battle often appear as flying aquatic manta rays, tirelessly hunting through both the Great Ocean and the air of real space like the legendary carcharodons of primordial Terra.

Other commentators have suggested that Tzeentch, the Great Mutator, has no fixed shape at all. Tzeentch's tangible form, when he chooses to manifest physically, is a mass of constantly shifting flesh. Thus, the constantly fluctuating material body of the Changer of Ways resembles many of his creations, such as his daemons and his realm itself, which similarly have no stable form. Still others have posited that Tzeentch's physical forms are simply images that mortal minds create to try to perceive and understand something far more abstract, an agent of pure change, mutation, and flux. Such a form is more akin to metaphor than reality, and perhaps suits this Ruinous Power to a greater degree than eyes of flesh or metal could possibly capture. If some truth lies in this line of reasoning, then perhaps mortal minds have come to associate Tzeentch with birds and fish, creatures of air and water, respectively, because both of these animals inhabit fluid environments. Wind, tide, waves, temperature, turbidity, and bodies in motion constantly reshape the air and water in which these organisms live, making them fitting symbols for the Changer of Ways. As with much concerning the Great Changer, however, in the end all is conjecture and supposition, for attempting to know the true form of the Master of Mutation is to embrace madness.

Like Tzeentch himself, the daemonic creatures of the Changer of Ways take many forms. In addition to the aforementioned Screamers, Discs, and greater daemons known as the Lords of Change, which take the form of giant anthropomorphic birds, Tzeentch commands many other daemonic servants as well. His Daemonic Princes once served the Changer of Ways as mortal champions. After they gained sufficient favour from their dark master, or perhaps simply became the focus of his unknowable whim, Tzeentch elevated these once-mortal servants to daemonic

I TZEENTCH



status and bestowed upon them immortality and powers that rival those of the Lords of Change. The forces of Tzeentch also include multi-limbed lesser daemons called Horrors whose large mouths and constantly shifting forms make them the stuff of nightmares. The headless, conical daemons known as Flamers bear the true fire of change and, with it, shower the enemies of the Master of Fortune in mutating warpfire. The most powerful of these lesser daemons may become daemonic heralds, the field officers and daemonic sorcerers of the Great Conspirator. These are but a fraction of the daemons known as creations of Tzeentch, and even these mutate and change so frequently that their forms may completely change from one manifestation to the next.

Tzeentch commands many mortal followers as well, perhaps most conspicuously the Traitor Legion known as the Thousand Sons. These former servants of the Corpse Emperor of the Imperium of Man bring the power of sorcery and of the might of the Chaos Space Marines to bear against the enemies of the Changer of Ways. Other Traitor Space Marines, such as the Scourged and the Oracles of Change, though less well-known than the Thousand Sons, fight for Tzeentch with equal fervour. While these fallen Adeptus Astartes wield tremendous martial power for the Architect of Fate, Tzeentch also makes use of more subtle weapons, for he is the master of schemes, plots, and deceit. As such, the forces of Tzeentch include secret heretics, corrupt politicians, derelict military officers, unprincipled scholars, unscrupulous philosophers, and other leaders vulnerable to his nefarious temptations. Many of these individuals are psykers or practitioners of the sorcerous arts. Tzeentch's mortal followers, knowingly or otherwise, serve the Father of Lies and Deception in

a thousand inconspicuous ways. In lieu of open battle, Tzeentch's mortal minions wage quiet wars with secrets, lies, opportunism, temptation, misdirection, and intrigue. Tzeentch's followers firmly believe that more empires have fallen to corruption and internal strife than to swords and bolter shells.

One hesitates to characterise the ethos or philosophy of an entity as inscrutable, cryptic, fickle, and ultimately unknowable as Tzeentch. Nonetheless, from the behaviour of Tzeentch's followers and the ends they seem to pursue, careful observers can ascertain certain goals, values, or tenets of what one might call his ideology. For one, Tzeentch and his followers seem to value information, particularly knowledge that is forbidden, mysterious, or difficult to discover. The numbers of scholars, scientists, practitioners of forbidden arts, and mad visionaries that swell Tzeentch's ranks lend credence to this claim. Many an inquisitive mind, stymied by the complexities of a philosophical, scientific, or engineering problem, has yielded to the temptation of an alluring but forbidden text, a classified collection of data, or an unethical experimental method. Such individuals tacitly invite the Great Conspirator to take heed and leverage their vulnerability to his advantage. In short, Tzeentch and his minions understand the power of information. They hoard esoteric details and poorly remembered lore and often delve into mysteries and the unknown. Whether Tzeentch and those who serve him value this information for its inherent intellectual value, as a weapon to use against their enemies, or both, remains uncertain.

In addition, Tzeentch and his followers seem to value evolution and progress, particularly when plots, schemes, and conspiracy serve to catalyse these changes. The needs and short temporal existences of mortal beings may encourage both xenos and humankind to assume that Tzeentch's manipulations and desires for constant evolution function towards some end game. Man and alien alike tend to assume that, if a plot exists, so must a goal. Indeed, some purpose—such as the conquest of the galaxy, warp space, or the other Chaos Gods—may in fact exist inside the mind of the Architect of Fate. However, other, more flexible mortal minds that are capable of thinking laterally and considering alternative paradigms, ideologies, epistemologies, and ontological schema consider other possibilities when evaluating Tzeentch's ultimate objective (of course, such minds are of the type that also most often fall victim to Tzeentch's temptations, or madness, or both). Such individuals sometimes posit that Tzeentch's conspiracies and actions to initiate change have no intention, no goal. Tzeentch's only purpose may be nothing more than change itself—constant development, progress, alteration, mutation, metamorphosis, diversification, transformation, and revolution. Still others suggest that ascribing something as mortal, temporal, and worldly as a simple goal to an enigmatic Dark Power like Tzeentch results from limited reasoning that erroneously attempts to anthropomorphise a Chaos God and incorrectly characterise him as having mortal, temporal, and worldly desires. It may be more accurate to state that Tzeentch is an entity that, by his very nature, is an agent for change. As such, Tzeentch no more desires change than a catalyst desires a chemical reaction. Still other thinkers find fault in those who describe Tzeentch as an unthinking, unreasoning entity and deconstruct the arguments and metaphors of those who fail to

FROM THE PRIVATE DIARY OF ABEIARDUS CRISIUS, PREFECTUS OF KAIOR III

I now fear any attempt to describe Tzeentch will fail. Can one sketch a splash of water in mid air? Can one catch smoke in one's bare hands? Can one give voice to the pleasures of a joyful dream half remembered? If one could know the Shifting Breeze with accuracy, if even for a moment, that understanding would become obsolete in an instant. Such is the vacillating nature of the Changer of Ways. Indeed, even the keenest mind's perception of the Great Mutator is, at best, fleeting, imprecise, fragmentary, partial, and distorted. As the even the finest archeotech relics can detect only the shadowy components of our reality, so too, we can only hope to perceive Tzeentch as a reflection. And, of course, any enlightenment that may brighten our dull, myopic eyes will have passed through the refracting lenses of the Great Conspirator's deceptions, lies, and corruptions. Still I must puzzle it out; I have struggled too far along this path to turn away, no matter what fate may come to me or my world.

identify the obvious deliberateness of Tzeentch's manipulations. Just because the end is difficult or impossible to identify does not mean that it does not exist. Of course, Tzeentch and his more scholarly servants may intentionally foster these circular and circuitous arguments in order to obscure and obfuscate his movements and objectives, if any, even further.

Yet another way to describe Tzeentch is in contrast to Nurgle in the pantheon of the Gods of Chaos. Typically, the Changer of Ways stands in opposition to the Lord of Pestilence, just as Khorne, the god of blood and skulls, opposes Slaanesh, the prince of decadence and depravity. Where Nurgle represents Chaos as entropy, Tzeentch represents Chaos as energy. Where Nurgle promotes decay and atrophy, Tzeentch promotes potential and progress. Where Nurgle fosters deterioration and ruin, Tzeentch fosters germination and development. To many students of the Dark Powers, the (however speculative) ideological descriptions of the Changer of Ways make better sense when juxtaposed against those of Nurgle, Tzeentch's seeming antithesis amongst the Ruinous Powers.

Tzeentch's inherent spirit, if he can be said to possess one, manifests tellingly in the sorcery he and his followers practice on the battlefield and in more private settings. Characteristic of the Changer of Ways, Tzeentch's magic takes shape in unholy flame, raw warp energy, spontaneous mutation, hideous transformation, and deceptive illusion. Tzeentch and his sorcerers can immolate their enemies with warfire that burns flesh or ceramite with equal ease. Expert practitioners of Tzeentch's dark arts can manipulate the raw stuff of the warp itself, the very touch of which can transform even the most devout into those monstrous gibbering mounds of oozing protoplasm known as Spawns of Chaos. Followers of the Great Deceiver are also masters of illusion who can bend the perceptions of others. By so doing, Tzeentch's sorcerers can trick a soldier into perceiving his brothers in

arms as enemies or convince a planetary governor to suddenly quash the decrees which he had previously promoted with enthusiasm. The sorcery of the Father of Lies and Deception is so insidious that many of its practitioners fail to realise that they are indeed serving Tzeentch's schemes each time they use their powers. Many an ambitious psyker, believing he was working in the service of the Emperor or for the greater good of some xenos race, has unwittingly aided the Changer of Ways and his convoluted manipulations of the mortal world.

The forces of Tzeentch do not engage in open warfare as often as those of Khorne and the other Dark Powers. Tzeentch prefers to advance his agenda inconspicuously through espionage, intrigue, politics, and subtle sorcery rather than through bloodshed and firepower. When Tzeentch does cry havoc and resort to direct assault, he first creates weaknesses in his enemies by spying on them to learn of their vulnerabilities or by engaging in psychological warfare that sows dissent and foments discord through propaganda, fear-mongering, and innuendo. The Great Conspirator corrupts key military and civilian personnel who will, at crucial moments in battle, fail to convey important orders, misdirect needed materiel, or conduct acts of misinformation, sabotage, and assassination. To Tzeentch, war is the ultimate game, and even a seeming defeat may, in actuality, constitute a necessary sacrifice or an insidious form of motivation for one of his champions or a potential follower. Thus, to Tzeentch, the loss of a single soldier, a greater daemon, an army, a world, or even an entire system matters little more than the loss of a pawn to a regicide master.

As any description of Tzeentch will be inaccurate and prone to the manipulations of the Great Deceiver, it follows that the most accurate descriptions of the Changer of Ways will acknowledge their inherent imprecision. Any attempt to fix this Dark Power in words, images, or ideas—no matter for what purpose, scholarly, tactical, self-serving, or unholy—will fail. Even if mortal minds could possibly perceive, comprehend, and communicate the true nature of Tzeentch at one moment, that nature would change the next, rendering the previous understanding obsolete. As such, whether one's goal is to remain loyal to the Emperor of Man, to serve the purpose of a xenos race, or to explore the ways of Chaos for purposes scholarly or dark, one may best be served by considering the Architect of Fate only at the periphery of one's mind's eye, for even those who knowingly sail upon the Shifting Breeze of Tzeentch can never see the true face of the Chaos God who wears a Thousand Masks.



A THOUSAND AND ONE PLOTS

“The manipulations of Tzeentch are complex, eternal, and endless. Foil one scheme and two more come to fruition, like the severed heads of the fabled hydra. What might seem like failure is but one step on a long and winding path that only those who have been blessed with the insight and power of the Changer of Ways may follow.”

—Attributed to Ankhu Anen, Guardian of the Great Library of Prospero

It is often said that Tzeentch is the mastermind behind a Thousand and One Plots, though it is likely that an entity with his omniscience, immortality, power, and reach weaves a complicated web of deceptions and schemes too numerous to count. The Great Conspirator seeks to spread his influence and impose his will upon every corner of the galaxy. His plots within schemes within conspiracies are as convoluted, slippery, and mutable as the Changer of Ways himself, and they can take millennia to mature and come to fruition. Sometimes, Tzeentch’s plans become obvious when, say, a daemonic host attacks an Imperial planet or a warband of Thousand Sons Space Marines attacks an Eldar homeworld in an attempt to locate the fabled Black Library. Less conspicuous tactics—such as bribes, threats, treachery, assassinations, and coercion—also represent important parts of Tzeentch’s arsenal. More often, however, Tzeentch chooses the most subtle tactics imaginable. He influences the workings of the mortal world quietly: revealing or concealing important information at opportune moments, infiltrating the institutions of the mortal world to learn their secrets and direct their activities, influencing organisational policies both large and small, bestowing power and rewards to those who follow him knowingly, and tricking frustrated scholars, latent psykers, desperate politicians, and ambitious military officers into doing his will.

The ultimate purpose or purposes behind Tzeentch’s Thousand and One Plots are not always clear, and even his short-term goals seem as inscrutable as the Master Deceiver himself. Why do his forces allow entire worlds under their control to return to Imperial rule with only nominal resistance in one place, while in another, they hopelessly defend small, obscure settlements to the last man? Why does he allow his followers to fight amongst themselves? Does the Changer of Ways seek to enslave humankind and the xenos races? Does he hope to destroy the Imperium of Man and the alien realms? Does he seek to dominate the other Gods of Chaos? Only Tzeentch knows for sure, assuming motivations that mortals can comprehend actually exist.

Speculative minds have posited a variety of theories to explain the mysterious ways of the Great Conspirator. These hypotheses range from one extreme to the other. Some claim that every move Tzeentch and his followers make is part of an elaborate master plan, an elaborate game older than the galaxy. To these theorists, the Architect of Fate moves only with deliberation and precision. Though some of Tzeentch’s actions and decisions may seem random, ill-conceived, or inexplicable to the limited minds of humans and xenos, everything he does

is a subtle ploy or gambit in his eternal game. Others postulate that Tzeentch’s Thousand and One Plots have no purpose other than to initiate change itself and to engender mayhem and disorder throughout the galaxy, the very things that nourish and empower the Changer of Ways. This line of conjecture concludes that the plots of Tzeentch represent the means to no end. Whatever Tzeentch’s purposes, if any, what remains clear is that he and his followers are masters of intrigue and conspiracy. Evidence suggests that Tzeentch has indirectly played a part in thousands of miscues, betrayals, freak occurrences, atrocities, and catastrophes throughout the history of the Imperium and of the alien races of the galaxy.

The story of Darius Vexa exemplifies Tzeentch’s subtle scheming. Vexa was a low-level scribe working for the Department Munitorum; for decades, he laboured aboard as their representative to the Imperial Navy freighter *Pococurante*. Vexa’s responsibilities included cataloguing the tithes collected from manufactory worlds and hive cities. Many of these tithes took the form of replacement parts for machines and munitions that supplied Imperial Guard forces defending Cadia and other planets throughout the Segmentum Obscurus. Vexa performed his tedious duties diligently but with little enthusiasm. After many joyless years, Vexa met Illyra Julian, a young Warrant Officer who had recently joined the crew of the freighter. Illyra had piercing blue eyes, a bright smile, and a cheerful demeanour that brought Vexa a measure of happiness for the few minutes he saw her each work shift. One day, Illyra came to Vexa with a problem. She explained that she had made an error on a requisition form. She asked for twenty crates of 5-millimetre left-winding cogs when she had intended to request 25-millimetre left-winding cogs. She asked Vexa to correct the records so that her erroneous request was the official one, explaining with a wink that no one need be the wiser. Vexa complied and falsified the requisition documents. Months later, Cadian Munitorum Sergeants discovered that the 25-millimetre cogs they needed to repair over a dozen Basilisk

EXCERPTS FROM THE OFFICIAL DIARY OF MIINIUS NOVACOR

DATE: 243812.M41

Septima and I spent the morning and much of the afternoon finalising details for the Awards Ceremony that will take place just four days hence. My respect and admiration for this young woman grow daily, as she identified several agricultural engineers responsible for increasing production of the grain fields of the western continent almost two-fold. As our planet’s secondary mission is to supply sustenance to the Emperor’s valiant forces in this sector, certainly these hard-working individuals deserve recognition for their service. Septima also informed me that she carefully reviewed the reports of Colonel Acario, whose scouts identified no threats in Sector 35-Alpha. I have instructed Septima to issue orders to recall the patrols and for the troops to return to their regular duties. She has also arranged for the Rashadian Eastern Symphonium to perform at the awards program. With the popularity of this orchestra, I look forward to what will hopefully be our most successful and best-attended ceremony to date.

tanks of the 266th Mechanised Company had not arrived. As such, the tanks would not be available to defend Kasr Derth against a daemonic horde that descended on the world with warfire of blue and pink.

The daemonic creation known as both the Changeling and the Trickster of Tzeentch epitomises the Great Conspirator's scheming tactical preferences, his love of sowing discord and distrust, and his perverse sense of humour. Tzeentch bestowed upon the Changeling a doppelganger's ability to assume any shape, from the tiniest insect to the largest greater daemon. The Changeling can imitate the appearance, speech, and mannerisms of any individual with such uncanny accuracy that he can fool even those closest to the person he is mimicking, a talent that makes him the ultimate infiltrator. Tzeentch also gifted his Trickster with an immense body of information and learning, and this wisdom assists the Changeling in understanding the motivations, professions, and knowledge of those he impersonates. One can imagine the havoc that the Changeling could wreak by simply taking on the guise of a General of the Imperial Guard and ordering a retreat in the midst of battle or by replacing the officer of a ship and ordering it to make a course correction that would cause it to collide with the nearest star.

On one occasion, the Trickster took the form of Ork Warboss Irkfang Grubbz of the Evil Sunz Clan, who had recently conquered Tenebria VI. After the real Grubbz had passed out following a week of particularly rigorous celebrating, the Changeling quietly stole into the Ork encampment. Seated atop Grubbz's prized warbuggy, the Trickster spent hours (an effective eternity, given the average greenskin attention span) regaling the carousing Orks with an elaborate fantasy involving "The Waaagh! of True Speed." He created a mythic yarn involving the Ork Gods Gork and Mork, who one day decided to race each other to see which "wun wuz da fashtesh." In the earthy, colourful language of the Orks, the Changeling described each step of the contest and embellished his tale with the violent details Orks love, such as a stretch of the race that spanned half a continent when Gork and Mork were neck and neck and "bashin' wun anuvver" for days. The Trickster knew better than to conclude his tale, which would have required him to declare one god faster than the other and thereby risk enraging many of the Orks present. Instead, while the Orks' blood was up from his exciting story, he declared that they would re-create the race of Gork and Mork and, in so doing, become the Waaagh! of True Speed. The Orks hastily divided themselves into two teams and mounted their bikes, buggies, and battle wagons. The enormous greenskin army raced after the Changeling into the Tenebrian night and, soon after, drove off a 500-meter cliff, thus ending the Waaagh! of True Speed and Waaagh! Grubbz to boot.



When the Trickster is not functioning as an infiltrator in this manner, he tends to adopt a guise that incorporates features of a number of Tzeentch's daemons, such as multiple limbs, not unlike those of Horrors, and sorcerer's robes. However, this is not his true shape, for he has long since forgotten his original form. The Changeling sometimes accompanies Horrors into battle, where his deceptive powers compel the enemy to see their comrades as daemons and vice versa. The Changeling amuses himself with these petty illusions, as they appeal to his daemonic sense of humour (and his master's as well).

Those who study the ways of Tzeentch, be they followers, allies, or enemies, often meet with frustration as they try to comprehend the Great Conspirator. Many give up and claim that the Dark Gods are unknowable or that the Changer of Ways has no ultimate purpose and seeks only to foster disorder. Others go mad while plumbing the depths of Tzeentch's abyssal conspiracies and are either executed as heretics or locked away for the remainder of their lives. A handful of the wisest who try to understand the spider web design underlying the Thousand and One Plots sometimes begin to perceive the faintest whispers of the twisted strings moving Tzeentch's puppets and the convoluted threads that make up his elaborate tapestry. Such individuals are to be respected and feared, as they are more likely than most to be granted favours from the hands of the Architect of Fate.

! TZEENTCH !



SEARCHING A SHIFTING MAZE

"Created from the raw energy of the warp, Tzeentch's Realm is one of constant flux and shifting structures hewn spontaneously from every material imaginable. There, the only constant is change. No mortal and few daemons can visit the realm of the Raven God and survive with sanity intact."

—Inquisitor Ghillian Kys, Ordo Malleus

Just as Tzeentch manifests and appears in many different guises, many of them fluid and shifting, so too, the realm of the Changer of Ways constantly adapts to its master's whims, desires, moods, and, of course, the demands of his Thousand and One Plots. Observers human, xenos, and daemon perceive and interpret this territory in a wide variety of ways. In fact, some scholars and a few of the more coherent first-hand witnesses who have survived contact with Tzeentch's realm have suggested that neither mortal nor daemon, save perhaps the most powerful Lords of Change, can grasp the true nature of Tzeentch's shifting realm. Most who visit the domain of the Great Mutator quickly go mad; those of exceptionally strong mind and strong will can perhaps interpret but one facet of the often crystalline landscape that, like Tzeentch himself, has an infinite number of faces. Many commentators suggest that the mind can only perceive this world of warp energy wrought into something resembling solid form through symbols or metaphors—images created by the mind of the iron-willed in an attempt to make sense of pure Chaos and constant change. In fact, many commentators rely on paradoxical metaphors even to describe the process of perceiving Tzeentch's realm itself: sculpting with fog, describing a dream as it occurs, singing silently, painting with mist, and the like. The Great Ocean is a sea of madness and insanity, and his realm is the concentrated essence of such things given form.

In spite of the constantly changing nature of the domain of the Architect of Fate and the limited capacity of the mind to perceive and comprehend it, certain common views have emerged from the extant descriptions of Tzeentch's realm. Some observers claim that an enormous crystalline labyrinth dominates the landscape, a luminescent plane shimmering like a polished, mottled opal. Passages in this maze appear, dissolve, merge, split, and change direction seemingly at random. Only the Lords of Change, Tzeentch's most powerful servants, and those with the trenchant insights of the irrevocably mad can hope to understand the design of Tzeentch's deranged maze and to navigate its corridors. No daemons are needed to act as sentinels in Tzeentch's realm; the labyrinth itself provides sufficient protection against anyone rash and foolhardy enough to attempt an assault on the Great Schemer.



Those who claimed to have gazed into the crystalline substance that composes this maze may see more than light reflected and refracted in the fluctuating facets of the shining surfaces. They may catch glimpses of fears, miseries, and hopes made visually manifest; dreams and nightmares; histories real and imagined; potential futures; images of torment, ecstasy, and despair; and abstract thoughts made momentarily concrete as pictures in the crystals. One visionary reported seeing various images of his children at different points in their lives, all of them moments of despair, sorrow, and desperation. Another recounted her experiences in Tzeentch's realm as one of exultation and ecstasy as she witnessed, reflected representations of what she took to be her possible futures, each more joyful and successful than the last. Yet another claimed to observe nightmare imagery in the mirrored surface of the labyrinth: daemons rending flesh from friends and loved ones, the destruction of his home by dark sorcerers wielding warpfire, and worst of all, the transformation of his own body into a tentacled, writhing mass. When this last traveller was finally able to tear his gaze away from the hellish visions, he discovered that days had passed and that his body had indeed changed into the hideous Chaos Spawn he had seen in his vision. Imperial records show that all three of these individuals met with tragic ends: suicide, insanity, and execution at the hands of the Inquisition, respectively. In one sense, these survivors of Tzeentch's realm were fortunate, as it is rumoured that most who travel through the maze of the Raven God wander it eternally as miserable, insane shells of their former selves, forever tormented by ghastly visions, regrets over their mistakes and missed opportunities, and the hopes for a tomorrow that they will never realise.

VOX-JOURNAL OF TYR BANNION, PERSONAL FILES

DATE: 335801.M41

I fear for my sanity and my soul as well as those of the individual in my charge. Against my better judgement, I accepted custodial responsibility for the psyker Jan Sprecher. Though Sprecher received training and official sanction some years ago, I fear he has lost control and fallen into madness. I mistakenly allowed him to guide me to these coordinates in our search, and now we find ourselves wandering endless caves and corridors of unusual stone and crystal. The planet vexes me, and this location in particular. Perhaps it is my fear speaking, but I constantly feel as though we are being watched by eyes just on the periphery of my vision, eyes that seem to peer out from the very crystals that make up the wall of this prison labyrinth. I cannot tell if the walls are natural or some xenos creation, but they are certainly not of man.

Sprecher, when I can rouse him from his mesmerised stupor, assures me that we are still on the right track to complete our mission and that the archeotech is less than a day's travel ahead. I have my doubts. I do not share his mutation and cannot perceive as he can, but it is my duty to the Emperor to prevent Sprecher from falling prey to weakness.

DATE: 336801.M41

Though our chronometers say that we have been wandering in this maze (for that is surely what it has come to be) for less than 15 hours, it seems like weeks. I am so exhausted I can barely stand, and I seem to have five days' growth of beard on my chin. My desperate mood is not helped by the fact that Sprecher is always muttering to himself. Every few minutes, he pauses and seems to stare off into space—no, not into space, but into the crystals that make up the walls. I can hardly stand within three metres of him, as he seems to be vibrating with some type of nervous energy that fairly crackles off his skin. I taste metal and smell ozone when I approach him. Whether he is losing his mind or he is under the influence of some warp-spawned entity I cannot judge. My laspistol indicates a full charge but only emits puddles of languid blue light. Emperor save us.

[...]

Minutes ago, Sprecher and I came to a metallic archway. It seemed to me little more than an unadorned arch, remarkable only because it was the only thing we'd seen other than crystals and rocks in some time. However, Sprecher approached the arch and mumbled some nonsense about a golden portal, wondrous flames, and a great mouth. He stood in front of the gate muttering to himself for a few moments. His eyes glazed over, and he began to drool. He was lost, I'm certain. I took a moment to harden my resolve and then raised my laspistol and prepared to administer the Emperor's justice as best I could. Just as I raised the weapon to strike him, Sprecher lurched forward through the archway. Where once there was a metal archway with a corridor of crystal beyond it, I saw only a wall of solid rock. The scanner detects neither Sprecher nor the archeotech. I am alone. I am lost.

DATE: 337801.M41

At last all is well. I have recovered the archeotech and am returning home where I will rejoin my family. I can almost see them now. My wife so beautiful. My boys growing up so strong and fine. Prefectus Rikaros assures me that my promotion is in the offing. My future shines brightly now. At last all is well. At last all is well. At last...

While the passage of time in the warp fluctuates and does not correspond to its regular, linear flow in the space-time of the Materium, the inconsistency of time's progression is even more pronounced in Tzeentch's realm. As the anecdote above suggests, in what seems like a few minutes spent gazing into the depths of the crystals of Tzeentch's labyrinthine realm, days or even years can pass. Two individuals might enter Tzeentch's realm in the same instant in time; one might exit moments later and report that years had passed, whereas the other could spend centuries of real time in Tzeentch's realm but swear that he had been gone only minutes. In addition, other peculiarities in individuals' subjective perceptions of time occur within Tzeentch's realm itself. A single footstep may seem to take hours to complete. What seems like a few seconds spent admiring the beautiful refraction of light on the crystalline structure of the maze can take days. Many visitors "momentarily" transfixed by some curiosity in Tzeentch's realm have died of dehydration or starvation. Others can spend years wandering the insane corridors of Tzeentch's maze without drinking, eating, or resting—their metabolism apparently slowed by chaotic influences.

Legends tell of an entity known as "The Guardian of the Maze" that inhabits the crystalline labyrinth. Though his name implies that he serves as the protector of Tzeentch's realm, he is said to function more as a gatekeeper and observer. Rumours tell of a path through Tzeentch's realm that, in theory, anyone—mortal or daemon—may follow to discover infinite knowledge. To follow this path, the inquisitive pilgrim must travel through nine gates. These portals, three times the height of a man, appear as golden arches wreathed in the blue and pink warpfire of Tzeentch. Such is the power of the Guardian of the Maze—or perhaps it is the bizarre temporal nature of Tzeentch's twisting realm itself—that the Guardian manifests as a giant disembodied mouth hovering above all nine gates simultaneously. At each gate, the mouth ponderously speaks, asking those seekers of knowledge one of the nine hundred ninety-nine Riddles of Tzarathoth. Those who answer the riddles correctly may pass through the gates and continue along the path to ultimate enlightenment. Those who fail to answer correctly are doomed to wander the labyrinth for all eternity wracked with insanity and regret over the infinite knowledge that might have been theirs.

TZEENTCH

FROM THE TOME OF SEVEN HUNDRED AND TWENTY NINE TRUTHS OF UNDOING HELD BY THE GREY KNIGHTS

The greatest weapon of Tzeentch is neither martial skill nor sorcerous prowess. Nor is it, as many might believe, guile, deceit, or cunning. No. Tzeentch's weapon that poses the greatest threat to the servants of the Emperor is knowledge: knowledge of the past, knowledge of the present, knowledge of the future, and most importantly, knowledge of what motivates the hearts and minds of the weak-willed, those who might one day swell the ranks of the Changer of Ways. While we can, with the Emperor's blessing, overcome Tzeentch's armies and sorcerers and learn to see through his plots and schemes, there is little we can do to bolster the willpower of the impressionable and the weak. Ultimately, then, our only defences against Tzeentch's greatest weapon are constant and ruthless vigilance.

Legend tells of one being—the only one in all history—who answered all nine of the questions correctly. Strangely, many versions of the story posit that this individual appeared in the guise of a young girl who was accompanied by a small black dog. Factions within the Ordo Malleus wage scholarly battles of the hidden significance of this, or if the tale actually happened, or was yet another metaphorical wisp of smoke from the Master of Lies.

Tzeentch's sanctum sanctorum, the Impossible Fortress, is said to lie at the centre of the crystalline maze, if indeed geographical descriptors such as "centre" apply with any accuracy to this inconstant realm. Some consider this as more akin to a central belief or conceit that might drive a series of thoughts than an actual location, as nothing of this area has physicality as mortals would comprehend. While this ætheric edifice is in constant flux, many have described it as a crystalline castle composed of the same sort of material as the labyrinth that surrounds it. Imbalanced spires spontaneously emerge from the ever-shifting foundation of the Impossible Fortress, as do towers of blue and pink flame and searing warpfire. Gates, doors, and portals slowly open, as if yawning with the ennui of ages, only to slam shut like mouths of terrible beasts and then disappear. Mortals shackled by the psychological manacles forged by a lifetime of habit and enculturation in the material realm cannot fathom the perverse design of Tzeentch's home. Indeed, as the name of this fastness implies, even the most visionary and heretical designers of the material realm could not draft plans for the maddening architecture of the Impossible Fortress. Few daemons, save the most powerful Lords of Change, can navigate its corridors, but as these creations are distillations of the madness that makes up his realm they thrive, all the same.

Deep inside the Impossible Fortress, according to some profane accounts, lies Tzeentch's fabled Hidden Library. This infinite collection of tomes, scrolls, and parchments of every kind contains every scrap of knowledge and thought ever recorded; stories written and unwritten; histories true and alternate; and

accounts of futures potential, actual, and imagined. Many of the volumes are so weighty with knowledge that they gain a sentience of a kind and spend centuries chattering to passers-by, arguing with one another, rewriting themselves, and then reorganising their placement accordingly. Magical chains of warpflame help to protect the books and bind them in place. Horrors serve as grotesque librarians and work tirelessly to re-shelve the works, catalogue the collection, and maintain what passes for order in the Impossible Fortress, though as the concept itself is anathema to the Great Mutator, no mortal could possibly fathom such a design.

As with so many things associated with the Changer of Ways, few things are always as they seem. Although the Crystal Maze, the Impossible Fortress, and the Hidden Library often appear (or at least are often perceived) as delineated above, by no means are these descriptions consistent with every narrative provided by those unfortunate souls who have visited Tzeentch's domain. Bock Sammaelle, dubbed the "Lunatic Scrivener of Hamclov Prime" by the hive princes who acted as his patrons, claimed to have travelled to and returned from Tzeentch's realm in early M41. Sammaelle attested that he saw nothing but a bleak hill on which a single, leafless tree stood. Daylasse Dial, the heretic illuminator of Phalan 10 who was later executed for heresy, described Tzeentch's realm as a barren, desert landscape populated by deformed, headless humanoids that continually split and reformed into new bodies. Other witnesses have described a realm of pulsating and constantly morphing protoplasm, towers of fungus and mould, continents of sentient vegetation and vines without finite length, and vast landscapes of nothing but barren stone and ash. It is likely that Tzeentch's realm is all of these things and many more. Others have suggested that observers interpret Tzeentch's realm subjectively, filtering their perception of structured warp energy through their own expectations and experiences. It may be most probable that Tzeentch himself determines how each individual perceives his realm to suit the needs, whims, and conspiracies of the Master of Lies.

EXCERPTS FROM THE OFFICIAL DIARY OF MIINIUS NOVACOR

DATE: 244812.M41

Last evening, I had the pleasure of hearing the Rashadian Eastern rehearsing in preparation for the upcoming awards program. Per Septima's suggestion, I have requested that the orchestra perform "For the Emperor and His Undying Glory." Though cynics may dismiss this elderly piece as out of style, I have no doubt that its stirring harmonies will provide the perfect accompaniment to the pomp and prestige of the ceremony.

DATE: 244812.M41 (SUPPLEMENTAL ENTRY)

I received a garbled vox, flagged as urgent from what we could decrypt, from Narciso Hexis, a regional manager from the northern province of the eastern continent. Septima and I have made several attempts to contact him, but thus far, communications seem to be down. I have left instructions for my staff to make regular attempts to contact Hexis.

**INTERROGATION OF THE MADMAN CORONIS AGATHON
TRANSCRIBED BY IGNATIUS JONN, INQUISITOR**

JONN: SO, YOU CLAIM TO BE A MANIFESTATION OF THE CHAOS POWER
COMMONLY KNOWN AS TZEENTCH. IS THAT CORRECT?

PRIMARY MOUTH: NO CLAIMS. NOT A MANIFESTATION. I AM HE.

SECONDARY MOUTH: THE CHANGER OF WAYS.

TERTIARY MOUTH: MANIFESTATION.

QUATERNARY MOUTH: MANIFEST CHANGE.

SECONDARY MOUTH: CHANGE MANIFEST.

JONN: YOU REALISE THAT SUCH A CLAIM AND YOUR OBVIOUS MUTATIONS ARE HERESY
AND GROUNDS FOR EXECUTION?

PRIMARY MOUTH: I HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR. THE TRANSITION FROM WHAT YOU
CALL LIFE TO WHAT YOU CALL DEATH IS BUT ONE CHANGE IN MY GRAND SCHEME.

SECONDARY MOUTH: SCHEMES CHANGE.

TERTIARY MOUTH: FEARS CHANGE.

QUATERNARY MOUTH: FEARS CHANGE SCHEMES.

SECONDARY MOUTH: FEAR SCHEMES.

JONN: WHEN DID YOUR MUTATIONS MANIFEST? I HAVE AN IMAGE SCAN OF YOU FROM 519 IN
WHICH YOU APPEAR NORMAL, AND...

PRIMARY MOUTH: I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN THUS.

QUATERNARY MOUTH: THUS, I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN.

SECONDARY MOUTH: MANIFEST THUSLY.

JONN: YOUR CRYPTIC ANSWERS WILL NOT SAVE YOU.

PRIMARY MOUTH: I HAVE NO WISH TO BE CRYPTIC. THE DATE ESCAPES ME AT THE MOMENT.

SECONDARY MOUTH: ESCAPE.

TERTIARY MOUTH: CRYPTIC.

QUATERNARY MOUTH: ESCAPE CRYPT.

JONN: VERY WELL. ARE THERE OTHERS LIKE YOU IN THE HIVE? OTHER FOLLOWERS
OF TZEENTCH?

PRIMARY MOUTH: NO. NONE. [PAUSE] I GROW TIRED OF ANSWERING YOUR QUESTIONS.

SECONDARY MOUTH: I WILL ANSWER ALL IN TIME.

TERTIARY MOUTH: ALL IN TIME.

JONN: BY THE EMPEROR, HOW MANY CULTISTS ARE THERE IN HIVE STANISLAS?

PRIMARY MOUTH: ONLY ME.

TERTIARY MOUTH: ALL IN TIME.

JONN: I WANT NAMES! NAMES!

PRIMARY MOUTH: I HAVE NO NAMES TO GIVE YOU.

SECONDARY MOUTH: TZEENTCH.

TERTIARY MOUTH: TCHAR.

SECONDARY MOUTH: CHANGER.

QUATERNARY MOUTH: LIES.

SECONDARY MOUTH: SHUNCH.

TERTIARY MOUTH: CONSPIRATOR.

QUATERNARY MOUTH: CHEN.

SECONDARY MOUTH: NAME LIES.

QUATERNARY MOUTH: NAMES LIE.

JONN: DAMN YOUR EYES, HERETIC! I WILL HAVE ANSWERS!

PRIMARY MOUTH: I WILL ANSWER. ALL IN TIME.

SECONDARY MOUTH: DAMN YOUR ANSWERS.

TERTIARY MOUTH: DAMNED MAN.

QUATERNARY MOUTH: ALL IN TIME. ALL IN TIME.

TERTIARY MOUTH: ALL DAMNED IN TIME.

[UNINTELLIGIBLE SOUNDS FOLLOW]

+++THIS RECORD IS FOR ORDO MALLEUS USE ONLY. IT IS A CRIME TO VIEW OR ALLOW
TO BE VIEWED THIS RECORD BY NON-AUTHORISED PERSONNEL, BY THE ORDER OF THE
INQUISITORIAL REPRESENTATIVE. NOT FOR ARCHIVING.+++

Archivist notes: Agathon exhibited numerous physical mutations, including several mouth-like orifices over the surface of his body. Jonn distinguished these orifices as the Primary Mouth (the "natural" mouth on Agathon's human face), Secondary Mouth, Tertiary Mouth, and so on. Both individuals were later executed for heresy.



MINIONS OF THE MASTER OF FORTUNE

"At first the creatures seemed comical, some dancing and singing in bizarre fashions while others were cavorting like colourful giant mushrooms, even as we fired on them. But then they reached us and the screaming started. At first I thought it was the things flying through the air above us, but then I realised it was my own voice."

—Lt. Orsino, Uttican 67th Company

Like all the Dark Powers, Tzeentch has a vast number of minions of a variety of types at his command, ranging from the daemons created as condensations of his will to the mortals who serve his whim, whether they know it or not. All are mere puppets to be manipulated by the Architect of Fate, and few, if any, even consider the nature of the strings controlling their actions.

DAEMONS

Tzeentch's daemons vary greatly from one type to another in terms of their appearance, their morphology, their level of intellect and autonomy, and their function in their master's schemes. Arguably, there is greater diversity in the creatures of Tzeentch than in the warp creatures of the other Dark Powers. However, the daemons of Tzeentch do have certain features in common. For one, daemons are creatures of the Sea of Souls that can normally only exist for short periods of time in real space, as the material realm is not their natural element. Some initiating incident usually occurs for the daemons to broach the barrier between the soft, shifting realms of the Immaterium and real space. They may be summoned into the material plane by a sorcerer or Chaos cultist conducting an ancient, forbidden ritual, or perhaps when a psyker loses control, enabling the daemon to tear his way into reality, or some calamitous sorcerous or psychic event occurs to weaken the barrier. In spite of the instability of their presence in the Materium, daemons can be remarkably resilient to most forms of physical damage; poisons and disease do no harm to these creatures of the warp though many force weapons, holy relics, and psychic attacks can harm them with comparative ease.

LORDS OF CHANGE

Tzeentch's Supreme Mutators

Tzeentch's greater daemons, the Lords of Change, often appear to mortals as giant, lanky humanoid birds with long limbs and necks and iridescent plumage of predominately blue, yellow, and purple in hue. Typically, they wear wizards' raiments of bejewelled robes and soft fabrics, and carry in their clawed hands staves adorned with the iconography of their creator. Their enormous wings enable them to soar through the roiling seas of the Great Ocean and the air of the Materium alike.

As Tzeentch is the Chaos God of magic, it follows that his Lords of Change are sorcerers without peer. Wielding the raw stuff of Chaos more deftly than a Space Marine handles his boltgun, Lords of Change can sear the enemies



of Tzeentch with pink and blue warpfire, transform mortals into gibbering creatures of Chaos, and create deceptions that can force enemy soldiers to attack their comrades. As masters of transmutation and illusion, Lords of Change may take the form of mortals in order to influence their intrigues and schemes. With a few well-chosen promises, temptations, or rumours, Lords of Change can manipulate mortals both human and xenos to reveal secrets, betray their brothers, ignore ethics and laws, and wittingly or unwittingly do Tzeentch's will.

As immortal beings, Lords of Change have aeons to collect information, so much so that these entities are effectively omniscient. Indeed, many believe that these daemons have the gift of prophesy and can see into the future. Whether these beings are truly prescient or simply so intelligent and intuitive that they seem to be so is subject to debate. However, most believe that only Lords of Change are sagacious enough to comprehend the mad design of the Crystal Maze and the Impossible Fortress and to understand their place in Tzeentch's endless schemes. Legend has it that when a Lord of Change looks at mortal beings, he sees not only their physical appearance but their hopes, dreams, past, and future. Few mortals can endure the penetrating stare of the greater daemons, and their scrutiny can destroy the sanity of those they gaze upon. Their vast knowledge and their ability to see into the hearts and minds of those who dwell in the material plane serve these greater daemons well in their manipulations of mortal society.

As masters of everything Tzeentch values—magic, guile, and knowledge—Lords of Change make effective generals ideally suited to lead Tzeentch’s daemonic armies. Although Lords of Change are Tzeentch’s most powerful minions, it is doubtful that this god feels affection for them in the same way that, say, Father Nurgle loves his daemons, whom he treats as grandchildren and pets. To Tzeentch, the Lords of Change are cogs in his infernal machine, pawns in his eternal game, and he will not hesitate to sacrifice them, deceive them, or pit them against one another should doing so suit his purposes.

DAEMON PRINCES

Dark Princeslings, Deathbringers, Eternal Blasphemies

Almost as powerful as their older cousins the Lords of Change, Tzeentch’s daemon princes are among the most potent beings in the galaxy. As such, for many who knowingly and deliberately follow the path of Tzeentch, the apotheosis to daemon principedom represents the ultimate destination of their dark journey. While all the Dark Powers are fickle creatures, promoting one champion to daemonhood after a few short years of service while denying others who have fought with distinction for centuries, Tzeentch’s promotions seem even more capricious. However, while the whims of the other Dark Gods may explain why one champion is promoted over another, Tzeentch, the Great Schemer, elevates only those champions whom he foresees will serve his dark will effectively and totally in the years, decades, and centuries to come.

All daemon princes maintain a measure of the individuality and independence they enjoyed as mortals, and many daemon princes have more free agency than even greater daemons. As Tzeentch tends to select individuals who, in mortal life, displayed great ambition, creativity, intelligence, and resourcefulness, his daemon princes tend to be among the most independent of warp creatures. Tzeentch’s daemon princes have characteristics that would make them admired, envied, and emulated in many mortal societies and civilisations. In fact, some daemon princes are even worshipped as gods in their own right by esoteric cults that spring up in remote corners and backwater planets throughout the galaxy.

Across the pantheon of the Chaos Gods, daemon princes vary widely in appearance and ability. Horns, talons, lashing tails, and wings are common features, and most of Tzeentch’s daemon princes share these attributes. Many daemon princes, excepting those who follow the path of Khorne, are sorcerers. As one might expect, almost all of Tzeentch’s Princes can manipulate the magic of the warp. In addition, Tzeentchian daemon princes tend to share some of their dark master’s visionary prescience and can see the strands of destiny as easily as mortals perceive light and shadow. As such, like Lords of Change, Tzeentchian daemon princes are master manipulators and strategists in the service of their god’s Thousand and One Plots. Like the Lords of Change, daemon princes are subject to the plots and schemes of the Changer of Ways, perhaps to an even greater degree. Tzeentch will not hesitate to sacrifice a champion whom he has elevated to daemonhood if it advances one of his many conspiracies.

THE APOTHEOSIS OF ESTRAGON

AS DESCRIBED BY SERGEANT LOR TASCHEN,
BRONTIAN LONGKNIVES, I67774.M41

Our Russes had finally broken the line, and we were advancing with blades out across the ground after the retreating cultists. Craters were brimming with mud gone red from the bodies buried inside. Suddenly, one of the corpses, a leader from the size of his ornate helm, stood up out of a pit, dripping blood and ruined flesh. Before we could even strike, he burst into flames. I didn’t see anyone target him with a flamer or anything that might have been an accelerant or incendiary, so I knew something weird was happening. Plus, the fire was more pink than red, and didn’t feel hot. All of a sudden, pieces of his chest plating started to split apart, and extra limbs, long spindly arms, a tail, and a pair of fething wings burst out of his body! He raised his staff towards the sky, and something like blue lightning struck it. Or maybe the lightning shot out of the staff—I’m not sure. Then this thing let out a howl that just about burst our ear drums and took off into the clouds. We opened fire, but it didn’t even seem to notice us.





DAEMONIC HERALDS

Commanders of Change, Heralds of Lies, Fatemasters

Less powerful than the Lords of Change and daemon princes but high above the lesser daemons like Screamers and Horrors, Tzeentch's daemonic heralds are the field officers that lead his troops to battle. Some heralds are indistinguishable from the lesser creatures they command, and some of the Ordo Malleus feel that many are nothing more than especially powerful Horrors. Most tend to be lanky, multi-limbed creatures whose physical form is in constant flux. Some wear sorcerer's robes and carry the trappings of wizards such as staffs and wands in the manner of Lords of Change, while others are barren of clothing or ornamentation. Most can manipulate warp energy and cast spells. When Tzeentch's daemonic hosts march to war, his heralds often function as squad leaders and organise the fiery, morphing mass of daemons into a devastating onslaught. Often, they carry Tzeentch's mutating standard into battle, and some heralds, particularly those who are adept spellcasters, ride atop Discs when they go to war.



HORRORS

Whirling Destroyers, Coruscating Spellbinders, Squealers

If Lords of Change and Daemonic Princes are Tzeentch's generals and officers, Horrors are his rank and file infantry. What Tzeentch's Impossible Fortress is to architecture, Horrors are to corporeal bodies, as their physical forms are in constant flux. Mouths, faces, tendrils, and limbs emerge from, and disappear into, a writhing central body mass. Generally, Horrors lack heads, and what passes for their face—a leering, grimacing visage with razor sharp teeth—often emerges from their chest or torso. Like many of Tzeentch's creations, their arms and legs tend to be thin and wiry, and these appendages end in taloned hands or clawed feet. Before they join battle, the Horrors' bodies tend to be pink or violet in hue; as such, many call these lesser daemons "Pink Horrors." Warpfire flares around their forms, and the daemons can manipulate the flames to use in hand-to-hand combat or as close-range missile weapons.

Though most mortals initially find the appearance of Horrors disturbing, individual Horrors are not the most fearsome of foes. Their fighting skills are rudimentary at best, and they are no stronger than the average human. Further, when Horrors march to war, they rarely seem to adopt a martial tone. Many observers have reported that they dance, joke amongst themselves, and even sing in joyous but disturbing tones. However, when the Horrors engage the enemy, their demeanour changes. Their chanting rises to a frenzied, screaming pitch as they revel in the bloodshed of battle.

Like many daemons, Horrors can withstand terrible injuries that would destroy most mortals. Lost limbs regenerate instantly, and their enemies have difficulty targeting vital or vulnerable areas on the Horrors' bodies, which are constantly changing shape. When an enemy does manage to land what would be a fatal blow to the body of a Pink Horror, remarkably, it splits into two creatures, and its colour changes from pink to blue. Though Blue Horrors are half the size of their pink counterparts, they are no less deadly. In addition, Blue Horrors undergo a radical shift in behaviour. Where Pink Horrors can seem childlike, playful, and even jovial—the court jesters of Tzeentch's daemonic host—Blue Horrors are mewling, cruel, petulant, and malevolent.

When Horrors band together for war, unusual changes occur. The bodies of a few of the Horrors may shift to form

EXCERPTS FROM THE OFFICIAL DIARY OF MINIUS NOVACOR

DATE: 245812.M41

Though arrangements for the ceremony had been moving forward smoothly to date, today our plans hit several snags. The first-violone took a tumble leaving his hab last night and broke his wrist, while Maestro Desiderius has taken ill. The infrequently used transmission facility at the Verbena Centre is malfunctioning as well. Above all, my caelumi auguries are foreseeing strong rains two days hence, which will certainly decrease attendance along the route of the gubernatorial procession. Such a shame.

Still no word from Narciso Hexis. Septima has volunteered to investigate his urgent report, freeing me to attend to the vital preparations of the awards program.

battle standards bearing Tzeentchian icons that can function to focus the power of the warp. Other Horrors' bodies may spontaneously generate perverse musical instruments of a kind, usually drums or horns, that the daemonic musicians use to accompany the chanting of the squad or to tap out a cadence for the march. Further, some reports posit that groups of Horrors can function as gestalt sorcerers of a kind. The spells they cast tend to involve manipulating the warpfire that wreathes their bodies and channelling it into deadly blasts to destroy the enemy, but other types of Tzeentchian magic have been witnessed as well. Thus, Tzeentch's foot soldiers tend to be much like the Changer of Ways himself: deceptive in appearance, flexible in form and function, and deadly in battle.

SCREAMERS AND DISCS

Soaring Predators, Sky-Sharks, Swoopers, Shrieking Skyrays

Known as Sky-Sharks and many other names throughout the galaxy and the warp, the flying daemons called Screammers closely resemble the mythical rays and skates that once inhabited the oceans of ancient Terra. How these daemons remain aloft is something of a mystery, and they can navigate planetary atmospheres, void space, and the Immaterium with equal ease and speed. Some have theorised that they fly upon or swim through warp energy rather than upon actual air or water. As they fly, Screammers leave behind contrails of multicoloured sparks, and they emit the piercing, high-frequency whine that gives these creatures their name. The few who have fought these creatures and survived explain that the scream of the Sky-Sharks has a profoundly disconcerting psychological effect.

Screammers are predatory creatures. While the creatures cannot be said to be intelligent, they do possess an animal cunning and highly attuned instincts. Screammers hunt the Immaterium in hungry packs that swoop in upon their prey at high speeds and then stun or kill their victims with short-ranged electrical attacks, the bursts of lightning emerging from their horns or tails. Their "natural" prey includes solitary Chaos Furies and other arcane creatures that travel or inhabit the Great Ocean. However, the psychic energy that all mortals generate, particularly mortals in crisis situations or before battle, also attracts the Screammers' hunting drive. Often, captains of ships traversing the warp have reported swarms of Screammers following in their wake. Sometimes, these swarms can grow to number in the hundreds or even the thousands. Should a ship lose its shields or experience other mechanical difficulties, the Screammers will attack in an instant, their powerful jaws capable of tearing through even the densest of armour plating.

Tzeentch will sometimes award one of his champions or heralds with a Screamer to use as a mount to carry him into battle. However, the Changer of Ways must first remake the daemon into a steed. Tzeentch reshapes the Screamer into a Disc and binds it with bands and chains of sorcerous gold and silver. The Great Shaper sometimes chooses to cover the Discs with eyes, to equip it with magical blades of living metal, or to add tentacles, feathers, scales, or bony plates. Through this reshaping process, the wild hunter becomes bound to its rider's will. The champion or herald so mounted gains the Screamer's speed and ability to fly, and can take advantage of his Disc's psychically attuned senses, its lightning attacks, and the psychological edge of its unnerving scream.

SPEECH BEFORE THE SACK OF BYRTUIL

ATTRIBUTED TO BELAZEITH, SORCERER OF THE THOUSAND SONS TRAITOR LEGION

TRANSCRIBED BY ORDINATE THEODOLPHUS BACCINIUS (CROSSREF: DIRECTED EXECUTION)

My brothers, let the slaves of the Corpse Emperor fear. I have always schemed to leverage the chief strength and arcane power harboured in the armour of my brothers in arms. Therefore, I come among you, on this planet of lambs, being resolved, in the midst and heat of battle, to conjure and slaughter with you; to fight for power, for change, and for Tzeentch. I know that I have but one body, that of a mortal man transformed by the Great Mutator, but I have a spirit that follows the strands of fate, strands woven by that grandest of weavers. I heap foul scorn upon any follower of the dead Emperor who would dare to defend the Corpse-God's hollow realm. I myself will be your general and, as a servant of the Changer of Ways, your judge and rewarder of every one of your virtues in the field. I know you already deserve rewards and power, and I assure you, in the name of Tzeentch, they shall be duly paid. By your obedience to the Shaper of Ways, by your conduct on this eternal campaign, by your savagery in the field, we shall shortly have a famous victory over the enemies of the Architect of Fate, of his Impossible Fortress, and of the Thousand Sons. Death to the Corpse-God!

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FLAMERS

Burning Horrors, Flame Spouters, Flaming Whirlwinds, Bearers of the True Fire of Change, Pyrodaemons, Candelabra Mutatoni

Of all of Tzeentch's bizarre daemonic creations, Flamers are perhaps the most unusual. These lesser daemons have a long, conical, almost fungoid trunk upon which the creatures, which have no legs or feet, balance. Like Horrors, the creatures have no heads, and one or more malevolent, wide-mouthed faces peer out from the daemons' torsos. The creatures have two long arms, thinner at the shoulder and elbow than they are at the wrists. Instead of a hand, however, each of the creatures' arms ends in a wide stump in the centre of which is a large mouth-like orifice. The "gums" of these orifices support rows of razor-sharp, shark-like teeth. A long, thin serpentine tongue inevitably lolls out of the mouth. These orifices constantly fume with odd exhalants, from acrid smoke, sulphurous gases, and the gouts of destructive warpfire that give these creatures their name.

Like Horrors, Flamers initially appear clumsy and comical. Lacking legs or a more traditional means of locomotion, they move forward in an awkward fashion, combining ungainly hops with a wriggling, bouncing motion. However, as the



Pyrodaemons close with the enemy, their leaps become more energetic and seem to defy gravity. Some observers have reported that the daemons' conical trunks emit gases from the base that propel the creatures forward like a jetpack of sorts. As the Flamers approach the enemy, they unleash a devastating short-ranged attack from the orifices in their arms. Most often, this attack takes the form of blasts of warpfire and alchemical heat which can burn almost anything. Reports claim that these flames can sometimes take the form of those they have immolated and perform a kind of *danse macabre* to mock the recently slain. While this display may produce a psychological effect on the enemies of Tzeentch, it is possible this result is not intentional, for such is the sense of humour of daemonkind. Like Horrors, Flamers make poor individual close combatants. That said, dispatching the Flamers is never an easy task, as it is difficult to identify and target the vital areas of a writhing, fungoid creature without a head.

Flamers excel at assaulting defensive positions, as there are few protections against their flames. The pragmatic and uncaring Tzeentch will not hesitate to sacrifice his Pyrodaemons for a tactical advantage. Though the Changer of Ways considers all of his servants expendable commodities, he treats the Flamers as particularly disposable. The creatures are all but mindless, yet keenly attuned to their master's will. As such, they make tractable grist for the mill of battle. A number of reports describe how huge numbers of Flamers have hurled themselves at fortified positions to overwhelm the defenders in showers of arcane fire and a press of daemonic bodies, rather than through martial expertise.

MORTALS

Tzeentch's daemonic creations are not his only servants to operate in the hard realm of reality. Many mortals have dedicated themselves to Tzeentch—either wittingly or unwittingly—such as Chaos Space Marines, Sorcerers, Cultists, and Rogue Psykers. Others, including upstanding Imperial servants, bureaucrats, scholars, and even members of the Ecclesiarchy, may serve his aims whilst being totally unaware of the consequences of their actions. From the highest lofts to the lowest dregs, all are but players in the Grand Scheme of Tzeentch.

THE THOUSAND SONS

The Thousand Sons were once the Fifteenth Legion of Space Marines founded on Terra, created to reclaim the stars for humanity. For some time, they fought with distinction and were nearly indistinguishable from the other Legions. Shortly into the Great Crusade, however, the Thousand Sons began to change. Many manifested psychic abilities; others underwent a "flesh change" and developed physical mutations. Mutated brothers were placed in stasis to await an eventual cure, and the ranks of the Thousand Sons grew thin. Leaders of the Imperium became concerned and many argued that the Chapter should be disbanded and removed from Imperial history.

The Great Crusade wore on and the forces of the Emperor reached the planet Prospero, where they discovered Magnus the Red, the cyclopean Primarch of the Thousand Sons. Magnus acted swiftly to save his progeny, almost all of whom had succumbed to the flesh change. Through some unknown and possibly arcane process, Magnus stabilised the gene-seed, but by then, the numbers of Thousand Sons were small indeed. Under Magnus's guidance, the Thousands Sons rebuilt, recruited new brothers from the population of Prospero, and reorganised themselves. They developed the most powerful Librarians of that era of Imperial history as well as unconventional tactics that involved sorcery and diplomatic trickery.

This ended with the Emperor's decree to abolish the use of sorcery and other psychic powers, and the tragic and terrible events that lead to the Thousand Sons turning their back on the Imperium forever. They became Traitor Marines and fought alongside Horus and his forces in the failed attempt to overthrow the Emperor and His lackeys. Now and forever aligned with the Changer of Ways, they use their powers to pursue knowledge and glory for themselves and their patron god.

After embracing Tzeentch, the Thousand Sons continued to develop their combat doctrine of guile and trickery, and they continued to favour ranged weapons and sorcery over close combat. They changed their Legions' colours to blue and gold and added elaborate headdresses to their helmets. The flesh change, which had been held in check by Magnus's intervention, began to take hold once again, and many of the Thousand Sons experienced radical mutations. The machinations of Ahriman, the Chief Librarian of the Thousand Sons and Magnus's second in command, lead to the horrific spell which permanently solved the issue. His horrifying Rubric did prevent further mutations in those adept at sorcery, but forever changed his other brothers into dust, forever encased in their enscribed suits of power armour.



Upon learning of the failure of the Rubric, Magnus banished Ahriman. This was the first of many schisms that split the Thousand Sons, divisions that eventually caused estrangement from their own Primarch. As a result of internal strife, the Thousand Sons effectively no longer function as a Legion. Instead, they fight as isolated warbands and individual warriors. Some serve Tzeentch devoutly, others begrudgingly, and others as mindless conduits for the devastating sorcerous power of the warp.

OTHER CHAOS SPACE MARINES DEDICATED TO TZEENTCH

The Thousand Sons are not alone in following the Master of Fate. Others have since joined them in the long years since the Heresy.

The Scourged

Little is known about the origins, whereabouts, or doctrines of the Traitor warband known as the Scourged. They wear blue and dark red power armour with gold trim. Rumour has it that, since they dedicated themselves to Tzeentch, they have been blessed by the Father of Deceit with the ability to hear every lie spoken by man. The knowledge of humankind's deceptions and dissembling affords the Scourged trenchant insights into human desires and ambitions. This information proves invaluable to the Scourged in their service to Tzeentch, as these are the things with which Tzeentch tempts vulnerable mortals. However, the "blessing" of the Scourged inevitably becomes a curse, as all of those recruited into the ranks of the Scourged eventually lose their minds.

The Oracles of Change

The exact circumstances under which Vanneus, once a Space Marine Epistolary Librarian, chose or was compelled to embrace Tzeentch remain a mystery. It is likely that in fulfilling his duties as a psyker and projecting his mind through the Immaterium, he fell victim to one of Tzeentch's servants residing there. Whatever the circumstances may have been, it is known that Vanneus denied the Emperor, rejected his former identity, took the name Amadeus Volkstein, and now serves Tzeentch as a powerful sorcerer. He leads a warband known as the Oracles of Change, who wear red armour with gold trim. Their symbol is a golden Chaos star with the Eye of Tzeentch adorning the centre where the lines intersect.

SORCERERS AND PSYKERS

Those who study arcane lore, employ psychic powers, practice the art of sorcery, or otherwise tamper with the power of the warp—with or without Imperial sanction—are among Tzeentch's favourite targets for temptation and eventual corruption. Imperial scholars have determined that the incidents of the Psyker mutation among the human population increases with each generation. It therefore follows that the risk Tzeentch poses to humanity has increased commensurately. As such, organisations such as the Inquisition, the Adeptus Astra Telepathica, the Adeptus Astronomica, and the Scholastia Psykana must remain forever vigilant and prosecute any trace of the influence of Chaos with extreme prejudice. Many checks and restraints exist to prevent the influence of warp creatures on the minds of Imperial psykers, but any security system and the individuals who maintain it are fallible, capable of errors in judgement, and themselves subject to temptations and dark influences. Even with these safeguards in place, Imperial Commissars operate under strict orders to execute Sanctioned Psykers at the first sign of possession or daemonic influence.

In addition, many psykers are born outside of the Imperial system on remote worlds or long-forgotten settlements. Lacking the training of the Scholastia Psykana, these wyrds, shamans, and mystics become autodidacts and are free to explore and exercise their inexplicable powers as they (or some influential Dark Power) see fit. Of course, many psykers willingly turn to the gods of Chaos for personal gain and to increase their psychic potential. These "Rogue Psykers" operate without the fetters of the Adeptus Astra Telepathica and, thus, can develop into some of the most powerful individuals in the service of the Dark Gods. Tzeentch and his minions are drawn to mortals who use psychic powers and even those with latent potential. A common ploy in the Great Conspirator's eternal game is to make tactical use of these talented mortal pawns by helping them to tap hidden talents or fully realise their sorcerous potential in exchange for services rendered.



MUTANTS

Whilst Tzeentch is the Master of Magic, he is also the Lord of Mutation. To mutate is to change and, as such, all those who see their forms altered into new shapes bear witness to the blessings of Tzeentch. These mutations might be so minor as to be barely noticeable, or so hideous that the bearer must leave society altogether lest they be ostracised or worse. To worship Chaos, and Tzeentch in particular, is to welcome such changes as a sign of devotion and as gifts from the gods. The blessings of the Changer of Ways often take the form of feathered skin, avian beaks, and taloned claws, while more advanced mutations might appear as fleshy appendages that can breathe baleful flames, multiple heads, or even wings granting flight. Some mutations are the result of humanity's malleable genetic structure, easily twisted by both environment or the whimsy of the Ruinous Powers. Actively using sorcerous powers also invites mutation, as does association with creatures of the warp. All are sure marks of Chaos though, and amongst their own are dark badges of honour.

Mutants who have left their previous lives because of their new forms, either willingly or forcibly, often gather together in the outskirts or depths of society for mutual safety and security. If they have not already, many gatherings soon turn to Chaos. For some, it might be in spite for the Imperium that suddenly sought their deaths for causes they had no control over. Others simply have gone mad from their transformation and welcome the embrace of the Dark Powers. Few can withstand the pressure to fall to Chaos and become cults devoted to the worship of the Ruinous Powers. Such groups may act as mercenary bands on



many worlds within the Screaming Vortex or other areas where the Imperium's flames do not burn so brightly. On planets where the False Emperor's hypocritical laws predominate, mutant herds still exist, hidden from view but always ready to attack the hated society that expelled them.

Mutations are often beneficial, offering greater strength, additional arms, or simply new visages that honour their patron gods, but mortal forms cannot withstand endless change as can the truly daemonic. At some point, a single new mutation, no matter how minor, pushes mortal flesh beyond possibility. What is left is a Spawn of Chaos, a mindless but powerful amalgamation of tentacles, heads, maws, and limbs. Even the mighty Adeptus Astartes are not immune from cascading mutation, as the Thousand Sons learned to their horror. Each spawn is unique, but each cannot be mistaken for anything else. Such is the final fate of all mortals who would follow Tzeentch unless they find his favour or fancy, for all Heretics must either Ascend to Daemonhood or Descend to Spawndom.

MORTAL LEADERS

Other mortal followers of Tzeentch may have no psychic aptitude whatsoever. Nonetheless, individuals who exhibit great cunning, intelligence, and ambition—particularly those who came into power through convoluted schemes—have a part to play in the great drama of the Playwright of Destiny. As Tzeentch and his minions prefer to wage war through deception, guile, espionage, and trickery rather than open warfare, the Master of Fate places high value on mortals in positions of power who can influence organisations, gain access to classified information, direct the allocation of resources, and shape decisions and policy.

Thus included in Tzeentch's mortal ranks are politicians and princes, military officers and warlords, industrialists and economic leaders. Tzeentch also recruits mid-level administrators, bureaucrats, and professionals. While these mortals lack the power and influence of higher-ranking individuals, they can easily remain inconspicuous while retaining their access to information and assets. In Tzeentch's great game, a memorandum that goes missing, a secret revealed at an inopportune moment, resources misdirected, or an order delivered late can be more effective and ultimately damaging than the armed might of an entire system.

EXCERPTS FROM THE OFFICIAL DIARY OF MINIUS NOVACOR

DATE: 246812.M41

This ceremony continues to be plagued with difficulty. I fear everything that could go wrong has gone wrong! Maestro Desiderius has been hospitalised, and they have yet to find a replacement. The rains now threaten to increase in intensity to heavy thunderstorms. Further, Septima has disappeared, and the local press have been reporting violence from northern sectors of the eastern continent. While normally I would dismiss these stories as mere rumour, a report from Colonel Acario dated 243 has surfaced, detailing the discovery of several partially buried drop pods in Sector 35-Alpha. I have again ordered Acario to investigate any problems in the vicinity.

EXCERPT FROM ON THE NATURE OF THE GREAT DECEIVER

A Treatise by Inquisitor Dioscuri Voculen, Ordo Malleus

In sum, from our mortal and human perspective—which I have demonstrated to be necessarily linear and temporal as well as, most often, goal-oriented—the final objective or objectives of the manipulations of Tzeentch and his followers are ultimately incomprehensible and unknowable. Indeed, it may be more precise to state that Tzeentch's schemes have no ends, no goals, no purpose—at least to our limited mortal minds. It may well be that Tzeentch's schemes, his Thousand and One Plots, and the changes he initiates are ends unto themselves. Thus, servants of the Emperor would do well to realise (or, at least, to act under the assumption) that the ultimate outcomes of Tzeentch's manipulations are inconsequential to him and his followers. As we work towards the culmination and the success of our endeavours, we will find it helpful to realise that Tzeentch's only goal is change itself. Ergo, our human tendency to impose order on disorder and to bring logic to Chaos, while generally a worthwhile and laudable inclination, can become a blindfold as we attempt to fathom the intrigues of the Great Schemer. In short, Tzeentch and his followers function solely to catalyse change and not to affect any concrete goal. Change and change alone gives them pleasure, provides their power, fuels their blasphemous sorcery, and nourishes their dark souls.

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Professors, philosophers, scientists, intellectuals, and artists also swell Tzeentch's ranks, for as much as the Changer of Ways embraces magic and guile, he also loves knowledge in all its forms. Predictably, Tzeentch finds those who investigate forbidden or taboo subjects particularly interesting, as individuals willing to defy convention and perhaps even ethics and the law to pursue their intellectual ambitions often make willing and effective servants. Some thinkers who reach a stumbling block in their scholarly pursuits can become obsessed with a particular problem or question. These scholars may try any number of approaches to find answers, but no experiment, no amount of research or consultation with experts, and no amount of sweat and elbow grease brings them closer to a solution. These obsessed scholars are particularly vulnerable to Tzeentch's temptations. While some may deliberately seek the assistance of the Master of Fate, many more unwittingly fall into Tzeentch's service after accepting help from an insightful but mysterious new colleague or after gazing too long at a classified or forbidden text that somehow finds its way onto their desk.



OTHER MORTAL FOLLOWERS

The Great Conspirator does not discriminate, nor does he recruit only from the social and intellectual elite. He also prizes those cunning and ruthless low-born individuals who must lie, cheat, steal, and deceive simply to survive. Anyone with the right combination of strengths and attributes might catch Tzeentch's attention, from the filthiest ganger eking out a hand-to-mouth existence in the bowels of a failing hive city to the fourth-born son of a chieftain from a primitive planet who conspires to relieve his older brothers of their birthright and one day lead his tribe, to the lowest menial labourer condemned to a life of thankless toil in the depths of some Administratum building who learns to flatter and ingratiate himself with his superiors to gain petty privileges. Such people may have more of a role to play in Tzeentch's grand scheme than a corrupt High Lord of Terra or a fallen Daemonhunter of the Ordo Malleus.



I TZEENTCH

TZEENTCH AND THE LONG WAR

"When I saw that there was no truth, freedom came easily. When I saw that freedom was an illusion, madness came easily. When I saw that madness was nothing but an epithet, truth came easily."

—Cire Rilsan, Disciple of Tzeentch and Betrayer of Hive World Orar

Tzeentch has long been associated with the struggle against the hated Imperium. Some dare whisper that it was his schemes that lead to the Heresy itself, with his invisible tendrils guiding such small events such as the discovery of a blade able to mortally wound even a Warmaster, or the rivalry that lead Legion to fight Legion, or the hubris that lead a Primarch to disobey his Father and His edicts. Such suppositions must remain as such, for it is also possible they are all mere rumours designed to ensnare the weak-minded with further evidence of the power of Tzeentch.

It is clear, though, that the Changer of Ways has been an active force in the Long War for untold ages. It may be that he required the Emperor to be brought low, lest mankind perhaps escape his grasp. It may also be that such endless conspiracies and plots amuse him for no other reason than the game itself, and he cares not which faction emerges as the victor. Such motivations would be far removed from rational thought, but the ways of Tzeentch are beyond mere sanity and no mortal mind can possibly encompass even a fraction of his roiling will. Like the Great Ocean he was created from, Tzeentch is perhaps more a force that must be respected and endured than controlled and harnessed. The Impossible Realm is littered with the gibbering, drooling spawn that had thought themselves ready to bind or comprehend the smallest shard of the Changer of Ways, but there are always more who will join them in time.

In the end, Heretics must remember that Tzeentch is the Father of Lies and Deceit. As such, Heretics may chose to accept the accounts they have read or experienced at face value or assume that, when it comes to Tzeentch, there is no true dogma. All is Change, even what most would consider to be incontrovertible facts that established empires. Anything xenos species or human followers of the Corpse God believe and perpetuate regarding the Great Conspirator may have also been influenced by his distortions. For those who would follow the Changer of Ways, manipulating fact and affirming myth are but a small part of the Great Game.



EXCERPTS FROM THE OFFICIAL DIARY OF MIINIUS NOVACOR

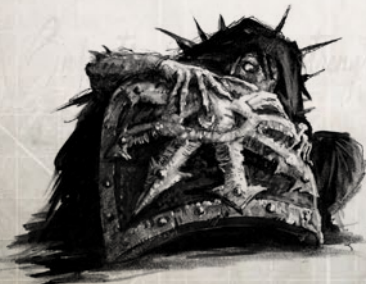
DATE: 247812.M41

AUTHOR: CORNELIUS BONN,
ACTING GOVERNOR OF RASHAD PRIME

I have assumed leadership of the governor's office, after the household staff found Governor Novacor dead in his private apartments this morning. His beloved awards ceremony cancelled from myriad small calamities, he had remained in the Palace when a fresco cherub broke and fell from the ceiling, probably due to the torrential rains of the last few days.

His leadership is sorely missed; we now have confirmed reports that what had been perceived as isolated riots on the eastern continent were actually cunningly coordinated military strikes on vital targets by cultists and ruinous Space Marines calling themselves the Oracles of Change. It would seem Derridian Septima was lost in the initial insurrectionist attacks, though her body has yet to be recovered.

Thus far, sabotage of key vox relays, orbital auspex systems, and tactical cogitators has thwarted our counter-offensive. Widespread rioting broke out when news of our beloved Governor's death somehow reached the city habs. While Col. Acario states confidently that our men can hold the western continent indefinitely and possibly make some inroads into enemy-held territory, I remain unconvinced. We retain our faith in the Emperor and know our fate is in His hands.





SERVANTS OF FATE



THE LEGIONS
OF CHANGE
•
TOOLS OF FATE
•
PSYCHIC POWERS
•
EXPANDED RITES
AND RITUALS



CHAPTER II: SERVANTS OF FATE

"I am Tzeentch and you are the puppet that dances to my tune..."

—Excerpt from the Book of Tzeentch

Tzeentch often attracts those who seek to change their fate through the control of information. These followers understand the intrinsic value of knowledge and how it can be used to gain influence and control over others. They work through intricate plans and insidious plots: manoeuvring their victims carefully into place like pawns on a regicide board. The Lord of Sorcery is also a logical object of worship for psykers and witches, whom he entices into his grand schemes with promises of even greater psychic abilities and esoteric lore.

Some of Tzeentch's chosen do not even know of his involvement in their fate or, in many cases, his very existence. They dream of changing their station in life and creating a better existence for themselves, all while remaining oblivious to the strings of the puppet master guiding their every action.

Tzeentch's devotees can be found in all aspects of Imperial society: from lowly manufactorum workers to hive princes. Every living being contains within them the potential for change. However, only those who are strong enough to act on this potential hear the whispered temptations of Tzeentch and receive his blessings.

This chapter of **TOME OF FATE** introduces four new character Archetypes along with many new tools, abilities, and rules for players to use in **BLACK CRUSADE**:

- **Thousand Sons Sorcerer:** Powerful sorcerers who view knowledge as the source of ultimate power.
- **Alpha Legion Chaos Space Marine:** Skilled warriors specialising in infiltration, deception, and guerrilla tactics.
- **Q'Sal Magister Immaterial:** Human sorcerer-scientists with a keen desire for knowledge in all its forms.
- **Idolitrex Magos of Forge Polix:** Corrupt Techno-Magi who have dedicated their lives to unholy research and experimentation.
- **Expanded Armoury:** A selection of new Weapons, Gear, and Tools for the servants of Tzeentch.
- **Expanded Psychic Powers:** Additional psychic abilities for use by the servants of Chaos.
- **Expanded Ritual Rules:** New sorcerous rituals and expanded rules for their use.

A NOTE TO GMs

These Archetypes are designed for more advanced players and represent powerful veterans of Chaos. GMs are encouraged to take this information into account before allowing players to use these Archetypes, and players should be aware that GMs may decide to limit the use of these characters. Also, due to the relatively high level of these Archetypes, it's recommended that GMs not grant additional starting experience to players using these characters, lest they have little room to develop outside of character creation.

The Chaos Space Marine veterans introduced in this chapter are roughly equivalent to a beginning Chaos Space Marine character with an additional 3600 XP. The Human characters are both roughly equivalent to a beginning Human Disciple of Chaos with an additional 4600 XP.

CHARACTER STARTING ABILITIES

CHAOS SPACE MARINES

All Chaos Space Marine characters begin play with the following Skills, Talents, and Equipment.

Starting Skills: Athletics, Awareness, Common Lore (War), Dodge, Forbidden Lore (Adeptus Astartes, The Horus Heresy and the Long War), Linguistics (Low Gothic), Navigate (Surface), Operate (Surface), Parry.

Starting Talents: Ambidextrous, Bulging Biceps, Legion Weapon Training, Heightened Senses (Hearing, Sight), Nerves of Steel, Quick Draw, Resistance (Cold, Heat, Poison), Unarmed Warrior.

Starting Traits: Amphibious, Unnatural Strength (+4), Unnatural Toughness (+4).

Starting Equipment: Legionnaire Power Armour, Legionnaire Bolter or Legionnaire Bolt Pistol, Legionnaire Combat Knife, four magazines for starting weapon.

HUMANS

All human characters below begin play with the following Skills and Traits.

Starting Skills: Common Lore (Any Two), Linguistics (Low Gothic), Trade (Any One).

Starting Trait: The Quick and the Dead

NEW TRAIT:

THE QUICK AND THE DEAD

To survive in the Screaming Vortex, particularly as a human, one must be particularly quick, both in wits and action—sometimes fast reflexes can compensate for a lack of ceramite armour. All Heretics with this Trait add a +2 bonus to Initiative Rolls.

THE LEGIONS OF CHANGE

"And what [of your] Imperium... It was built with the toil of heroes and giants, and now it is inhabited by frightened weaklings to whom the glories of those times are half-forgotten legends."

—Attributed to Ahriman of the Thousand Sons

Ten thousand years ago, Horus and the Traitor Legions rebelled against the Emperor of Mankind. The resulting civil war tore the Imperium asunder and ended only when Horus was slain by the Emperor's hand during the Siege of Terra. However, the Emperor was also mortally wounded and subsequently confined to the arcane Golden Throne. He remains there to this day, worshipped by the citizens of the Imperium as a living god.

The defeated Legions withdrew from Terra, most splitting into smaller warbands and continuing to wreak havoc amongst the many worlds of the Imperium. Eventually, these traitors were hounded out of Imperial space and forced to seek refuge in the Eye of Terror and the worship of the Dark Gods. These Chaos Space Marines dwell there still, and they remain a constant threat to the stability of the Emperor's realms.

Two of these Legions, the Thousand Sons and the Alpha Legion, exhibit many aspects of the path of Tzeentch. While the Thousand Sons actively worship the Changer of Ways, the Alpha Legion hides its intentions and does not openly worship any particular Chaos god. Despite their many differences, however, warriors from both Legions place great value on knowledge and secrecy. They plot and scheme from the shadows, often using trickery and guile to gain the advantage over their foes. Tzeentch has use of such pawns in his endless conspiracies and his subtle influence can be seen in the abilities and tactics of both of these fallen Legions.

THE HISTORY OF THE THOUSAND SONS

Magnus the Red, Primarch of the Thousand Sons, was said to be a giant amongst men. Larger than even his brother Primarchs, he had copper-coloured skin, fiery red hair, and a single cyclopean eye. While he was well known for his prodigious intellect, Magnus was also an extremely powerful psyker.

Magnus was reunited with the Emperor on the planet Prospero, and was quick to swear fealty to his father. He was then given command of the fifteenth Space Marine Legion, which were renamed the Thousand Sons. With his progeny by his side, Magnus eagerly joined in the Emperor's Great Crusade to expand humanity's rule.

Even before they were reunited with their Primarch, the Thousand Sons had a higher degree of psychic mutation than any other Space Marine Legion. Magnus cultivated these natural talents until the Legion's Librarians were regarded amongst the most accomplished psykers in the Imperium. What's more, Magnus and the members of his Legion frequently engaged in the arts of sorcery to augment their considerable gifts. The



Thousand Sons became infamous for their use of these potent psychic abilities on the battlefield, often unleashing them on their enemies to devastating effect.

Magnus possessed an insatiable hunger for knowledge. He believed that all knowledge was beneficial and worthy of study as long as one mastered everything one learned. The Thousand Sons followed their Primarch's example, becoming scholars and masters of arcane lore and legend. They constructed great libraries within the cities of Prospero, where the knowledge and lore collected by the Thousand Sons during the Great Crusade could be catalogued, studied, and preserved for all time.

However, the Legion's continued use of sorcery began to draw censure from within the Imperial court, and clamours arose for an end to these practices. As a result, a great council was established on the planet Nikaea to decide the issue of sorcery and the use of psychic individuals in the Imperium once and for all. Though Magnus spoke out in defence of his Legion's practices, the Emperor eventually issued an edict banning the practice and study of sorcery. However, unbeknownst to the Emperor, Magnus continued his sorcerous studies in secret.

When the Horus Heresy began, Magnus learned of the coming apocalypse through his arcane lore and attempted to warn the Emperor directly with the aid of a powerful spell. Magnus was able to tell his father of Horus's impending treachery, but at a catastrophic cost—the destruction of what would have been the Emperor's Great Work. The Emperor was horrified at Magnus's refusal to abandon the use of



magic and at what he saw as proof of the inherent dangers of sorcery. The Emperor forcefully broke contact with Magnus and unleashed Leman Russ and the feral Space Wolves to cleanse Prospero and bring the Thousand Sons to heel.

The Wolves of Fenris opened their assault on the planet with their customary ferocity and zeal, launching a devastating orbital bombardment before attacking with ground forces. On the planet's surface, the Space Wolves set fire to entire libraries of tomes, parchments, and countless other priceless artefacts of history. The Thousand Sons fought desperately to stave off the assault, but they were slowly beaten back by the unbridled fury of Russ and his Legion. Thousands of lives and millennia of priceless knowledge were both lost in moments.

Finally, as the battle became desperate, Magnus himself strode forward to battle the invaders. He was furious at the loss of his Legion's work, and by the betrayal he saw in his father's actions. Eventually the two Primarchs met on the battlefield: Russ, an avatar of savagery and instinctive cunning; and Magnus, a warrior-scholar of terrible psychic power. The resulting duel was a clash of super-human skill, willpower, and sorcerous might; yet in the end, Magnus was defeated.

Many believe that other powers and events may have worked to mask the coming of Prospero's doom from its would-be defenders. Whether or not Tzeentch played any part in Prospero's destruction is unknown, however—for who can really fathom the intent of the Changer of Ways? What is known is that, before Russ could strike the killing blow, Magnus accepted the salvation offered by the Lord of Sorcery.

He and his Legion vanished from Prospero, thereby saving the Thousand Sons from oblivion. When they were next seen by loyalist forces, it was within the ranks of the Traitor Legions.

During the Siege of the Emperor's Palace, the Thousand Sons added their sorcerous might to the armies of Horus and, after his defeat, fled into the Eye of Terror to the world Tzeentch had prepared for them. This Planet of Sorcerers, as it has come to be known, is home to the remains of the Thousand Sons' cities and the Legion itself. By accepting Tzeentch's salvation, Magnus became a servant of knowledge instead of its master. Tzeentch elevated Magnus and made him an immortal daemon prince.

The mutations that ravaged the Legion since their founding, thought finally repressed, never went away. Magnus had checked their spread when assuming leadership, but the warp has a corrupting effect on those who are exposed to it for extended periods of time. Many of the Thousand Sons embraced these mutations as gifts of the Lord of Change and signs of his favour. However, many Traitor Marines viewed such mutations as the beginning of the end, believing that such changes would continue until only inhuman warp-spawn remained of their Legion.

Magnus's Chief Librarian, Ahriman, was determined to save his brothers from the corrupting influence of the warp. Along with a cabal of his most trusted sorcerers, he secretly enacted a powerful and dangerous spell to save the Legion. The planet was enveloped in a maelstrom of magic so powerful that even daemons fled before it. Brilliant blue and yellow lightning bolts arced across the planet's surface, each striking down and destroying a corrupted Space Marine. No one is sure how long the storm endured, but in the end Magnus himself was forced to intervene.

The Rubric of Ahriman, as the spell is now known, was to be both Ahriman's crowning achievement and greatest failure. Any surviving psykers had their powers and capabilities greatly enhanced, while the remaining Thousand Sons' bodies were reduced to dust and their souls magically sealed inside their armour. These so-called Rubric Marines were left as mindless automatons and now function only as warriors and bodyguards for the surviving sorcerers. By Ahriman's hand, the Legion has been both destroyed and preserved for all time. For his efforts, Magnus expelled Ahriman and his followers from their new home. They now roam the galaxy and beyond, forever searching for more hidden knowledge and forever in the service of the Master of Fate.

MOTIVATIONS AND THEMES OF THE THOUSAND SONS

The Thousand Sons have severely fractured since the Horus Heresy and the Rubric of Ahriman, with individual Sorcerer Lords leading separate warbands. As a result, the days of the Scholar Legion are long gone, lost to the pursuit of power and the acquisition and hoarding of arcane lore.

The Thousand Sons prefer to keep their foes at a distance, relying on ranged fighting, trickery, deception, and the powerful spells wielded by the Legion's sorcerers. Their Rubric Marines serve as silent and deadly fighters, marching forward with implacable strides. In combat, the Thousand Sons move purposely onwards, spreading Tzeentch's glory with manifestations of his terrible power.

THE HISTORY OF THE ALPHA LEGION

Reliable information concerning the Horus Heresy and the Traitor Legions is notoriously hard to come by. This is usually due, in large part, to the routine purging of many such records to ensure the moral purity of the Imperium. Information regarding the Alpha Legion is especially difficult to obtain, as the chapter has always been highly elusive about its methods and strategies.

The Alpha Legion was the twentieth and last of the Space Marine Legions. The discovery of the Legion's Primarch, Alpharius, is shrouded in mystery, and no records exist of Alpharius's home world or his life before being reunited with the Emperor and assuming control of his Legion. Whatever the circumstances of Alpharius's discovery, it is clear that the Warmaster Horus immediately saw something in his brother Primarch that impressed him greatly.

The Alpha Legion quickly achieved many victories in the Great Crusade through careful planning and strategy. Alpharius always stressed that every available resource be used to the fullest when planning an assault. He would recruit or bribe allies, foment rebellion, and utilise spies and traitors; he would likewise infiltrate his Space Marines behind enemy lines to sabotage and sew confusion in the enemy ranks. Often, by the time the battle commenced, the enemy would be so disorganised, and the Alpha Legion would have such an advantage, that victory was swift and decisive.

Alpharius also stressed the importance of always being prepared for any contingency. He trained his warriors to strike at multiple targets at once, or the same target from different approaches, in order to make absolutely sure of victory. He encouraged his officers to think independently of the main army, take the initiative in battle, and to react to unexpected developments and complications. Supposedly, Alpharius would often leave during battles, simply to observe how his Legion functioned without him.

Alpharius was tireless in extolling his Legion to greater and greater victories, seeming to care little for personal glory and honour. This led to a division between him and some of his brother Primarchs, many of whom did not think highly of his Legion's tactics. After one particular meeting with Roboute Guilliman, Alpharius began to push his Legion even harder to seek out more challenging battles.

This drive led to one of the Legion's most notorious triumphs. When the rulers of Tesstra Prime refused to be incorporated into the Imperium, the Alpha Legion delayed its attack for a full two weeks in order to allow the defenders time to deploy and dig in. During this time the Legion employed its traditional tactics of deception, infiltration, and subterfuge and, within a week of the Legion's first attack, all opposition had been crushed. The delaying of the Alpha Legion's forces instead of simply attacking drew criticism from many, though the Warmaster Horus is said to have remarked upon the tactical genius behind the assault. From then on, the Alpha Legion almost completely isolated itself from its fellow Space Marine Legions, though it is probable that Alpharius remained in contact with Horus in light of later events.

It is not known exactly when or why the Alpha Legion sided with Horus against the Emperor of Mankind, though the massacre of the loyalist forces at Iststvan V bears many hallmarks of the Legion's tactics. The Legion also did not participate in the actual assault on the Emperor's Palace on Terra. Instead, Alpha Legion forces continued to raid Imperial targets until well after Horus's defeat, eventually being driven from Imperial space by the loyalist Ultramarines. However, the Legion itself was never decisively defeated, and they would remain an devious adversary for centuries to come.

MOTIVATIONS AND THEMES OF THE ALPHA LEGION

It is not known to what extent the Alpha Legion fractured following the defeat of Horus, or how much of the Alpha Legion's command structure remains intact. Every attempt to locate a central base or disrupt the Legion by killing its leaders has ended in utter failure. What's more, any splintering that has occurred within the Legion may be entirely intentional, as small isolated warbands with individual goals would be entirely in keeping with Alpharius's tactics.

The Alpha Legion maintains its practice of utilising allies in its plans, frequently relying on underground recidivist groups and heretical cults. These groups are expertly integrated and coordinated into complex strategies, involving layers of deception and traps. Such allies are often misled or kept ignorant of their exact part in the Alpha Legion's plan or of any involvement by the Legion whatsoever.

Alpha Legion warbands have been known to combine forces with anyone who can advance their objectives—whatever those may be—and are not above allying with xenos and other fouler things. What's more, the Alpha Legion does not carelessly throw away its allies. Instead, they are organised into cults and spy networks across many worlds whenever possible, ensuring that every advantage is fully exploited, for as long as that resource can remain useful to their goals.

The Alpha Legion uses confusion, misdirection, and underhanded tactics to achieve victory, and routinely employs decoys, infiltrators, and even disguises to catch their foes off-guard. Like the hydra that the Legion uses as its symbol, the Alpha Legion attacks its target from multiple directions. Each attack is independent from, and yet coordinated with, the other attacks, ensuring that at least one strike always achieves its objective. Also, like the hydra of legend, destroying the head—in this case the supposed leader of an attack or operation—has little effect, as the attackers adapt to the loss quickly and without apparent disruption. The Legion's ability to wage such a highly effective and complex shadow war has earned them special loathing by the members of the Inquisition, who view the Legion as responsible for much of the cultist activity within Imperial society.



THOUSAND SONS SORCERER

"I have travelled this plane for untold centuries, and tasted the undiluted power of Chaos itself. The essence of the cosmos is mine to mould as I see fit. By what right do you dare challenge me?"

—Amamshér, Sorcerer Champion of the Thousand Sons

The Sorcerers of the Thousand Sons number amongst the most powerful of the servants of Chaos. For centuries they have dwelt within the Eye of Terror, emerging only to pursue new paths of heretical study and inflict vengeance on the Imperium. Exposure to the raw power of the warp, as well as Ahriman's Rubric, has corrupted these sorcerers in body and mind, while the untold time spent pursuing their dark arts has only magnified their considerable psychic abilities.

Of all the sorcerers of the Chaos Space Marine Legions, none are as feared as those of the Thousand Sons. Travelling across the Imperium and beyond, these servants of Tzeentch relentlessly search for sources of secret and profane knowledge. Their goal is to increase their already considerable powers and wisdom while furthering the glory and influence of Tzeentch throughout the realms of existence.

PLAYING A SORCERER OF THE THOUSAND SONS

The following are some ideas for portraying a Thousand Sons Sorcerer. Of course these should be considered guidelines and suggestions, not directives or canon. If a player comes up with his own backstory and character personalities, he should feel free to explore them.

Thousand Sons Sorcerers dedicate themselves to the pursuit of knowledge in all its forms, striving to master every discipline available to them. All subjects, no matter how trivial or obscure, are worthy of their careful consideration and keen intellect. They have spent their lives in study and contemplation, and all possess a uniquely intuitive and enlightened view of the universe.

Ancient artefacts, xenos constructs, and forgotten tomes are considered valuable objectives for the this Legion, who investigate such objects without the prejudices of their Imperial adversaries. They believe all artefacts, regardless of origin, may contain valuable information and warrant pursuit and examination. Many Thousand Sons extensively study both xenos and so-called heretical artefacts, viewing the unknown potential locked within as neither tainted nor debased. To them, any such power is exactly that: power.

Xenos races with psychic gifts are often subjects of particular fascination and study to the Thousand Sons. Older races, such as the enigmatic Eldar and the soulless Necrons, are seen as founts of wisdom and learning that could be easily harnessed and exploited by one who is willing to appreciate such things. A Thousand Sons Sorcerer readily accepts any opportunity to gain insight into the abilities and lore of such races. The potential power such knowledge may unlock often easily outweighs any risks inherent in dealing with such creatures.

Magnus taught his sons that knowledge is neither good nor evil, but all knowledge has power to those who master it. As a result, Thousand Sons Sorcerers believe that nothing is too terrible or powerful to be learned and controlled. These Chaos Space Marines fearlessly study cursed writings and blasphemous rites, dabbling in the many manifestations of Chaos without hesitation. Such studies are invaluable to the Thousand Sons, and they place great value on anything that improves one's ability to manipulate the power of the warp.

All who venerate Tzeentch are aware of the power of knowledge as well as the importance of guarding it. As a result, a Thousand Sons Sorcerer hoards his knowledge, using it to manipulate others towards his own ends. Many have also learned methods of glimpsing the strands of fate and often use such abilities to aide in their plots and schemes.

Crafty and cunning, Thousand Sons use deception both on and off the battlefield to achieve their aims. They prefer to bide their time and wait for favourable circumstances rather than rushing headlong into a confrontation. When they do fight, they do so with an understanding of their enemy's capabilities and on their own terms. Overt conflict is rarely preferred over a well-executed plot, unless the conflict serves a meaningful goal.

The Sorcerers of the Thousand Sons have nothing but disdain and hatred for the stagnant Imperium, which they believe to be bound by ignorance and willful blindness. What's more, they will never forgive or forget the Emperor's betrayal by ordering the destruction of Prospero and all the archives contained within. The Imperium is an ossified shell worshipping a state of endless, stifled existence. For such proud Space Marines as these, forged



STARTING SKILLS, TALENTS & GEAR

Thousand Sons Sorcerers must be Chaos Space Marines.

Characteristic Bonus: +5 Willpower and +5 Fellowship, +15 Corruption, +9 Infamy.

Starting Skills: Command, Common Lore (Choose One), Deception *or* Scrutiny, Forbidden Lore (Psykers), Forbidden Lore (Warp) *or* (Daemonology) *or* (Xenos), Logic, Psyniscience, Scholastic Lore (Occult), Scholastic Lore (Legend).

Starting Traits: Psyker, Unnatural Willpower (+2), Rubric of Ahriman.

Starting Talents: Psy Rating (x3), Up to 500 xp worth of Psychic Powers chosen from the Unaligned, Divination, Biomancy, Pyromancy, Telepathy, *or* Telekinesis Disciplines, as well as the Boon of Tzeentch Psychic Power, Ancient Warrior, Foresight *or* Strong Minded, Meditation *or* Mimic, Resistance (Psychic Powers), Warp Sense.

Starting Gear: Legion Bolt Pistol, Force Sword, two clips of Tzeentchian Inferno Bolts, Talisman of Tzeentch.

Wounds: 15+1d5

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Sorcerer: The Heretic gains the Psyker Trait (listed above), a Psy Rating of 3, and 1 Corruption Point. When determining Psychic strength (see page 206 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook), he counts as Bound.

Rubric of Ahriman: Long ago, the Sorcerer Ahriman sought to rid his Legion of mutations; though the Legion was destroyed, many of the Legion's Sorcerers attained greater degrees of power and control over their abilities. Thousand Sons Sorcerers gain Unnatural Willpower (2) (listed above) and may roll an additional die when forced to roll on the Perils of the Warp table, discarding whichever one he chooses to get a more favourable result. This Unnatural Willpower bonus does not count towards the character's maximum Psy Rating.

Thousand Sons Sorcerers begin play aligned to Tzeentch.

long ago in the fires of the Great Crusade, to see such potential reduced to such a low is a terrible anathema.

These sorcerers know the servants of the Corpse-God to be weak minded pawns for the Changer of Ways, the only god truly worthy of worship. He bestows gifts of power and wisdom on those who follow his path and the Thousand Sons are eager to garner such favours. They know that embracing Chaos is the path to true power and the secrets of the universe.

Thousand Sons Sorcerers often join other warriors to facilitate their quest for knowledge, and are considered by many to be a useful addition to any warband. On the battlefield, their powerful psychic abilities, and their skill in wielding them, are terrible to behold. They are also veterans of countless conflicts, with knowledge and experience far beyond the scope of other warriors. Many are fiercely independent and not accustomed to being led, only allowing others to assume command when it suits their purpose. As a result, wise leaders know it is not prudent to cross such devoted followers of the Lord of Change.

THOUSAND SONS

SORCERERS IN THE VORTEX

The Screaming Vortex provides many opportunities for a Thousand Sons Sorcerer to pursue his quest for knowledge and gather new allies. Most residents believe that the Legion does not recruit new members, meaning all are part of the original Legion that rebelled against the Emperor centuries ago. As a result, they command great respect amongst the many inhabitants of the Vortex and often use this to their own advantage.

The following are some example motivations that coincide with the path of constant study undertaken by the Thousand Sons Sorcerers.

Wolf's Bane: Knowledge is power, and power is the means to an end; namely, vengeance on the Emperor and his subjects. These Sorcerers view the destruction of Prospero, and the knowledge contained within, as an egregious act that alone justifies the downfall of the Imperium. The zealots of the Corpse-God are no better than rabid dogs and deserve to be put down as such before more knowledge is sacrificed to the Ecclesiarchy's ridiculous dogma. These servants of Tzeentch also hold a particular disdain against the most barbaric of all the loyalist forces—the Space Wolves.

Sorcerer of the Cabal of Ahriman: After the Rubric was dispelled, Magnus, in a fit of rage, threatened to obliterate Ahriman for the damage he had caused. However, Magnus's hand was stayed by Tzeentch who inquired why Magnus would abuse his pawn so willingly. Instead, Ahriman was banished from the Legion and condemned to a fruitless quest to understand the nature of Tzeentch. Some members of his cabal continue to follow in Ahriman's footsteps, believing that his banishment was the design of the Architect of Fate himself. By striving to emulate Ahriman's quest, they hope to one day unlock some measure of Ahriman's power. These Thousand Sons Sorcerers maintain a particular interest in lore related to Tzeentch and his unending schemes.

Discipulus Rubricae: The Rubric of Ahriman was a terrible tragedy, but there are many who still appreciate its power. They regard the spell as a masterpiece, perfect except for an unknown flaw. These Thousand Sons dedicate their studies to deciphering the Rubric and hope to gain an understanding of sorcery sufficient for them to fix what went wrong so many centuries ago.

ALPHA LEGION CHAOS SPACE MARINE

"For the Emperor!"

—Battle cry of the Alpha Legion, still used for reasons unknown, possibly to confuse Imperial forces

Since the Horus Heresy, the Alpha Legion has waged a continuous guerrilla war against the Imperium, fomenting rebellions and fostering cells of recidivists and cultists across Imperial space. Any raids performed by the Alpha Legion are often preceded by events such as uprisings, sabotage, and attacks—or reports of attacks—by renegade forces. These activities are designed to catch enemies off guard or manoeuvre enemy forces into traps and/or away from crucial objectives.

Individually, Alpha Legion Chaos Space Marines are secretive and cunning individuals who use whatever resources they have available to the greatest possible advantage. They are experienced fighters, capable of adapting to almost any situation, as well as adept infiltrators and saboteurs. On the battlefield they strike from the shadows, always attacking where they are least anticipated before retreating as unexpectedly as they arrived. Such tactics have made them a particularly feared and hated foe by the Emperor's many servants.

PLAYING AN ALPHA LEGION CHAOS SPACE MARINE

The following are some of the ways a player can portray an Alpha Legion Chaos Space Marine. Of course these should be considered guidelines and suggestions, not directives or canon. If a player comes up with his own backstory and character personalities, he should feel free to explore them.

It is often speculated whether individual warriors have their own agendas, are part of a grand scheme involving unknown additional agents, or act as some combination of both. Members of the Alpha Legion rarely divulge any information that is not of critical importance to a mission. In fact, so little is known of the Legion's motives, many rumours and legends of grand schemes and labyrinthine plots have surrounded the Legion since the beginning of the Long War.

The covert nature of the Alpha Legion's battle doctrine adds to this air of mystery, and allows them to maintain a strategically advantageous position. Often times the mere hint of this Legion's presence is

enough to affect their enemies, who begin to expect attacks at any moment and jump at shadows and imagined threats.

When interacting with other warriors of Chaos, these Traitor Marines are vague and on guard at all times. Ultimately, they trust no one outside their own Legion, and what information is shared between allies is divulged with caution. Compromising information cannot be extracted from someone who does not possess it.

The Alpha Legion has always been renowned for its frequent recruitment of agents for various tasks including: sabotage, decoys, propaganda, and reconnaissance. They are not as discriminating as their Imperial counterparts when it comes to their allies, readily associating with xenos, renegades, rogue psykers, and even daemons if it suits their purpose. The abundance of such allies within the Screaming Vortex makes it an ideal location for an Alpha Legion Traitor Marine to operate.

Members of this Legion frequently use deceit and half-truths when dealing with others. Usually, this is done out of a desire for secrecy or to manipulate would-be allies into participating in their plots and schemes. It is highly unlikely that these individuals are even aware of the full extent of their involvement in such designs. Frequently, the deceived are obstacles to the Legion's true goals, and a few choice words and actions are all that is required to remove them from the picture.

To these warriors, having knowledge of an opponent's motivations gives power over that individual. To this end, accurate surveillance and intelligence gathering are critical factors in battlefield strategy. They are accomplished infiltrators, often spending days, weeks, or longer scouting enemy positions. Their ability to hide their super-human stature is legendary, and

there are frequent accounts of members of the Alpha Legion masquerading as mutants, xenos, and



STARTING SKILLS, TALENTS & GEAR

Members of the Alpha Legion must be Chaos Space Marines.

Characteristic Bonus: +5 Int and + 5 Per, +15 Corruption, +9 Infamy.

Starting Skills: Awareness (+10) *or* Charm, Common Lore (Imperium) *or* Survival, Deceive (+30), Dodge (+10), Forbidden Lore (Psykers) *or* (Pirates) *or* (Xenos), Scholastic Lore (Tactica Imperialis), Scrutiny, Stealth, Stealth (+10) *or* Survival.

Starting Traits: Deceitful Tactics, Insurrectionist.

Starting Talents: Ancient Warrior, Cold Hearted *or* Jaded, Combat Formation, Disarm *or* Double Team, Enemy (Inquisition), Foresight, Hip Shooting *or* Nerves of Steel, Rapid Reload.

Starting Gear: Legion Boltgun, Legion Bolt Pistol, Four Legion Frag Grenades, Cameleoline Cloak *or* Disguise Kit, Demolition Kit, three clips for each bolt weapon.

Wounds: 15+1d5

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Deceitful Tactics: The Alpha Legion is perhaps the most enigmatic of the forces of Chaos, even among its would-be allies. Members of the Alpha Legion take full advantage of this fact, deliberately misleading and manipulating supporters and agents in favour of their own hidden objectives. Once per session, an Alpha Legion Chaos Space Marine may substitute his Deceive Skill during an Opposed Infamy Test for the purposes of Obtaining Services and Manipulating Others.

Insurrectionist: The Alpha Legion is well-known for its extensive employment of agents, and individual members are adept at discovering potential allies to aid in their schemes. Once per session, an Alpha Legion Chaos Space Marine may make a **Challenging (+0) Scrutiny Test**. If successful, the GM may reveal a contact that can help the Traitor Marine accomplish a stated goal, if any such allies are to be found. The amount of time it takes to locate the contact and the contact's beginning disposition are left to the GM's discretion; however, this disposition may be improved by subsequent actions.

Alpha Legion Chaos Space Marines begin play as Unaligned.

even as other Space Marines. They also strive to embody the mythical hydra in their fighting style; always attacking from unexpected directions while remaining independent and adaptable, and with such a diffuse and redundant command structure that its removal does not hinder combat effectiveness.

Working alone or in groups, Alpha Legion Traitor Marines are efficient and deadly killers with centuries of combat experience. They are welcome members of any Compact, where their skills and abilities frequently prove invaluable. However, no one can fully trust an Alpha Legion Chaos Space Marine, as his reasons for joining the compact are his own. Even if revealed, few would believe the admission. Allies are important and should not be squandered in the mind of these Traitor Marines, but victory is more important still.

ALPHA LEGION CHAOS

SPACE MARINES IN THE VORTEX

No one can be certain exactly what drives an Alpha Legion Chaos Space Marine, nor can anyone give an accurate account of the Legion's exploits. As a result, the true reason for the appearance of Alpha Legion Traitor Marines in the Vortex is unknown. This has led the dwellers of the Vortex to be especially wary of these Traitor Space Marines. Their combat skills are legendary and no one wants to end up within their bolter's sights. Whether or not the Legion recruits new members, or if all Alpha Legion Traitor Marines fought during the Horus Heresy, is a topic of rumour and speculation. Regardless, Alpha Legion warriors are treated with the respect due a veteran of Chaos.

The following are examples of supposed reasons for lone Alpha Legion Chaos Space Marines appearing in the Vortex. However, players are encouraged to make use of the mystery and reputation surrounding the Legion to invent unique goals and motivations of their own. A true Traitor Marine never forgets that misinformation and information denial are valuable both on and off the battlefield.

Reconnaissance Mission: Instances of lone members of the Alpha Legion performing reconnaissance missions within the Vortex are quite common. However, what they are reconnoitring is anyone's guess.

Lone Operative: Some Alpha Legion Chaos Space Marines have fought and travelled without their battle brothers for so long that all who see them assume they are completely alone. He may be on a personal mission, a mission for a distant commander, or both. None can really say, as the skills displayed by the Alpha Legion at disguise and deceit mean that the sighting of the same Traitor Marines multiple times may be merely a ruse.

One of the Severed: Rumours persist of Alpha Legion warriors who have been exiled from their Legion. In the Vortex, these supposed "exiled" Chaos Space Marines are known as The Severed. Whatever the reason for their exile, they certainly do not speak of it.

Guerrilla Fighter: For some members of the Alpha Legion, the time spent in the Hollows is for practical rather than strategic purposes. Whether they are returning from a raid or preparing for another mission, these Alpha Legion Chaos Space Marines frequently travel between the realms of the Imperium and the Screaming Vortex. The allies that sometimes accompany them rarely, if ever, speak of what they witness on these missions.

Q'SAL MAGISTER IMMATERIAL

"You see this device? It's nothing really, just a harmless bauble. However, if I trace this rune here... well... you see it becomes oh-so-much more."

—Magister Immaterial Zaftis Vuldar, moments before the infamous "Tragedy on Sovlenas"

Q'Sal is a planet located on the outer fringe of the Screaming Vortex. Here, powerful sorcerer-technocrats rule the planet from three cities using profane mixtures of magic and technology, and constantly vie with each other for power and influence. These cities are differentiated by their distinct cultures and the unique specialities of the sorcerer-scientists within each city. Occasionally, such studies lead these intellectuals to leave their respective abodes and forsake everything they have ever known in the pursuit of knowledge.

These travellers are referred to as Magister Immaterials, and they have a reputation of being unrelenting seekers of new and forbidden lore. Scholars of great renown and learning, each is also an accomplished sorcerer and exhibit a degree of control over their powers rarely seen in humans. Such companions are considered valuable assets to any leader who can temporarily slake their unending thirst for new information.

PLAYING A Q'SAL MAGISTER IMMATERIAL

The following are some of the ways a player can portray a Q'Sal Magister Immaterial. These should only be considered guidelines and suggestions, not directives or canon. If a player comes up with his own backstory and character personalities, he should feel free to explore them.

Magister Immaterials pursue many scholastic and esoteric fields of study. Such inquiries often serve to enhance the sorcerer's erudition and unlock new paths of scientific research. In some cases, they may instead apply their studies to their already considerable psychic abilities or even use them when bargaining for the blessings of Tzeentch.

All Magister Immaterials venerate the Lord of Change, as is common for accomplished sorcerers and scholars of their ilk. Their dedication comes from the untold time spent perfecting their arts on Q'Sal, a planet devoted to Tzeentch, and many are granted gifts of power and forbidden lore by the Grand Conspirator.

Magister Immaterials are crafty and cunning, having learned well the benefits of secrecy and subtlety. The use of black mail, bribery, and threats are all too familiar to these conniving individuals, and all are adept at such tactics of manipulation. They view the frivolities of morality and decency as weaknesses and exploit any opportunity to obtain the knowledge they desire. Magister Immaterials readily sacrifice allies, servants, and wealth to further their search, though they remain mindful of the folly in casually squandering such resources.

The varied cultures of Q'Sal's cities, combined with the nature of their studies, expose all Magister Immaterials to risks of insanity and mental deviance. As such, they often possess many truly distinctive personality traits including conversing through intricate gestures, collecting seemingly trivial objects, speaking in lyrical rhythms and anecdotes, or refusing to allow their feet to touch the ground. At best, they are quirky and strange characters; however, rumours exist of far more sinister habits hidden beneath carefully constructed facades of amiability and cooperation.

A Magister Immaterial may travel between the cities of Q'Sal—a somewhat perilous but not unheard of endeavour—or he may leave the planet entirely. Though they often abandon all thoughts of political power upon embarking on their quest, a rare few have returned to rejoin the upper echelons of Q'Sal's society. Tales of such individuals, and the grisly results of their political designs, have led the ruling sorcerer-technocrats to view them with both curiosity and suspicion. However, returning Magister Immaterials often apply their learning to the creation of Q'Sal's many wonders, resulting in many marvels of sorcery and technology.

As a rule, a Magister Immaterial only aids those who are able to assist him in his endeavours. In return, he may offer his considerable psychic abilities and knowledge, or the use of any remaining contacts on Q'Sal. Such an arrangement is tenuous, however, as Magister Immaterials foremost swear their allegiance to Tzeentch above all others.



STARTING SKILLS, TALENTS & GEAR

Magister Immaterials of Q'Sal must be human.

Characteristic Bonus: +5 Intelligence, +5 Willpower, and +5 Fellowship, +15 Corruption, +9 Infamy.

Starting Skills: Awareness, Charm (+10) *or* Charm and Deceive *or* Deceive (+10), Common Lore (Q'Sal), Dodge, Forbidden Lore (Psykers), Inquiry, Logic, Psyniscience, Scholastic Lore (Occult) *or* (Legend), Scrutiny, Awareness (+10) *or* Psyniscience (+10) *or* Logic (+10).

Pick One City of Q'Sal for the homeland's Skills:

Surgub: Linguistics (Chaos Marks), Scholastic Lore (Cryptology) *or* (Occult) *or* (Heresy), Forbidden Lore (Daemonology), Forbidden Lore (Warp) *or* (Daemonology) (+10) *or* (Psykers) (+10).

Velklir: Scholastic Lore (Numerology) *or* (Astromancy), Navigate (Stellar) *or* (Warp), Forbidden Lore (Warp), Forbidden Lore (Pirates) *or* (Warp) (+10) *or* (Psykers) (+10).

Tarnor: Linguistics (Tarnorian Sign Language), Scholastic Lore (Cryptology) *or* (Chemistry) *or* Tech-Use, Forbidden Lore (Archeotech), Forbidden Lore (Xenos) *or* (Archeotech) (+10) *or* (Psykers) (+10).

Starting Traits: Chaos Psyker, Magus Supremus.

Starting Talents: Psy Rating (x4), (Up to 500 xp worth of Psychic Powers chosen from the Unaligned, Divination, Biomancy, Pyromancy, Telepathy, *or* Telekinesis Disciplines, as well as 300 xp chosen from any of the above *or* the Tzeentch Powers), Jaded, Paranoia *or* Foresight, Strong Minded, Weapon Training (Primary), Weapon Training (Exotic (Q'Sal), Weapon Training (Las) *or* (SP) *or* (Shock), Warp Sense *or* Child of the Warp.

Starting Gear: Good Craftsmanship Laspistol *or* Autopistol *or* Common Quality Q'Sal Crystal Caster, Good Craftsmanship Q'Sal Glass Dagger *or* a Common Craftsmanship Force Staff, Grimoire containing acquired lore, Mesh Combat Cloak.

Wounds: 8+1d5

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Chaos Psyker: The Heretic is a rogue psyker and begins play with the Psyker Trait (listed above), a Psy Rating of 4, and 1d5 Corruption Points. In addition, when determining his Psychic Strength (see page 206 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook) he counts as Unbound.

Magus Supremus: The Magister Immaterials of Q'Sal are renowned for their control over the fickle powers of the warp. Rolls on the Psychic Phenomena table do not affect the Magister Immaterial, although those around him may still be affected, unless the roll causes Perils of the Warp. The Magister Immaterial may also spend an Infamy point to either reroll the result on the Psychic Phenomena Table, accepting the new result as final, or decide who (allies, NPCs, and/or enemies) are affected by the result. The Magister Immaterial must be able to see an individual to affect them in this manner.

Magister Immaterials begin play aligned to Tzeentch.

Q'SAL MAGISTER

IMMATERIALS IN THE VORTEX

Magister Immaterials are first and foremost scholars and seekers of lore and knowledge. A Magister Immaterial's journey may begin in any of the three cities of Q'Sal, but his desire to expand his horizons inevitably ensures his departure from his place of origin. However, each city has a distinct culture that is ingrained into its citizens, and this culture shapes how the Magister Immaterial views the Vortex.

The following are examples of Magister Immaterials from each of Q'Sal's three cities.

Archivist-Savant of Tarnor: The Archivist-Savants of Tarnor believe that the systematic cataloguing and study of that which is known is the key to understanding what may be. Methodical and calculating individuals, these Magister Immaterials eagerly search for evidence of previously unknown exploits, events, and experiments. Archivist-Savants are currently forbidden to speak due to the Arch Qaestor's decree, but many have found creative and disturbing solutions to this minor impediment.

Shaper-Artisan of Surgub: Shaper-Artisans are employed in the forges of Surgub, where their ability to manipulate warp energy is used to craft many of the wonders of Q'Sal. They delight in complexity and control, expertly shaping intricate glyphs that resonate with power and potential, both to create and destroy. The more profound the results of a glyph are, the more notoriety to be gained by the Artisan who crafted it. All are masters of their craft and willing to go to any lengths to learn and explore the possibilities that their glyphs can unlock.

Astral Seers of Velklir: The Astral Seers study the movements of the cosmos and the insanity of the Screaming Vortex, which they see as a reflection of the forces of fate that shape reality. The seers spend long hours searching for subtle patterns and currents in these observations, which they use to create their renowned charts and detailed horoscopes. The glimpses of fate offered by these works allow Astral Seers to ruthlessly advance themselves and manipulate their fortunes towards their own ends. However, no one can stare into the madness of the Vortex for long without unwanted side-effects, and all Astral Seers are undeniably insane to some extent.

II: SERVANTS OF FATE

IDOLITREX MAGOS OF FORGE POLIX

**Observational note* "Subject 429 shows signs of systemic organ failure and severe tissue distension. Heart Rate: 198; Nerve Responsiveness: 94.327%; Mortality Probability: 93.74%."*

**Recommendation* "Begin procedure."*

—Fragment of a data spool recovered from the wreckage of the *Unchained Erudition*

Within Forge Polix toil many Magi of various specialties and skills for their master, Magos Onuris. They have waged a desperate and brutal war with the forces of the Exospectre and Forge Castir for untold ages. While the Exospectre currently holds the upper hand, the war shows no signs of ending in the near future.

All who dwell in Forge Polix, from the lowliest servitor to the most learned Heretek, spend their every waking moment fighting to tip the balance of this conflict back to their favour. So desperate is Onuris that he frequently incites his minions to resort to drastic fields of study and experimentation. The Idolitrex Magi have fully embraced this call, devoting their efforts to the unremitting pursuit of innovation and experimentation.

Idolitrex Magi are highly respected, if slightly disturbing, contributors to Polix's progress, and all are utterly consumed by their quest. Many pursue fields of study normally considered perilous or insane. Most retain loyalty to Onuris even once departing their ruined planet, but some formulate their own independent motivations which can become incompatible with their former master, and so become apostate magi. Efficient and calculating to a fault, they will stop at nothing to obtain any scrap of data that may further their goals, including risking Magos Onuris's wrath for abandoning his struggle entirely and leaving the Hollows behind.

PLAYING AN IDOLITREX MAGOS OF FORGE POLIX

The following are some of the ways a player can portray an Idolitrex Magos of Forge Polix. These ideas should be considered guidelines and suggestions, not directives or canon. If a player comes up with his own backstory and character personalities, he should feel free to explore them.

All Idolitrex Magi are unified in their tireless quest to gather information for their dark designs. Incredibly learned and driven individuals, they believe their works to be of the utmost importance. All other considerations—including allies, resources, or anything else—are subject to the needs of their research, and any impediment is removed as efficiently as possible.

A magos may obtain his data from a variety of subjects and sources. Some pore furiously over forgotten tomes of blasphemous lore, while others may ceaselessly hunt for long-lost technology to study and twist towards their own corrupt purposes. Many instead focus their research on

xenos or warp-fuelled technology and scour the Vortex to study and obtain potential specimens. The possibilities are endless, as each new piece of data leads the magos ever on in an unending chain of discovery.

An Idolitrex Magos views experimentation as an incredibly valuable research tool, which he habitually uses to further explore his dreadful theories and concepts. Suffering is merely a statistic to these callous individuals, registered only as variations in biological rhythms or the suitability of subjects for future research. These macabre trials are conducted without thought to morality or their effects on the world around them, and frequently end in tragedy and death.

These magi often dabble in the forbidden arts of sorcery, and most include such studies in their dreadful creations. Idolitrex Magi must rely heavily on rituals and arcane lore to enhance their sorcerous talents, as a result of the severe biological augmentations they regularly undergo. Ironically, their rituals often draw upon the discarded rites of the Adeptus Mechanicus, though these rites are irreparably corrupted by this dark purpose.

Such a Heretic is a welcome, though never fully trusted, member of any warband. All Idolitrex Magi have vast amounts of data and lore—as well as the advanced technical skills and abilities befitting their station—at their disposal, and may be persuaded to craft unique and deadly devices for the right incentive. Most find experimentation more useful than loyalty, however, which often leads to the sacrificing of others for the Magos's eternal research.



STARTING SKILLS, TALENTS, & GEAR

Idolitrex Magi of Forge Polix must be human.

Characteristic Bonus: +10 Intelligence, +5 Willpower, +15 Corruption, +9 Infamy.

Starting Skills: Common Lore (The Hollows), Common Lore (Tech) (+10), Dodge *or* Parry, Forbidden Lore (Warp), Forbidden Lore (Any), Interrogation *or* Scrutiny *or* Medicae, Linguistics (Chaos Marks) *or* (Techna-Lingua), Logic, Scholastic Lore (Occult), Scholastic Lore (Chemistry) *or* (Numerology), Tech Use (+10), Trade (+10).

Starting Traits: Blasphemous Studies, Mechanicus Implants, Psyker.

Starting Talents: Armour Monger *or* Weapon Tech, Blasphemous Incantations, Die Hard, Enemy (Adeptus Mechanicus), Jaded, Lesser Minion of Chaos (must be a Servitor *or* Servo-skull) *or* Cold Hearted *or* Peer (Forge Polix), Mechadendrite Training (Weapon) *or* (Utility), Meditation *or* Total Recall, Paranoia, Psy Rating x1, Up to 300 xp worth of Psychic Powers chosen from the Unaligned, Divination, Telepathy, *or* Telekinesis Disciplines, Technical Knock, Weapon Training (Las, Primary, Shock), Weapon Training (Bolt, Plasma, Melta, *or* Power).

Starting Gear: Best Craftsmanship Lascarbine with Red-dot Laser Sight *or* Spread Limiter, Common Craftsmanship Fallen Magos Power Axe, Light Carapace Armour, One Good Craftsmanship Cybernetic and One Best Quality Cybernetic, Unholy Unguents, Dataslate, Optical Mechadendrite *or* Utility Mechadendrite *or* Ballistic Mechadendrite with Las-Pistol, Luminin Capacitors *or* Maglev Coils *or* Ferric Lure Implants.

Wounds: 13+1d5

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Blasphemous Studies: Idolitrex Magi view sorcery as yet another tool to be used in their never-ending quests. The Idolitrex Magos begins play with the Psyker Trait (listed above), a Psy Rating of 1, and 1d5 Corruption Points. The Idolitrex Magos's maximum Psy Rating is limited to his Corruption Bonus. In addition, when determining his Psychic Strength (see page 206 of the **BLACK CRUSADE CORE RULEBOOK**) he counts as Bound.

Necessary Modifications: Heretical members of the machine cult all share the desire to rid themselves of the weaknesses of their organic bodies. While some are more extreme in this practice than others, all Hereteks have extensively modified their physiques to better suit their needs. The Idolitrex Magos gains the Mechanicus Implants Trait (listed above), as well as one Good Craftsmanship Cybernetic and one Best Quality Cybernetic of his choice (also listed above). In addition, he gets the Binary Chatter ability. This ability increases the loyalty of all minions who are servitors or other cybernetic constructions by 10.

Idolitrex Magi of Forge Polix begin play Unaligned.

IDOLITREX MAGI IN THE VORTEX

The Forges of Hive Polix are dedicated to the construction of weapons of war for the constant struggle with Forge Castir. As such, most Idolitrex have at least some connection to warfare, either through actual battlefield experience, weapons fabrication, or weapon research. Any original focus on warfare and weaponry is merely a catalyst for the Magos's ceaseless research, and it may no longer contain the key to his current ends.

Below are a few examples of Idolitrex Magi found within Forge Polix.

Engineer Diabolicus: Perhaps the most common Idolitrex Magos, these magi attend the many terrifying combinations of technology and warp-craft that accompany Forge Polix's armies into battle. They have witnessed first-hand the effectiveness of these creations and each has spent countless years perfecting their unholy charges. Competition amongst these Engineers is fierce and deadly, as each searches for any advantage in the struggle to outdo his rivals in his accomplishments.

Transmaterium: Forge Polix remains saturated in warp energy due to the constant ministrations of the Transmateriums and their attendants. These Idolitrex Magi specialise in adapting the ancient knowledge of the Mechanicus towards channelling the terrible energies of the Immaterium as power sources, and are responsible for the sustenance and maintenance of the forge's many arcane devices. These magi greatly resemble corrupt parodies of their Mechanicus brethren, surrounding themselves with profane sigils and rites meant to channel the favour of far darker things than the Omnissiah.

Dread Biologis: Deep beneath Forge Polix lie the research vaults of Magos Onuris, where his more interesting mutant specimens are contained. Idolitrex Magi toil within the countless laboratories, observation chambers, and gene-lathes, endlessly twisting and warping the flesh of their victims into new and horrifying fodder for Onuris's armies. They delight in pushing the limits of their flesh-craft and many have left the Hollows to seek out new and more exotic forms to corrupt.

TOOLS OF FATE

"You can feel it now, can't you? Savour this moment as the crystal shards work their way through your body and the warp devours you from within. As your final breaths leave you, look upon my face and understand that you have lost, and I have won."

—Harthan Grex, Master Assassin of the Velklir

The warp-infused forges of the Screaming Vortex are responsible for a myriad of creations both mundane and miraculous. Against a backdrop of burning cauldrons, molten metal, and tortured machinery, innumerable slaves toil at the behest of their vile and capricious masters. On Q'Sal, wondrous technologies are created in a manner few can comprehend. The warring factions of the Hollows vie endlessly in their attempts to out do one another, often with destructive and disastrous results. Yet behind these frenzied patterns of creation and devastation lies the hand of Tzeentch, whose desire for meddling and intrigue knows no bounds.

Many are the warp-fused technologies and ancient artefacts that can be found within the Screaming Vortex. Most of the weapons and wargear below are related in some way to the Chaos God Tzeentch—The Father of Lies and Deception—as well as the worlds within the Vortex where Tzeentch holds the most sway. All can be quite dangerous in the right hands, and Heretics that claim to walk in Tzeentch's ever-twisting shadow will do well to seek these creations out wherever they can.

RANGED WEAPONS

Tzeentch's followers gain much of their power from their destructive sorcerous might. Rare and exotic, weapons such as the Crystal Caster and the Soul Cannon are widely feared by those fortunate enough to have survived their fury.

Q'SAL CRYSTAL CASTER

An insidious weapon of deception and assassination, the Q'Sal Crystal Caster itself is actually a mundane tube that uses compressed air to propel a projectile over a very short distance. What makes it such a formidable weapon, however, is its ammunition. These exotic warp-based crystals splinter within the flesh, causing immense pain through uncontrollable waves of cell-destroying energy. The crystals can be deadly even when they fail to penetrate, as they unleash a short blast of warp lightning when they shatter against enemy armour. Crystal Casters are silent weapons, often fashioned as pistols or as wrist-mounted launchers and highly favoured among the assassins of Q'Sal.

Q'Sal Crystal Casters function like standard Ranged Weapons with the Silencer Weapon Upgrade, but have different effects depending on whether the initial shot causes any Damage to the target. If the target suffers any Damage from a successful hit, the weapon is treated as having the Crippling (6) Quality. If the target suffers no Damage from a successful hit (due to Armour/Toughness reductions, or due to a Force Field stopping the shot), he must immediately Test as if hit by a weapon with the Shocking Quality, although this Test is considered **Hard (-20)**. As they are small and compact weapons, it is easy for a Heretic to hide one; anyone attempting to find a hidden Crystal Caster

suffers a -20 penalty to the relevant Test. A Crystal Caster can be incorporated into another object as a standard Weapon Upgrade, making Tests to locate it two steps more difficult than normal, although if adapted in this manner, the Crystal Caster's Clip Size is reduced to 1.

Q'SAL SOUL CANNON

Frightening to look upon, and even more terrifying when seen in action, Q'Sal Soul Cannons are custom crafted warp weapons. Most of what makes up the Soul Cannon appears to be quite ordinary—it has a wide barrel, a simple trigger mechanism, and several handholds—but the rest of it acts as a form of grotesque harness, with a series of metallic cords or tentacles wrapping around the user's shoulders and mid-section, converging at the base of the wielder's spine. These cords are always handmade, and are designed to fit the body shape of one specific user. Whenever the weapon's trigger is pulled, these cords seem to come alive, writhing and glowing with a sickly blue inner light.

The Soul Cannon is fuelled by a psychically warded container that houses the essence of the gun's previous victims. Each time the weapon is fired, it lets out a tortured shriek as one of the stored souls is crushed and projected outwards in a bolt of warp lightning. Those not incinerated instantly are often set alight, and the Soul Cannon itself seems to feed on the death and destruction it causes. The monstrous harness is even capable of drawing power from its own user, although this can be fatal as the owner of the Soul Cannon's essence is ripped from his body to feed the gun's blasphemous operation.

The Soul Cannon can never be reloaded. Instead, for every 10 points of Damage it causes, or for every target it kills, it gains one more shot. In use against Hordes, it gains one shot every time it reduces the Horde's Magnitude by 5 or when the Horde is destroyed. This cannot exceed the maximum Clip Size of 10. If the cannon ever runs out of ammo, the wielder can either choose to wait for it to recharge, which requires an area of intense warp activity (such as deep within the Vortex) and one hour per shot recharged, or they can fuel the weapon with their own essence. The wielder takes a **Difficult (-10) Willpower Test** and the Soul Cannon regains a single shot. If the Test is failed, the wielder suffers 1d5 temporary Willpower damage for each Degree of Failure. Soul Cannons are custom made and the original owner never needs to be Braced to use the weapon.

MELEE WEAPONS

Only the most foolish within the Screaming Vortex would choose to go without some form of close-quarters protection, and melee weapons are the most favoured. Many are Daemon Weapons (see page 194 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook), and unless stated otherwise, all require one hand to use.

BEDLAM STAFF

Using guile, tricks, or promises of power, lower-order psykers entrap minor daemons of Tzeentch that favour illusion and trickery, fusing them within elegant rods of incomparable construction. With the daemon held in place, the Bedlam Staff can be used to spread Chaos among the sorcerer's enemies, as each blow leaves its target temporarily dazed.

TABLE 2-1: WEAPONS

Ranged Weapons

Name	Class	Range	RoF	Dam	Pen	Clip	Rld	Special	Wt.	Availability
Q'Sal Crystal Caster	Pistol	15m	S/--/--	1d10+4 E	5	N/A	Full	Razor Sharp, Crippling (6)†	0.5kg	Rare
Q'Sal Soul Cannon	Heavy	75m	S/--/--	2d10+10 E	0	10††	N/A	Flame, Shocking, Warp Weapon	45kg	Extremely Rare

Melee Weapons

Name	Class	Range	Dam	Pen	Special	Wt	Availability
Bedlam Staff	Melee	—	1d10+4 I	4	Balanced, Concussive (2), Flame, Proven (3)	4kg	Near Unique
Castir Lightning Khopesh	Melee	—	1d10+4 E	4	Balanced, Flexible, Power Field	2kg	Very Rare
Polix Heavy Khopesh	Melee	—	1d10+8 E	8	Balanced, Concussive (1)†††, Power Field	6kg	Very Rare
Pandemonium Stave	Melee	—	2d10+8 I	8	Balanced, Felling (4)	6kg	Near Unique
Warp Staff	Melee	—	1d10 I	0	Balanced	3kg	Extremely Rare

† The Quality a Crystal Caster uses depends on the Damage it causes.

†† Cannot be reloaded. See full rules for details on ammunition expenditure.

††† Must be wielded with two hands to gain this Quality.

A Bedlam Staff is a Tzeentch Daemon Weapon with a Willpower of 40 and a Binding Strength of 2. It has the Illusory and Warp Flame Daemon Weapon Attributes. A Bedlam Staff requires two hands to use, can be used as a Psy-Focus, and can only ever be used by those dedicated to Tzeentch.

THE HOLLOW BLADES

One of the more famous weapon designs of the Vortex are the Hollow Blades, a common name given to a pair of curved swords—one made by Forge Polix, the other by Forge Castir. The blades are so well regarded that the Traitor Legions have been known to seek them out, and the warriors of the Thousand Sons have a particular affinity for the peculiar shape the blades take.

Polix Heavy Khopesh

Forge Polix's blades mirror their heavy industry. Bulky and brutal, the long curved blades can cut through the thickest armour and cleave a man in two with a single swipe. When used against a Castir Lightning Khopesh, this blade suffers no penalties when Parrying attacks from the lighter weapon but also does not gain its normal bonus Concussive bonus for two-handed use.



Castir Lightning Khopesh

Almost the complete opposite of their heavier counterparts, the Hollow Blades of Forge Castir are designed as fast and agile duelling weapons. Often used in pairs, these elegant blades feature bowed handles that allow them to be spun and turned in the hand with very little effort. The thinness of the blades also makes them difficult to defend against, and their only true match in combat are the Polix blades. A Castir Lightning Khopesh has the Flexible Quality, although it may still be used to Parry as normal.

PANDEMONIUM STAVE

Potent Daemon Weapons of immense power, Pandemonium Staves are wielded only by Tzeentch's greatest champions. Longer than a man is tall and consisting of a single rod of roughly hewn and psychically bonded black granite, these staves tend to cast unnatural shadows, drawing in nearby light and glowing softly in a pattern that can make those that stare at it too long feel sick. The dull glow quickly changes to a bright white when the wielder channels his own psychic energy down the length of the stave, and the daemon contained within screams out, adding its own caged fury to the power of the attack.

A Pandemonium Stave is a Daemon Weapon with a Willpower of 80 and a Binding Strength of 4. It has the Accursed, Howling, Living Magic, and Sorcerous Force Daemon Weapon Attributes. A Pandemonium Stave requires two hands to use, can be used as a Psy-Focus, and can only ever be wielded by someone that possesses the Mark of Tzeentch.

WARP STAFF

This rod of glimmering metal is studded with shining icons of might and engraved with runes that appear differently to every person that looks upon its length. Any psyker wielding a Staff will only suffer from Psychic Phenomena when they Push. When using psychic powers at the Unfettered level, every time the wielder would cause a Psychic Phenomenon, he adds his Psy Rating to the Damage of the next Psychic Power he uses. If the next Psychic Power would not deal Damage, this bonus is lost until the next Psychic Phenomenon would be caused.

TABLE 2-2: SPECIAL AMMUNITION

Name	Can Upgrade	Availability
Tzeentchian Inferno Bolts	Legion bolt pistols, bolters and combi-bolters	Extremely Rare
Q'Sal Crystal Caster Shells	Q'Sal Crystal Casters	Extremely Rare

SPECIAL AMMUNITION

These ammunition types are obtained only as full clips, and not as individual shells.

TZEENTCHIAN INFERNO BOLTS

Inferno Bolts are standard Legion bolter shells inscribed with runes of power dedicated to the Changer of Ways. They glow with an inner light as the runes themselves writhe with barely contained might. When fired, the bolts explode in brilliant displays of cobalt and vermilion fire, destroying all nearby with baleful warp energies.

The weapon loses its Tearing Quality, but gains the Warp Weapon and Blast (2) Qualities. Inferno Bolts only function when used by someone dedicated to Tzeentch, are too unstable to fire in any mode other than single shot, and lose their Warp Weapon Quality when used against non-living targets.

Q'SAL CRYSTAL CASTER SHELLS

These small iridescent shells are incapable of reaching high velocities but their razor-sharp points are capable of cutting through most forms of protection, after which the crystal itself splinters inside the victim's flesh. From there the power of the warp takes over, leeching through the crystal shards to annihilate the target from within.

ARMOUR

While most sorcerers avoid heavy, bulky protective suits, some who thought otherwise have outlived these supposedly wiser beings by many a year.

MAGMA SUIT

Forge Polix of the Hollows prides itself on its power armour construction techniques, a set of secrets it guards jealously from its rival on the other side of the planet. Magma Suits were originally designed to keep valued mining overseers safe from sudden surges of molten rock, but have proven quite adaptable for use in combat and have become highly desired throughout the Vortex.

A Magma Suit is a suit of human power armour that has all the standard abilities of power armour, as well as the following sub-systems and upgrades: Osmatic Gill Life Sustainer, Vox Link, Sustainable Power Source, and Recoil Suppression. Additionally, a Magma Suit grants the wearer the Resistance (Heat) Talent.

TABLE 2-3: PROTECTIVE DEVICES

Armour				
Name	Locations Covered	AP	Wt	Availability
Magma Suit	All	9	90kg	Near Unique
Force Field				
Name	Protection Rating	Wt	Availability	
Prismatic Amulet	60	3kg	Near Unique	
Shimmering Robes	Psy Rating x9	1kg	Extremely Rare	

FORCE FIELDS

Hidden, disguised, or otherwise unnoticeable, force fields appeal to many followers of the God of Lies.

PRISMATIC AMULET

These mysterious prisms are worn around the neck or fastened to the chest. The amulet does more than simply break light apart though—it is capable of splitting reality itself. Those that attack the wielder often find their shots fractured and refracted, as they bend around the wielder and dissipate as though they never existed. It is said that to have a Prismatic Amulet is to have the favour of Tzeentch, and that those that challenge the wearer often find themselves at the mercy of the Lord of Magic.

If the Prismatic Amulet ever overloads, the attacker responsible for causing the overload automatically suffers 2d10 Energy Damage (reduced by their Willpower Bonus, not Toughness Bonus or Armour) as the judgement of Tzeentch falls upon them. A Prismatic Amulet only functions when the owning character also possesses the Mark of Tzeentch.

SHIMMERING ROBES

Beautiful to behold, these finely woven robes are quite common among sorcerers, especially those that call Tzeentch their patron. Colours dance across their surface as they flutter on unseen winds and, despite their fragile appearance, they can stop the most powerful of blasts or turn aside the heaviest of blows. Should the favour of Tzeentch turn against a user grown too arrogant in his powers, however, they can just as easily become no more than useless fabric.

A set of Shimmering Robes has a rating equal to the wearer's Psy Rating multiplied by 9 (eg. Psy Rating 5 would give the Shimmering Robes a rating of 45). The overload rating on a set of robes is equal to the wearer's Psy Rating (eg. a Psy Rating 7 would mean the overload is 1-7). If a set of Shimmering Robes ever overloads, the wearer must engage in devout meditation for an hour to reinvigorate its powers. If this is not done within a day, the robes fade to a dull grey and crumble to dust. Shimmering Robes provide no protection to those without the Psyker Trait, although they are very attractive and other Heretics might desire them purely for their aesthetic appeal.

WARGEAR AND EQUIPMENT

Though the followers of Tzeentch prize their intellect and sorcerous powers above all else, only the foolish would not call upon the arcane creations that might aid their quests.

CASTIRIAN SOUL CAGE

Known throughout the Screaming Vortex for their expertise in the construction of Daemon Engines, the Dark Magi of Forge Castir have created a truly disturbing device—the Castirian Soul Cage—that they use to trap and hold daemonic entities before they are bound to their new metal prison. A Heretic can use a Cage as part of any Ritual in which his intent is to summon a daemon. This can include summoning a daemon that will eventually inhabit a Daemon Weapon or Daemon Engine, or even a Ritual that is used to summon a daemon directly into the material realm. The Soul Cage makes all Tests involved in summoning the daemon two levels easier. At the end of the Ritual the daemon will be contained within the Soul Cage as long as the Heretic that trapped the daemon is able to maintain control (via an Opposed Daemonic Mastery Test taken every hour the daemon is contained). A trapped daemon can be freed intentionally and the Soul Cage can be used to channel the daemon towards its original purpose (such as creating a Daemon Weapon). Heretics should be careful though, as daemons tend not to like being imprisoned against their will.



CROWN OF PROSPERO

According to ancient myths, the Crowns were thought to have been created long ago during the Great Crusade. Those fated to possess a Crown find that their abilities further enhanced through the powers of Tzeentch, transforming them into utterly invulnerable maelstroms of psychic destruction. Each Crown acts as a Psychic Hood (see page 188 in the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook) that also provides the wearer with a force field with an overload level of 01-05. It has a Protection Rating of 30, which doubles to 60 when used to deflect psychic attacks. It is designed to interface with a suit of power armour (human and Legion), and does not function with any other type of armour or if the wearer is not dedicated to Tzeentch.

TABLE 2-4: WARGEAR AND EQUIPMENT

Name	Wt	Availability
Castirian Soul Cage	55kg	Near Unique
Crown of Prospero	2kg	Near Unique
Glimmerstone	—	Rare†
Golden Eye of Tzeentch	—	Extremely Rare
Q'Sal Crystal Spire	18kg	Very Rare
Talisman of Tzeentch	—	Very Rare
Tarnor Mimic-Mask	0.5kg	Rare
Vortex Pendant	—	Extremely Rare

†Rare in the city of Velklir, Extremely Rare everywhere else.

GLIMMERSTONE

Available only in Velklir and rumoured to be mined from Glimmerwing nests deep within the Ragged Helix, Glimmerstone is a type of porous grey rock often shaved into tiny spherical stones. It is used as a form of psychic ward. The grey stones burst on impact into a cloud of dust that shifts colours as it descends, disrupting the flow of psychic energy.

Glimmerstone comes in bags of 10 pieces. A wielder can throw a single stone directly at his feet as a Half Action. This creates a dust cloud 2 metres wide with the Smoke Quality, and anyone within the cloud gains a +20 bonus to resist Psychic Powers. Alternatively, it can be thrown at a distant target, although this must be done with some force and thus the range is reduced to the thrower's Strength Bonus in metres. Any character with the Psyker Trait that is within the resulting dust cloud from impact suffers -20 to all Focus Power and Psyniscience Tests. The cloud dissipates quickly, lasting only 1d5 rounds.

GOLDEN EYE OF TZEENTCH

Golden Eyes of Tzeentch are purported to be fossilised eyes of a powerful Tzeentchian daemon, and are said to be able to gaze beyond the mortal realms of life and death. Those lucky enough to possess one can link his own foresight to the orb. Using a Golden Eye requires a free hand, as the user grips the small container tightly. As a Free Action, the user may make a **Challenging (+0) Willpower Test**, and for every Degree of Success gains +10 to any Evasion or Opposed Stealth Tests until the start of his next Turn. A Golden Eye of Tzeentch will only function when the owning character is dedicated to Tzeentch.

Q'SAL CRYSTAL SPIRE

No more than a metre high, a Q'Sal Crystal Spire consists of a pointed shard of flawless blue crystal set in a rune-encrusted mounting. Once activated, for a brief period of time the barrier between the Immaterium and the material universe weakens slightly. Activating a Q'Sal Crystal Spire is a Half-Action and, once active, all Focus Power Tests and all Tests made as part of a Ritual within 20m of the spire are considered to be two levels easier. This increases by one level for every additional active spire within 20m of another active spire. Additionally, all rolls on the Psychic Phenomena Table add +20 to the roll, with a further +10 for every active spire after the first within 20m of another active spire. If this roll causes a Perils of the Warp result, the spire closest to the character that caused this result explodes (D10+5 E; Pen 5; Blast (5)), destroying it completely.

TALISMAN OF TZEENTCH

These strange psychic devices allow those dedicated to the Changer of Ways to enact their master's will and vanquish anyone who would dare claim themselves mightier than his own. Any psyker, friend or foe, that wishes to use a psychic power when within 50 metres of a character possessing a Talisman of Tzeentch must first pass a **Challenging (+0) Willpower Test** or reduce their Psy Rating by 1 for every Degree of Failure, lasting that same number of turns. This Test is taken every time they wish to use a power. A Talisman of Tzeentch has no effect on psykers dedicated to Tzeentch, and will only function when the owning character is dedicated to Tzeentch.

TARNOR MIMIC-MASK

The sorcerers of Tarnor dare not speak and shield their faces, as well as their emotions and intentions, through the use of a complex series of masks. Their masks do more than just hide their faces—they can shift ever so slightly to give greater meaning to hand gestures and body language, and be manipulated to calm people as well as to frighten them. A Tarnor Mimic-Mask must be worn directly on the face and not over any form of helmet, goggles, or other headgear. As long as the wearer possesses the Psyker Trait, he may use the mask to gain a +20 on all Charm, Deceive, and Intimidate Tests. Alternatively, as a Half Action the wearer may attempt a **Difficult (-10) Willpower Test** to give himself a frightening visage and gain the Fear (1) Trait for as many minutes as the wielder's WP Bonus, plus 1 minute for each Degree of Success after the first.

VORTEX PENDANT

Vortex Pendants come in many forms. Some are jewels worn about the neck, others are ornate silver wristbands, and can even take the form of golden crowns covered in microscopic symbols of Tzeentch. The only common element to a Vortex Pendant is the way they shift in size, colour, and dimension—endlessly changing their form, sometimes imperceptibly like the hands on a clock. When used against an enemy psyker, however, a Vortex Pendant can rip into the target's mind, tearing his psyche apart and leaving him powerless.

The psyker must have line of sight to his target in order to use a Vortex Pendant. It requires a Full Action with the Ranged and Concentration Subtypes, and is activated via an **Opposed Hard (-20) Willpower Test**. For every Degree of Success, the target will lose the ability to use one psychic power he possesses for the remainder of the encounter. Randomly determine what psychic powers are lost. A Vortex Pendant has no effect on those without the Psyker Trait, and when used by a character not dedicated to Tzeentch, the Opposed Willpower Test will be **Very Hard (-30)** instead.

MINIONS OF TZEENTCH

As an alternative to creating a standard Minion, a Heretic dedicated to Tzeentch may select from the following new types.

THRALL WIZARD

It is not unheard of for powerful sorcerers of Tzeentch to surround themselves with small gaggles of lesser psychic beings, leeching off their essence as both a form of protection and a form of power. The lives of these pathetic creatures are often meaningless to the sorcerer, and he would end their lives as casually as he would brush a mote of dust from his robes.

A Heretic dedicated to Tzeentch who also possesses the Psyker Trait may take up to 6 Thrall Wizards if possessing the Greater Minion of Chaos Talent, up to 3 with Minions of Chaos, or 1 with Lesser Minion of Chaos. The total number of Thrall Wizards may never exceed the Heretic's Fellowship Bonus.

Thrall Wizard									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
15	10	20	20	20	30	10	25	10	--

Movement: 2/4/6/12

Wounds: 3

Armour: None

Total TB: 2

Skills: Forbidden Lore (Daemonology, Heresy, The Warp) (Int), Linguistics (Chaos Marks, Low Gothic) (Int).

Talents: Soul-Tap (see below).

Traits: Psyker.

Weapons: Binding Rod (1d5+2 I; Pen 0; Primitive (6)).

Soul Tap: As a Free Action before making a Focus Power Test, the Heretic that commands the Thrall Wizard may choose to leech power from his hapless minion by making a **Challenging (+0) Willpower Test**. If the Test is failed, the Heretic gains no benefits; if successful, the Heretic drains the Thrall Wizard's psychic essence completely and may Push his next Psychic Power without suffering the normal effects of Pushing such as possible Fatigue or Psychic Phenomena. Regardless of the outcome of the Test, the Thrall Wizard must pass a **Challenging (+0) Toughness Test** or be utterly slain; treat him as a minion that has been killed.

Binding Rod: Whenever the Heretic that commands the Thrall Wizard suffers from a result on either the Warp Phenomena or Perils of the Warp Table, he may choose to have the result affect the Thrall Wizard instead. The Thrall Wizard suffers the rolled result, and then dies horribly. Treat the Thrall Wizard as a minion that has been killed.





GLIMMERWING

This creature has been seen accompanying a number of Velklir sorcerer-lords. What purpose they serve in their obsessive study of astronomy is unknown, but these vibrantly coloured winged familiars—not truly alive yet not truly dead—are thought to act as spies and even psychic amplifiers.

A Heretic dedicated to Tzeentch and who also possesses the Psyker Trait may take a Glimmerwing as a Greater Minion of Chaos.

Glimmerwing									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
35	10	30	30	45	25	40	30	05	--

Movement: 8/16/24/48 (Flyer)

Wounds: 6

Armour: Natural Armour (All 4)

Total TB: 3

Skills: Awareness (Per) +20, Dodge (Ag), Navigate (Surface, Stellar, Warp) (Int), Stealth (Ag) +20.

Talents: Berserk Charge, Double Team, Fearless, Hardy, Leap Up, Psychically Bonded (see below), Psychic Amplifier (see below), Rapid Reaction, Step Aside.

Traits: Dark Sight, From Beyond, Flyer (8), Natural Armour (4), Natural Weapons (Beak), Size (3), Unnatural Agility (+4), Unnatural Perception (+4), Unnatural Senses (100m).

Weapons: Beak (1d10+3 R; Pen 0; Primitive (7)).

Psychically Bonded: A Glimmerwing is treated as a creature that has already undergone the *Ritual of Bonding*, although there

is no need to actually perform the Ritual. For more details on the effects on the Ritual of Bonding, see page 65.

Psychic Amplifier: The sorcerers of the Velklir are capable of channelling their powers through Glimmerwings, extending the reach and potency of their abilities. When casting a Psychic Power, a Heretic may choose to measure the range and line of sight of the Psychic Power from either himself or the Glimmerwing. This choice must be made before the Focus Power Test is made, and the creature must be within the maximum range of the Psychic Power being cast (i.e. the Glimmerwing must be within range of the power first before it can be used to extend the range). If casting the power results in a roll on the Psychic Phenomena Table, the Glimmerwing will suffer the effects rather than the Heretic, but only if the Glimmerwing was used to extend the range and line of sight of the Psychic Power that turn.

RUBRIC MARINE

Thousand Sons Sorcerers often have retinues of Rubric Marines, those mute reminders of the Legion's desperate past in which rampant mutation nearly destroyed them all. A Rubric Marine may be taken as a minion for Thousand Sons Sorcerers with the Minion of Chaos Talent, or other sorcerers with the Mark of Tzeentch and the Greater Minion of Chaos Talent.

Rubric Marine (Elite)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
40	50	65	55	30	20	42	50	--	--

Movement: 4/8/12/-

Wounds: 30

Armour: Legion Power Armour (8 All)

Total TB: 10

Skills: Awareness, Forbidden Lore (The Long War), Intimidate (+10), Linguistics (Low Gothic), Parry.

Talents: Ambidextrous, Bolter Drill, Bulging Biceps, Cold Hearted, Crack Shot, Dead-Eye Shot, Hardy, Rapid Reload, Unarmed Warrior.

Traits: All is Dust...†, Slow and Purposeful††, Unnatural Strength (4), Unnatural Toughness (5).

Weapons: Legion Bolter (Basic; 100m; S/3/-; 1 D10+9 X; Pen 4; Clip 24; Rld Full; Reliable; Warp Weapon; Blast (2).†††)

Gear: Three clips of bolter shells and Tzeentchian Inferno Bolts.

†**All is Dust...**: Rubric Marines are little more than walking suits of armour, their bodies and minds reduced to dust by Ahriman's spell.

A Rubric Marine gains immunity from Fatigue, Fear, Pinning, Poisons, Diseases, Suffocation, most environmental hazards, Stunning, and any mind-influencing psychic effects. However, death results when Damage exceeds the Rubric Marine's wounds. For Loyalty Tests, Rubric Marines use a value of 40.

††**Slow and Purposeful:** Rubric Marines are utterly relentless, calmly striding into the thick of battle with bolters blazing. Rubric Marines may declare Suppressing Fire as a Half Action, however, they are unable to declare a Run Action (included above.)

†††*Legion Bolter includes the effects of the Tzeentchian Inferno Bolts*

GM Note: Rubric Marines also make for excellent NPCs and Adversaries, and can be added to many adventures in which the Heretics are questing for or transporting mysterious tomes, arcane devices, or other items that the Thousand Sons would eagerly seek to acquire.

PSYCHIC POWERS

"From the warp, all blessings flow to us. Through blessing, the warp flows through us."

—Excerpt from Book IV of the Sibylline Incitements

Of the many fell gifts bestowed on the servants of the Ruinous Powers, none so viscerally testify to the might of Chaos as the sorcerer's will made manifest upon reality. Even the hypocritical slaves of the Corpse-God draw on this power, for without it their Imperium would surely wither and perish. Through it, minds can reach across the galaxy from the Segmentum Tempestus to the Ghouls Stars and from the Screaming Vortex to the Hadex Anomaly. Potent psykers scour life from planets and exact their will on the multitude; such is the desire of Chaos.

Powers of those who have aligned with Chaos have a particular essence to them absent from those powers manifested by the weakling Imperium. They are wrought not only from psychic energy but from the strong emotions and great energies of the warp, its daemons, and the Dark Powers. While an Imperial Sanctioned Psyker might mysteriously divine information through his focus and faith in the Corpse-Emperor, the Chaos Psyker accepts litanies of foul truths whispered in his mind by entities too horrific to comprehend.

The following list of new psychic powers provides Heretics with additional tools to utilise on their paths to greatness. These include powers for those devoted to Nurgle and Slaanesh as well as Tzeentch, for the God of Change is akin to patron for all psykers, even those who believe they are opposing him. Included among them are warding powers for each of the aligned power groups and new powers restricted to Thousand Sons Sorcerers. Also presented are biomancy and pyromancy powers available for Heretics and NPCs alike, even those not devoted to Chaos.

UNALIGNED POWERS

For those who have not yet chosen a master from among the Dark Gods or who have decided to embrace Chaos as a whole, the following powers are available. Likewise, those already aligned to a Chaos God may select from these powers as well to fill out their repertoire. Note that two of the following powers, Hex of Decrepitude and Phantom Parry, are prerequisites for more potent versions among the Exalted powers. Heretics should plan accordingly.

BLADE OF BALEFUL MIGHT

Alternate Names: Empyreal Blade, Reaper's Scythe, Staff of Souls

Value: 300xp

Prerequisites: Psy Rating 4, Infamy 30+

Action: Full Action

Focus Power: Difficult (-10) Willpower Test

Range: Self

Sustained: Free Action

Subtype: Concentration



Description: The sorcerer's force weapon exhibits terrifying qualities of destruction and menace. The ritualistic activity required to use this power allows the sorcerer to channel his very soul into the weapon that, in response, crackles in chaotic harmony and changes in form and quality into an engine of slaughter. After completing the ritual forging of his weapon, he may enter the fray alongside Champion and Chosen alike, reaping souls with matching fury.

After making a Focus Power Test, the sorcerer adds Qualities to his force weapon from the following list based on the number of Degrees of Success attained on his Focus Power Test; treat this number like points to be spent on these Qualities. These Qualities are: Flame, Power Field, Razor Sharp, Tainted, and Tearing. Qualities worth two successes include: Crippling (2), Felling (2), Proven (3), Shocking, and Toxic (1). For three successes, the Sorcerer may add the Warp Weapon Quality. Qualities that have a parenthetical may have the bracketed number increased by one via spending an additional success. Finally, the sorcerer may unleash a torrent of force energy on his enemies, sacrificing the benefits of the various qualities acquired through Blade of Baleful Might for a turn to make a ranged attack through the empowered force weapon (note that the weapon retains all the qualities it would normally have such as Force Weapon, Balanced, Unbalanced, etc.). The attack is treated as a normal attack with the Force Weapon, but with a range equal to five times the Psyker's Psy Rating.

PATHS TO POWER

Some of the new powers presented in this book offer additional benefits when used in conjunction with the Paths to Power options introduced in the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook. Players are encouraged to utilise these options to add flavour to their characters.

Corpus Conversion: When using Blade of Baleful Might with the Corpus Conversion Path to Power, the psyker's weapon and soul are forged as one and he may postpone taking the Toughness Damage from Corpus Conversion until he stops maintaining this power. However, every round that he maintains the power he must either make an attack with the weapon or make an effort to engage an opponent if making an attack is not possible. If he fails to do so, the power's effects end and he suffers the Toughness Damage immediately.

BUTCHER'S OFFERING

Alternate Names: Dark Sacrifice

Value: 100xp

Prerequisites: None

Action: Free Action (Special)

Focus Power: Challenging (+0) Willpower Test

Range: Self

Sustained: No

Subtype: Concentration

Description: As the sorcerer cuts through his enemies with unnatural vigour, he takes a moment to make an offering to the Dark Gods in all their glory. With the dead at his feet and his weapon held high, he utters a prayer and sends a soul to its damnation. Should the Dark Gods take notice of his ignoble sacrifice, he can expect a reward for the fruits of his unholy labour. The Dark Gods are fickle, however, and at times have a strange way of responding to their worshipper's offerings.

The Focus Power Test used with this power is a Free Action, made immediately after slaying another in combat. If successful, the sorcerer may select one of the following benefits:

- He gains a +10 bonus to the next Test he rolls.
- He gains the Unnatural Characteristic (2) Trait for any one Characteristic.
- He gains the benefits of the Jaded, Nerves of Steel, and Resistance (Fear) Talents.

Regardless of which option the sorcerer selects, these benefits last no longer than until the end of his next turn. Even though the Focus Power Test is a Free Action, as an additional cost the sorcerer must sacrifice his Reaction for this turn.

Psychic Phenomena: If he fails on his Focus Power Test, he gains the attention of some other entity of the warp—and one that does not care to grant him a boon of any sort. He rolls on the Psychic Phenomena Table and adds +5 to the roll for every Degree of Failure attained on the Focus Power Test.

Sacrifice: If Butcher's Offering is used with the Sacrifice Path to Power, the sorcerer may choose the following benefit instead of those listed above. When making an Extended Test, the sorcerer may add a bonus equal to five times his Psy Rating to all rolls for that Test. This benefit only affects rolls for his next Extended Test and has a duration of 24 hours.

ECHOES OF MALICE

Alternate Names: Swarm of Hate

Value: 400xp

Prerequisites: Psy Rating 4

Action: Half Action

Focus Power: Hard (-20) Willpower Test

Range: 5 metres x Psy Rating radius

Sustained: No

Subtype: Attack, Concentration

Description: The warp is a repository of unfettered emotion, dense with energy ever engaged in a turbulent dance. Among these emotions, the strongest are those that the masses of humanity fear the most: anger, hatred, rage, hopelessness. For the worshippers of Chaos, these emotions must be embraced before they move one further on the path to greatness. A psyker may utilise the resonance of these emotions in his work, causing them to bleed from the warp into the minds of those around him. Thus, his allies rage in battle whilst his enemies struggle in hopelessness.

When activating this power, the psyker designates each creature within the power's radius as either an ally or an enemy (he may choose to designate himself as an ally or to ignore the power's effects altogether). Allies in the radius become enraged and must succeed on a **Challenging (+0) Willpower Test** or they sacrifice their Reaction for the turn (if they have not used it already) and immediately make a Standard Attack against a target of their choice. Enemies within the radius must also succeed on the same test or suffer feelings of crippling defeat. They also lose their Reaction this turn (if they have not used it already) and take a penalty to all Skill and Characteristic Tests equal to five times the psyker's Psy Rating until the start of the psyker's next turn.

HARRIER IMPS

Alternate Names: Warp Flies

Value: 100xp

Prerequisites: None

Action: Half Action

Focus Power: Ordinary (+10) Willpower Test

Range: 25 metres x Psy Rating

Sustained: Free Action

Subtype: Attack, Concentration

Description: Harrier Imps are a swarm of minor daemons that press up against the barrier between reality and the warp that laugh at and harry the poor soul vexed by their presence. Though otherwise harmless, they prove to be quite distracting tricksters that revel in the frustration they cause.

These minor daemons harry the target, preventing him from performing even the most basic of tasks unencumbered. He suffers a -10 to all Tests made while this power is in effect. The imps themselves suffer from two fatal flaws, however—stupidity and cowardice. If the target spends a Half Action and succeeds on an **Ordinary (+10) Intimidate Test**, the imps, unaware that the barrier between the warp and reality protects them, quickly flee, thus ending the power's effects.

HEX OF DECREPITUDE

Alternate Names: Brittle Bones

Value: 400xp

Prerequisites: Psy Rating 5, Cold Hearted

Action: Half Action

Focus Power: Difficult (-10) Willpower Test

Range: 10 metres x Psy Rating

Sustained: No

Subtype: Attack, Concentration

Description: In the warp, time flows according to its own unlogic. Space faring vessels travel the galaxy precisely because of this property, arriving at their destination in a matter of weeks rather than over the course of generations. A powerful psyker may call upon such temporal effects to age his enemies prematurely by manipulating the eddies of the warp.

The target of this power visibly ages as ribbons of light brutally strip him of his youth, taking 1d10 temporary Strength, Toughness, and Agility Damage per Degree of Success on the psyker's Focus Power Test (for example, a result of three Degrees of Successes on the Focus Power Test results in the target taking 3d10 Damage to each of the aforementioned Characteristics). The target of the Hex of Decrepitude may make a **Difficult (-10) Toughness Test** to resist this Damage, reducing the damage dice by one for every Degree of Success he achieves to a minimum of zero. The target's experience deepens as though he had really aged, and he gains a +10 bonus on all Willpower and Intelligence Tests for the next 1d5 rounds. No one may be targeted by Hex of Decrepitude more than once per combat, and creatures that do not age naturally (such as warp entities) are immune to the effects of this power.

PHANTOM PARRY

Alternate Names: Kelhad's Ruse, Emyprean Snare

Value: 400xp

Prerequisites: Psy Rating 4, Warp Sense

Action: Reaction

Focus Power: Opposed Challenging (+0) Willpower Test

Range: 5 metres x Psy Rating

Sustained: No

Subtype: Attack, Concentration

Description: As an enemy sorcerer draws on the warp to fuel a psychic power, the psyker may respond by disturbing the veil with a Phantom Parry, causing his foe's control to falter and allow the warp loose to corrupt the fragile materium. Psychic Phenomena abound from the parry and thus the unbalanced target must centre himself and refocus his concentration.

In response to a target using a psychic power, the psyker and the target make an **Opposed Challenging (+0) Willpower Test** as they psychically grapple. If the psyker succeeds, the target still manifests his power but must make a Psychic Phenomena roll (in addition to any other Psychic Phenomena rolls he would have to make for rolling doubles, Pushing, etc.). For each Degree of Success the psyker attained on his Focus Power Test, add a +5 to all Psychic Phenomena rolls the target makes this turn. For the next 1d5 turns, the target suffers a -5 penalty to all Focus Power Tests unless he spends a Half Action to refocus his concentration. If the target succeeds in the Opposed Willpower Test, Phantom Parry has no effect and he may use his powers normally.

Psychic Phenomena: In addition to any other rolls the target may make on the Psychic Phenomena Table this turn, he also triggers the Warp Ghosts effect if he rolls doubles on his Focus Power Test. For example, a roll of 22 results in both the Spoilage and Warp Ghosts effects. Should the target trigger Warp Ghosts multiple times, the effects are not cumulative.

UMBRAL HALO [CORRUPTION]

Alternate Names: Dark Star

Value: 200xp

Prerequisites: Corruption 30+

Action: Half Action

Focus Power: Challenging (+0) Corruption Test

Range: 5 metres x Psy Rating radius

Sustained: Half Action

Subtype: Attack, Concentration

Description: The psyker summons a black halo around his head, wrought from his own corrupt soul. All light flows towards this shadow-well in a ghostly processional, only to be consumed in the halo's umbral wrath. As the light dies, it leaves behind the phantoms of its passing in the form of haunting whispers, faint apparitions, and an unnatural coldness that grips those within it in a pall of fear.

Within the radius of this power's effect, if the area is not already in Darkness, reduce the lighting by one step (from Bright to Shadow or from Shadow to Darkness). The user does not suffer from any ill effects due to the reduced lighting and the radius follows him everywhere he moves. Additionally, all creatures except the user must make a Test against **Fear (2)** when entering the radius while the power is active.

WARP VORTEX

Alternate Names: Gravity Well

Value: 200xp

Prerequisites: Psy Rating 2

Action: Half Action

Focus Power: Challenging (+0) Willpower Test

Range: 25 metres x Psy Rating

Sustained: Half Action

Subtype: Concentration

Description: A vortex of energy emerges to collect all matter within its core; men fall towards it as air rushes past and a small sphere of debris forms at its devastating centre.

The psyker designates a point on the ground within range of this power as the origin of the Warp Vortex. If he succeeds on his Focus Power Test, all creatures within a number of metres equal to the psyker's Psy Rating must make a **Challenging (+0) Toughness Test** or fall prone and slide two metres in the direction of the vortex. Anyone reaching the centre suffers 2d10 I Damage which may be mitigated as normal. This effect occurs on each turn the psyker chooses to maintain it. A creature attempting to move away from the vortex must make a **Challenging (+0) Agility Test**. If he fails the Test, he may still move but must remain at the same distance or less from the vortex. Creatures making ranged attacks that travel through this area suffer a -20 penalty on their Ballistic Tests.

NURGLE POWERS

Powers of disease and pestilence are the Lord or Decay's purview. The new powers below include options that corrupt the flesh of the living, the dead, and even inorganic matter, and he that wishes to continue down the path of Nurgle worship should consider them for his arsenal. Note that all Toughness Tests made to resist an Opposed Focus Power Test for a Nurgle power are considered to be tests to resist a poison or disease, and consequently any Talents, Traits, or special abilities that grant bonuses to resist poison or disease grant their usual bonuses.

ACIDIUM VITAE

Alternate Names: Toxic Blood

Value: 300xp

Prerequisites: Aligned Nurgle, Psy Rating 4

Action: Half Action

Focus Power: Hard (-20) Willpower Test

Range: Self

Sustained: No

Subtype: Concentration

Description: The psyker's very blood and breath course with poison and disease, punishing his enemies for daring to attack him. His skin takes on a sickly colour, his veins turn green, and his breath reeks of decay. These cosmetic effects pale beside the suffering inflicted by his caustic blood as it splatters out from his wounds.

While Acidium Vitae is in effect, if the psyker suffers any Damage from Impact, Rending, or Explosive attacks, or other Damage that causes bleeding, the resulting blood spray covers his enemies and eats away at their flesh. After a triggering attack resolves, all creatures within three metres of the psyker must make a **Difficult (-10) Agility Test** or take 1d10 E Damage, Pen 5, with the Toxic (1) Quality. Creatures that attack the psyker with natural melee attacks (from teeth, claws, or the like) also take this damage in the same way, ignoring Armour but not Toughness Bonuses. This effect lasts for a number of rounds equal to the psyker's Psy Rating and the psyker himself is immune to the effects of this power.

BRAIN FEVER

Alternate Names: Thought Burden

Value: 100xp

Prerequisites: Aligned Nurgle

Action: Half Action

Focus Power: Difficult (-10) Willpower Test

Range: 5 metres x Psy Rating

Sustained: No

Subtype: Attack, Concentration

Description: A rapidly progressing fever takes the target of this power, rendering him unable to think and slow to respond. Affected warriors find it difficult to stand defiant in the face of battle and struggle to take in war's chaotic events. Psykers suffering the Brain Fever battle to draw on even the most basic unholy powers of the Dark Gods. This tool indirectly but sufficiently turns the tide of battle when cunningly applied to strategic targets.

The target of this power suffers a level of Fatigue and must make a **Challenging (+0) Willpower Test** as a Free Action whenever attempting to perform a Reaction or an Action with the Concentration Subtype. If the target succeeds on this Test, he may perform the Action normally. If he fails, he loses the Action entirely. However, he may spend any other Actions he chooses as long as he has any left to spend for that round. Additionally, whenever the target fails a Willpower Test, he suffers a level of Fatigue. Brain Fever lasts for a number of rounds equal to the Heretic's Psy Rating.

CORPSE BURST

Alternate Names: Bone Shrapnel

Value: 300xp

Prerequisites: Aligned Nurgle, Psy Rating 4

Action: Half Action

Focus Power: Challenging (+0) Willpower Test

Range: 30 metres

Sustained: No

Subtype: Attack, Concentration

Description: Of the more resourceful of Nurgle's followers are those sorcerers who have mastered the art of the Corpse Burst. As the armies of Chaos lay waste to their enemies, littering the war-plains with the bodies of the dead, disgusting eruptions of blood and bone, rot and disease cut through the soft skin of the Corpse-Emperor's children.

This power emits a Psychic Blast centred on the body of a dead creature of adult human size or larger. It deals 1d10 + Psy Rating Rending Damage and has the Toxic (2), Tearing, and Pinning Qualities. The radius of the blast is a number of metres equal to the Psy Rating of the psyker. All within line of sight to the explosion must make a Fear (2) Test, except the psyker himself.

DIRGE OF DECAY

Alternate Names: Blightsong

Value: 400xp

Prerequisites: Aligned Nurgle, Disturbing Voice, Psy Rating 4

Action: Half Action

Focus Power: Difficult (-10) Willpower Test

Range: 5 metres x Psy Rating

Sustained: Half Action

Subtype: Attack, Concentration

Description: As the devotee of Nurgle intones the Dirge of Decay, wounded combatants howl in a chorus as rot and infection take them. As the psyker utters the first verses, fresh wounds begin to pus, only to become discoloured and rank in the rising crescendo. At the apex, an infection takes hold that rapidly devours muscle, bone, and organ until nothing is left but a desiccated husk.

On the turn the psyker manifests Dirge of Decay, all creatures who have suffered Damage within range must make a **Challenging (+0) Toughness Test** or immediately suffer an additional amount of Rending Damage equal to the sorcerer's Psy Rating. For every turn that the sorcerer maintains the power, all creatures who have suffered damage within range must make a **Challenging (+0) Toughness Test** or suffer one additional point of Rending Damage. Armour and Toughness

do not reduce Damage caused by this power. Creatures who have not suffered any damage are unaffected by this power (that is, until or unless they suffer damage otherwise). Devotees of Nurgle ignore the effects of this power.

Blasphemous Incantation: When Dirge of Decay is used with the Blasphemous Incantation Path to Power, the sorcerer may choose to increase the action to sustain it to a Full Action (once this decision is made, it cannot be changed until he uses this power again). If he does, on every turn that the sorcerer maintains the power he can make an attack against any one creature currently suffering under its effects. This attack requires a **Challenging (+0) Willpower Test** and deals 1d10+6 Rending Damage and has the Toxic (2) Quality.

TENDRILS OF CORROSION

Alternate Names: Rusting Curse, The Red Pestilence

Value: 300xp

Prerequisites: Aligned Nurgle, Tech-Use Skill

Action: Half Action

Focus Power: Challenging (+0) Willpower Test

Range: 20 metres

Sustained: No

Subtype: Attack, Concentration

Description: Though decomposition and disease of the body are more recognisably the work of the Lord of Decay, corrosion and entropy in their broadest form are also his purview. Through this power, rust coloured Tendrils of Corrosion caress materials of a more apparently timeless sort than flesh such as plasteel, adamantium, and ceramite. Corroded but not worthless, items suffering from Tendrils of Corrosion malfunction; data-slate screens crackle with interference, power weapons become no better than primitive blades, and lasguns jam with frequency.

The sorcerer targets a single weapon, piece of armour, or item of equipment within range and makes a Focus Power Test. If successful, Tendrils of Corrosion causes damage to the item and impairs its functioning. Melee weapons are reduced to Poor Craftmanship, lose the Balanced, Force, and Power Field Qualities (if present), and gain the Primitive (6) and Unbalanced Qualities. Ranged weapons are reduced to Poor Craftmanship, lose the Accurate, Maximal, and Reliable Qualities (if present), and gain the Inaccurate and Unreliable Qualities. All armour targeted by Tendrils of Corrosion suffers a -2 penalty to its AP (to a minimum of 0). All Tests using any gear affected by this power are taken with a -10 penalty (such as the Test for protection rating with a force field or an Awareness Test made with an auspex).

The effects of this power are reversible by someone capable of doing basic maintenance and repairs to the equipment, such as a Heretek. This requires a few minutes of time and attention and so must be dealt with outside of combat but requires no Test.



VILE CONTAGION [CORRUPTION]

Alternate Names: Curse of Velaj

Value: 400xp

Prerequisites: Mark of Nurgle, Nurgle's Rot

Action: Half Action

Focus Power: Difficult (-10) Corruption Test

Range: Special

Sustained: Free Action (Special)

Subtype: Concentration

Description: Nurgle's Rot spreads across the battlefield adding disease to bloodshed as far as the eye can see. However, the survival of any disease requires new hosts for incubation and as paths of transmission. Fortunately for the Master of Pestilence, Nurgle's Rot spreads vigourously when fresh flesh is available and susceptible to its ravages. The Devotee of Nurgle, lured in and empowered by the cries of suffering his corruption inflicts, extends his consciousness through the miasma, spreading the disease along with it. Legends tell of sorcerers using this spell to gain a pyrrhic victory when defeat seems imminent.

While maintaining Nurgle's Rot, the psyker may activate Vile Contagion. He chooses one target that has taken damage from Nurgle's Rot plus an additional target for every two Degrees of Success beyond the first on his Focus Power Test. He adds a radius, centred on the target or targets equal to five metres times his Psy Rating, to the manifestation of Nurgle's Rot that he is already maintaining (so as to add to the original radius centred on himself). Apply the effects of Nurgle's Rot

once only (regardless if they fall under both radii or just the radii of Vile Contagion) to each victim that falls within the various radii of Nurgle's Rot and Vile Contagion. This power is maintained for as long as he continues to maintain Nurgle's Rot. Note that maintaining Vile Contagion while maintaining Nurgle's Rot still counts as maintaining two powers.

WARD OF WORMS

Alternate Names: Curse of the Writhing World

Value: 500xp

Prerequisites: Aligned Nurgle, Psy Rating 5, Infamy 40+

Action: Half Action

Focus Power: Difficult (-10) Willpower Test

Range: Self

Sustained: No

Subtype: Attack, Concentration

Description: Putrid, olive green worms continually squirm from the mouth, nose, and ears of the sorcerer and writhe about his body covering his armour in necrotic slime. When an enemy strikes him, the worms leap from sorcerer to his attacker, eating voraciously at the poor fool's exposed flesh. When particularly inspired by his own foulness, he may deliver the onslaught of worms to devour an enemy. Should he succeed in destroying the wretched soul, the worms animate the corpse at his command.

Ward of Worms lasts for a number of rounds equal to the psyker's Psy Rating. While active, he gains an additional Reaction option as described in **Worm Infestation** below. Also, as a Half Action the psyker may prematurely end the effect to make a special attack, unleashing a torrent of worms to slay an enemy and, if successful, turn that enemy into a puppet of worm infested flesh. To make the attack, he must succeed on a **Difficult (-10) Willpower Test**. This attack is a Psychic Storm, has a range of five times the psyker's Psy Rating and deals 1d10 + Psy Rating Rending Damage, Pen 5, and the Toxic (2) and Tearing Qualities. If all hits from this attack are focussed on one target and that target dies due to this attack, his corpse becomes infested with worms. These worms now act as the corpse's musculature and it becomes a puppet for the caster to manipulate. On each of the psyker's turns, as a Free Action he may command the puppet to make a Standard Attack or a Half Move Action. The puppet is essentially dead, has no Psy Rating, and cannot do anything else that a living creature may normally do such as speak or concentrate; his actions are limited to standing in place or performing basic commands. Its characteristics are half the original target's values (rounded up) and does not benefit from any Skills or Talents. The worm-infested corpse has a total of five Wounds, does not benefit from healing, and falls into a bloody, amorphous heap on the ground after 1d5 + Psy Rating rounds of false life.

Worm Infestation

Type: Reaction

Subtype: Attack, Melee

Whenever an enemy makes a melee attack against a creature protected by Ward of Worms, the creature may respond with this reaction after the triggering attack has resolved. To do so, the character makes a **Challenging (+0) Willpower Test**. If successful, a horde of worms leaps from his extended arm

onto the target to devour his flesh. This attack deals 1d10 R, Pen 5 Damage and has the Toxic (0) and Crippling (2) Qualities. Armour does not reduce Damage from this attack unless it is environmentally sealed as the worms seek out any opening in the target's defences. The target may spend a Full Round Action to remove the Crippling effect.

SLAANESH POWERS

Desire and lust, pleasure and the escalation of sensations of all kinds to their peaks are embodied by the debauched Prince of Chaos. The following new powers reflect these values and further one on his path in the worship of Slaanesh.

CEDRON'S TWIN

Alternate Names: Doubling Curse

Value: 250xp

Prerequisites: Aligned Slaanesh, Fellowship 40+

Action: Full Action

Focus Power: Difficult (-10) Willpower Test

Range: Self

Sustained: Free

Subtype: Concentration

Description: The power of the warp to shape the desires of the psychically attuned have few limits. Thus, the vanity of man, and his desire to transcend his reality in favour of his ideal has already been created in the form of Cedron's Twin. This power allows the psyker to make a double of himself to fool his enemies and erstwhile allies alike. However, the double betrays the psyker, for it reflects the psyker's ideal self and not his true form.

This power allows the psyker to produce an illusory double of himself, available on all sensory registers. In order to fool others as to which is real and which is the double, the psyker must control his own ego and make a **Hard (-20) Willpower Test**. For each Degree of Success, he gains a +10 bonus on Deceive Tests to fool onlookers. Likewise, each Degree of Failure results in a -10 penalty to those same Tests due to the fact that the double has qualities that reflect the psyker's ideal self and thus the psyker pales in comparison. The psyker is in complete control of the double and may perform any mundane actions the psyker normally can unless the action requires a Test and is not of a social nature. Thus, the double may not attack, manifest powers, or administer first aid, but it may deceive, command, or woo. The psyker makes all Tests on the double's behalf. He may maintain this power for as long as he can concentrate and the double remains within his view. The double immediately disappears if it takes any Damage or is targeted by a successful attack of any sort.

Psychic Phenomena: The nature of man's desire to become his very ideal means that he is prone to taking risks in that pursuit that he would otherwise avoid. If he should have to roll for Psychic Phenomena, modify that roll in an equal and opposite proportion to the bonus or penalty to Deceive Tests received from this power. For example, if he gained three Degrees of Failure on his **Hard (-20) Willpower Test**, then he adds 30 to his Psychic Phenomena roll.

CELERITOUS SENSE

Alternate Names: Oculan Blessing

Value: 400xp

Prerequisites: Aligned Slaanesh, Psy Rating 4, Perception 40+, Lightning Reflexes

Action: Half Action

Focus Power: Challenging (+0) Willpower Test

Range: Self

Sustained: Free Action

Subtype: Concentration

Description: The sorcerer hones his senses, directing the flows of light and sound such that he can take in every nuanced detail. He can understand several conversations at once, pick out an elusive enemy from a crowd, or anticipate the movements of his enemies so as to better respond and retaliate. So fine are his senses that no glint of light or murmur of sound escapes him. To his enemies, he is an angel of death able to move and respond with unnatural speed.

While active, this power grants the following bonuses and abilities: the caster gains a bonus to Perception and Evasion (Dodge and Parry) Tests equal to five times his Psy Rating; he now inflicts Zealous Hatred on a roll of 9 or 10; and his perceptions detect stimuli either too insignificant to normally be noticed (i.e. whispered words from hundreds of metres away or individual blades on a rapidly spinning propeller) or emitted amidst a chaos of other stimuli (such as immediately picking out a specific location on a complex map, spotting a specific individual amidst a crowd of thousands, or clearly listening to a conversation in the midst of a great battle). The bounds of this last effect are subject to the GM's judgement and creative applications.

PANGS OF MISERY

Alternate Names: Saladun's Obediencer

Value: 300xp

Prerequisites: Aligned Slaanesh, Psy Rating 4, Toughness 40+

Action: Half Action

Focus Power: Difficult (-10) Willpower Test

Range: 10 metres x Psy Rating

Sustained: Half Action

Subtype: Attack, Concentration

Description: The Heretic reaches deeply through the target's mind and burrows into his pain centres. There he leaves a seed of energy that he nurtures until it matures into a sophisticated torture device. The victim suffers seemingly random and sudden but excruciating waves of pain. So terrible are these pangs that the victim risks falling unconscious if he cannot steel himself against them.

Initiating this power simply requires that the psyker make a Focus Power Test, at which time an invisible sliver of energy penetrates the target's mind. Up to once per round, after any of the target's actions have fully resolved (including Reactions) the psyker may invigorate the energetic sliver, sending excruciating misery throughout the target's body. The psyker makes a **Challenging (+0) Willpower Test** opposed by the target's **Challenging (+0) Toughness Test**. Should the psyker win, the target suffers 2d10 temporary

A NOTE TO GMs ON PSYCHIC POWERS AND STORYTELLING

Most experienced GMs know that sometimes a player can use a power, ability, or resource provided for them in a way that foils a plot or does away with an enemy much too easily. The Celeritous Sense power presented here, for example, may give a player an edge that the GM did not expect and that might take the story in a direction that ruins the enjoyment for everyone. For example, if the Heretics run across two NPCs having a secret meeting and the point is to show the Heretics the meeting but not reveal what the NPCs have to say, the GM can have the fickle nature of Chaos intervene in the effects of the Celeritous Sense power, revealing not the content of the conversation but some other bit of plot-worthy or empowering information. Perhaps the Heretic hears the conversation but encoded by a force of Chaos that wishes to see the NPC's work done. However, the Heretic simultaneously discovers a weakness in one of the NPC's defences, something to put to use when the Heretics confront him in combat later on. That way, the Heretic is rewarded for using his resources, the plot moves forward, and game balance remains intact.

Willpower Damage, gains a level of Fatigue, and is treated as though hit by a weapon with the Shocking Quality. After a number of turns equal the psyker's Psy Rating, the sliver dissipates and the power ends.

SERPENT'S WARD

Alternate Names: Sxelthx's Scales

Value: 500xp

Prerequisites: Aligned Slaanesh, Psy Rating 5, Infamy 40+

Action: Half Action

Focus Power: Difficult (-10) Willpower Test

Range: Self

Sustained: No

Subtype: Attack, Concentration

Description: This beguiling ward gifts the psyker with an alluring gaze, causing enemies to forget themselves and the dangers about them. Not only his eyes but also his skin undergoes a serpentine change, becoming loose, scaly, and able to shed at his command.

Serpent's Ward lasts for a number of rounds equal to the psyker's Psy Rating. While active, he gains an additional Reaction option as described in **Charmer's Gaze** on page 51. Furthermore, the Heretic may spend a Half Action to prematurely end the duration of this power and shed his skin—even his armour and weaponry seem to slough off a skin of their own as part of this manoeuvre. The smooth, shed skin leaves behind any shrapnel, barbs, or flames that may have plagued the psyker, ending Grappling and Crippling effects and any damage caused from being set on fire. Furthermore, he may make a Half Move as a Free Action. This movement does not provoke attacks from opponents, even if he was engaged with them.



Charmer's Gaze

Type: Reaction

Subtype: Attack

When targeted by either a melee or ranged attack, a creature protected by the Serpent's Ward power may use this Reaction in response. After the triggering attack has been resolved, the warded creature may attack the triggering enemy by making a **Challenging (+0) Willpower Test**. If successful, he stuns the target until the end of that target's next turn. Targets of this power must have line of sight and have the ability to see the protected creature (for instance, blind creatures are immune to Charmer's Gaze).

THE SIX BLADES OF PROSEPHERON

Alternate Names: One Thousand and One Knives

Value: 400xp

Prerequisites: Aligned Slaanesh, Agility 50+, Lightning Attack, Two-Weapon Wielder

Action: Half Action

Focus Power: Hard (-20) Willpower Test

Range: Self

Sustained: No

Subtype: Concentration

Description: To suffer defeat at the hands of the Six Blades of Prosepheron at least makes for a quick, if painful, death. The psyker sheathes the air in a cloak of silver and red as his blades cut bodies with incalculable speed. Only those with the luxury of training in both martial skills and the gifts of the warp may master this uncanny feat.

The psyker spends a moment to focus his skill with his weapons of choice and then unleashes a torrent of attacks. While this power is active, he must make two Lightning Attacks on each turn (thus spending both of his Half Actions) but rather than taking the -10 to each attack, he gains a bonus to the attacks equal to five times the number of successes scored on his Focus Power Test. He must wield at least two weapons whilst using this power and continue only to use Reactions and spend Half Actions making Lightning Attacks. The effects of this power last for a number of rounds equal to the psyker's Psy Rating or until he chooses not to make a Lightning Attack, whichever comes sooner. As soon as the power ends, the psyker suffers 1d5 levels of Fatigue. Note normally making two Lightning Attacks would be impossible, but here is permissible.

Psychic Phenomena: When a psyker manifesting the Six Blades of Prosepheron triggers Psychic Phenomena, tiny pain spirit warp entities emerge to feed on the suffering of wounded combatants. All Heavily Damaged creatures within 30 metres of the psyker take one level of Fatigue as they are suddenly shot through with pain.

UNNATURAL OBSESSION [CORRUPTION]

Alternate Names: Unyielding Gaze of Slaanesh

Value: 300xp

Prerequisites: Aligned Slaanesh, Psy Rating 3, Fellowship 40+

Action: Half Action

Focus Power: Challenging (+0) Corruption Test

Range: 5 metres x Psy Rating

Sustained: Half Action

Subtype: Concentration

Description: The subject of this power loses all sense of reality and becomes obsessively and irrationally devoted to the psyker. Any who would raise a hand against the psyker can expect to feel the victim's retributive wrath, even if previously they had considered one another allies. When the psyker is not endangered, the subject lowers his head in deference, awestruck and unable to speak.

The targeted creature makes a **Challenging (+0) Willpower Test** opposed to the psyker's Focus Power Test. If he fails, he may not attack the psyker and takes a -10 penalty to all Tests as a result of being distracted by the Heretic's seeming greatness. The target attacks anyone who obviously attempts to harm the psyker and ignores the -10 penalty from this power when doing so. Otherwise, the target may act freely as long as the psyker is not in danger.

TZEENTCH POWERS

The Changer of Ways grants his supplicants powers of deceit, fate, forbidden knowledge, and, not least among them, transmutation. Those wishing to deepen their devotion to Tzeentch should explore the new powers listed below.

ÆTHER WORM

Alternate Names: Cerebral Paracyte

Value: 400xp

Prerequisites: Aligned Tzeentch, Psy Rating 5, Mindsourge

Action: Half Action

Focus Power: Challenging (+0) Willpower Test

Range: 20 metres x Psy Rating

Sustained: No

Subtype: Concentration

Description: The Master of Plots dines off of the webs of mistrust and errors in faith engendered by those who conspire and politic throughout the galaxy. In such environs, one can never be sure who or what fights on his side and who or what deceives him. Though not the perfect defence, the Æther Worm created many centuries ago on the planet of Q'sal has played its role in the machinations of many a magister immaterial. As with many ideas having originated on that world, magisters from all three cities lay claim to the Æther Worm's invention.

This psychically implanted parasite burrows deep into the mind of its host and infects it in the most peculiar way. At first it appears as a boon, strengthening the host's mind against the telepathic invasions of enemy psykers whilst bolstering his psychic powers. However, the Æther Worm serves the sorcerer master who implanted it, giving him privileged access to the host's mind.

Prior to activating this power, the sorcerer may choose to hide both the nature and the target of the power by making a **Challenging (+0) Deceive Test** opposed by a **Challenging (+0) Psyniscience Test** of any present psykers able to see the sorcerer manifest this power. The sorcerer then makes his Focus Power Test and, if successful, implants an Æther Worm in the target's psyche. The worm remains in place for a number of days equal to the manifest's Psy Rating. The target may attempt a **Difficult (-10) Willpower Test** to expel the worm once per day, assuming he knows it is there. While host to the Æther Worm, the target imposes a -20 penalty to all Focus Power Tests made by enemy psykers targeting him with powers from the Telepathy discipline or powers that directly affect the mind (such as the Mindsourge power from the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook). Also, the target gains a +5 bonus to all Focus Power Tests made to manifest his own powers (assuming he has the ability to use psychic powers in the first place). The Æther Worm's true allegiance lies with its master and thus, with regard to the sorcerer that implanted it, this power has a different effect. The original caster has increased access to the target's mind and ignores the target's defences against Telepathy and mind affecting powers. If he is trained in it, he may use the Mind Probe power (from the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook) subtly, though with a **Routine (+20) Willpower Test** for his opposed Focus Power Test rather than a **Hard (-20) Willpower Test**. Also, any attacks the psyker makes that directly affect the target's mind (such as the Mindsourge power) gain a bonus to damage

equal to the sorcerer's Psy Rating. Finally, the target must make a **Hard (-20) Willpower Test** in order to target the sorcerer with any psychic power, as the Æther Worm cannot allow its host to harm its master. If the host fails to target the sorcerer, he may choose a new target or a new action instead.

BEFUDDLING CURSE

Alternate Names: The Perplexus

Value: 250xp

Prerequisites: Aligned Tzeentch, Psy Rating 3

Action: Half Action

Focus Power: Challenging (+0) Willpower Test

Range: 10 metres x Psy Rating

Sustained: No

Subtype: Attack, Concentration

Description: A multihued bolt of light leaps from the sorcerer and strikes the target with no apparent effect. Shortly after receiving the strike, the victim begins to act strangely, muttering to himself, screaming at imaginary enemies, or even taking a chainsword to his own leg against the infestations rooted there.

Treat the target of this power as though struck by a weapon with the Hallucinogenic (X) Quality, where X is equal to the sorcerer's Psy Rating. The target does not receive the +20 bonus to his Toughness Test for having a respirator or other protective equipment. If the sorcerer rolls five or more Degrees of Success on his Focus Power Test, the target must make a **Challenging (+0) Willpower Test** or suffer a Disorder (see the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook pages 278-279 for more information on Disorders).

BLESSING OF MAGNUS

Alternate Names: The Red Boon, The Ninth Syllebrum

Value: 400xp

Prerequisites: Aligned Tzeentch, Psy Rating 4, Thousand Sons Sorcerer

Action: Half Action

Focus Power: Difficult (+0) Willpower Test

Range: Self

Sustained: Free Action

Subtype: Concentration

Description: The Thousand Sons have survived many a difficult trial in the past ten thousand years they have plied the galaxy. The Blessing of Magnus testifies to this as it bolsters their will in the face of great perils.

The Thousand Sons Sorcerer gains the following benefits while using this power:

- He gains a bonus to all Willpower Tests equal to five times his Psy Rating.
- He may spend a Free Action once per turn to gain the benefits of Aiming (as though he had spent a Half Action). This ability only affects attacks made with force weapons.
- He resists psychic powers more easily. Whenever targeted by a psychic power, he may make a **Hard (-20) Willpower Test** as a Reaction; if he succeeds, the power automatically fails.

The sorcerer must suffer from the Heavily Damaged condition in order to activate or maintain this power.

FATE LOOM [CORRUPTION]

Alternate Names: The Biker's Game, Ahriman's Gambit

Value: 500xp

Prerequisites: Aligned Tzeentch, Psy Rating 6, Corruption 40+, Infamy 40+

Action: Half Action

Focus Power: Hard (-20) Corruption Test

Range: Self

Sustained: No

Subtype: Concentration

Description: Sorcerers use this power as a last ditch effort by forcing fate's hand to accomplish goals that would otherwise be impossible. When the spell has done its work, however, fate has its due and revisits the sorcerer with equal and opposite force.

Fate Loom provides the sorcerer with three benefits that take effect immediately and last for 1d5 + Psy Rating Rounds and a number of drawbacks which occur when these benefits end. For the duration of this power, the sorcerer gains a +20 on all Toughness and Willpower Tests and also a +20 on Tests of one other Characteristic of his choice, decided upon activating this power. If at no other time, now he must prove himself one among the most infamous; the sorcerer regains all Infamy Points spent this session and may spend as many of them as he likes, even if that means spending more than normally allowed per session. Finally, he is bolstered by the necessity of accomplishing his goal; the sorcerer immediately heals 1d5 Wounds and any Critical Damage (though the effects of any Critical Damage or Critical Hits are not removed). When these effects end, he loses all unused Infamy Points, increases his Damage total to equal his Wounds, and suffers 1d5 levels of Fatigue as fate rights itself and restores the sorcerer to his rightful place in Tzeentch's grand scheme.

INCENDIARY OF TZEENTCH

Alternate Names: Sorcerer's Brand

Value: 300xp

Prerequisites: Aligned Tzeentch, Psy Rating 2, Thousand Sons Sorcerer

Action: Half Action

Focus Power: Challenging (+0) Willpower Test

Range: Touch

Sustained: No

Subtype: Concentration

Description: These sorcerous shells race towards their enemies in blue-white fire, exploding on impact, and not only damage the flesh but the spirit itself in unholy flame.

Incendiary of Tzeentch enhances one shell of standard ammunition designed for Solid Projectile Weapons (only those without the Primitive Quality) and Bolt Weapons. The enhanced ammunition gains the Warp Weapon and Blast (2) Qualities. If the sorcerer rolled five or more successes on the Focus Power Test to use this power, the ammunition also gains the Tainted Quality, using his Corruption Bonus to determine the additional Damage dealt. The shell marks its target—all psychic powers targeting the individual hit during this combat with an Incendiary of Tzeentch gain a +10 on their Focus Power Tests. Furthermore, should the target manifest any psychic powers, all Psychic Phenomena rolls he triggers take a +20. The shell remains enhanced for a period of one hour before returning to its normal state.

LABYRINTHINE CONUNDRUM

Alternate Names: Deceiver's Maze, Thought Cage

Value: 300xp

Prerequisites: Aligned Tzeentch, Psy Rating 4, Intelligence 50+, Logic (Known)

Action: Half Action

Focus Power: Hard (-20) Willpower Test

Range: 20 metres x Psy Rating

Sustained: No

Subtype: Concentration

Description: The power infects the target's mind, weighing down his thoughts and possibly disabling his thinking altogether as he attempts to solve an insolvable enigma. Either he succeeds in the only way he can, by realising the problem cannot be solved, or he succumbs to the impossibility and falls into a coma.

The psyker implants an all-consuming mystery in the psyche of the target. At the start of each of the target's turns, he must succeed on a **Challenging (+0) Intelligence Test** (or a **Challenging (+0) Logic Test** if he is trained in that Skill) or suffer 1d10 temporary Intelligence Damage and be stunned until the start of his next turn. The Focus Power Test made to initiate this power imposes a penalty on these Intelligence and Logic Tests equal to -5 times the Degrees of Success he achieves. The effects of the power end when either the target succeeds on his Intelligence (or Logic) Test or is reduced to a zero Intelligence.

Blasphemous Incantation: The psyker utters mistruths to further bewilder the target. When used with the Blasphemous Incantation Path to Power, Labyrinthine Conundrum deals 2d10 temporary Intelligence Damage instead of 1d10.





MASK OF DECEIT

Alternate Names: Nine Faced Lie

Value: 300xp

Prerequisites: Aligned Tzeentch, Psy Rating 4, Fellowship 40+

Action: Full Action

Focus Power: Special, see description

Range: Self

Sustained: No

Subtype: Concentration

Description: The Great Conspirator constructed every worthwhile tool in the machinations of politics, some mundane, and others feats of legendary power. Among the latter is the Mask of Deceit, otherwise known as the Nine Faced Lie. The occasion arises, not uncommonly, when a Sorcerer would prefer to appear as someone else—perhaps appearing as a powerful warlord to issue commands to his enemies or as a weakling of no significance to better blend in with the masses of Corpse-God worshipping slaves. In any case, a cunning devotee of Tzeentch makes this power a standard within his repertoire.

This power allows the sorcerer to take the form of another specific person, of the same species, for a short period of time and with some effort at maintenance. The Focus Power Test made to initiate this power is a Willpower Test that has an attendant Difficulty as shown on **Table 2-5: Mask of Deceit Difficulty**. If the sorcerer succeeds on the Test, he appears in every way as the person in question although clothing and equipment are not altered. In the event that the new form differs significantly from his own, new clothing may be necessary. While in this new form, the sorcerer may not use any abilities or powers specific to the new form; the change is merely cosmetic. This power lasts for a number of minutes equal to the sorcerer's Psy Rating at which point he must either return to his natural form or make a new Focus Power Test at a -10 penalty as a Free Action. If the Test is successful, he continues the ruse seamlessly. If the new check fails, the sorcerer suffers a mutation from **Table 9-1: Gifts of the Gods** on page 291 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook and, otherwise, returns to his natural form. This roll lasts for 1d5 rounds and cannot be exchanged for a Reward of Tzeentch.

TABLE 2-5: MASK OF DECEIT DIFFICULTY

Difficulty	Familiarity with Target
Difficult (-10)	Intimately Familiar: The Heretic and the subject see and interact with each other every day.
Very Hard (-30)	Familiar: The Heretic and the subject interact occasionally.
Punishing (-50)	Acquainted: The Heretic and subject have only met recently.

STORM OF CHANGE

Alternate Names: Empyrean Maelstrom

Value: 500xp

Prerequisites: Mark of Tzeentch, Willpower 50+, Psy Rating 5

Action: Full Action

Focus Power: Challenging (+0) Willpower Test

Range: 25 metres x Psy Rating

Sustained: No

Subtype: Attack, Concentration

Description: The psyker summons an army of aerial fire to descend on his enemies. Engulfed in these unnatural, chromatic, and reality altering flames, damned souls cry in misery as those yet living desperately grasp for a way out and to maintain integrity of form. These flames sear both the mind and the body, forcing transmutations of both and leaving the galaxy forever altered.

Storm of Change is a Psychic Blast with a radius measured in metres based on the manifesting psyker's Psy Rating. All creatures within this radius take 2d10 + 7 Energy Damage, Pen 9, that has the Felling (Psy Rating) Quality. Additionally, if the attack inflicts Zealous Hatred on any target, that target suffers a random Gift of the Gods (see page 290 from the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook)—at the GM's discretion, minor NPCs or adversaries can simply be transformed into a mewling Chaos Spawn, effectively killing them. Creatures aligned to one of the Dark Gods may not roll for Rewards of the Dark Gods instead.

WARP-FLAME WARD

Alternate Names: Changer's Threat

Value: 500xp

Prerequisites: Aligned Tzeentch, Psy Rating 5, Infamy 40+

Action: Half Action

Focus Power: Difficult (-10) Willpower Test

Range: Self

Sustained: No

Subtype: Attack, Concentration

Description: The psyker calls on the Changer of Ways to wrap his form in arcane energies. Tendrils of these multihued flames orbit the sorcerer in erratic paths, eager to engulf those who stand between him and glory.

Warpflame Ward lasts for a number of rounds equal to the psyker's Psy Rating. While active, he gains an additional Reaction option as described in **Lash of Warpflame** on page 55. In addition, he may spend a Half Action to end the duration of this power prematurely to make a special attack. This attack is a Psychic Blast centred on the warded psyker (he is immune to the blast's effects), has a radius equal to five plus the psyker's Psy Rating, and requires a **Difficult (-10) Willpower Test** to initiate. This eruption of warpflame deals 1d10 + Psy Rating Energy Damage, Pen 5, and the Flaming and Felling (2) Qualities. Any creatures suffering Zealous Hatred from this power must make a **Challenging (+0) Toughness Test** or suffer a random Gift of the Gods (see page 290 in the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook). At the GM's discretion, minor NPCs or adversaries may simply become harmless but disgusting Chaos Spawn.

Lash of Warpflame

Type: Reaction

Subtype: Attack, Melee

When targeted by a melee attack, the creature protected by Warpflame Ward may use this Reaction after the triggering attack has resolved. Warpflame engulfs the target with a successful **Challenging (+0) Willpower Test**, dealing 1d10 + Psy Rating Energy Damage, Pen 5, and the Flame Quality.

EXALTED POWERS

Those that tread the path of Chaos but do not give fealty to a single god may find their road difficult but not without reward. While the supplicants of the Ruinous Powers delve into the particular mysteries of their chosen deity, those without a single allegiance may focus on the depths of Chaos itself, embracing the power of the pantheon and mould it into powers most terrible. Only the Unaligned may select from the following Exalted powers.

AEGIS OF EUPHEDROS

Alternate Names: Bane of Worlds

Value: 1000xp

Prerequisites: Psy Rating 7, Infamy 70+, Forbidden Lore (The Warp) +30, Scholastic Lore (Occult) +30, Child of the Warp

Action: Full Action

Focus Power: Very Hard (–30) Willpower Test

Range: Self

Sustained: No

Subtype: Concentration

Description: Few have witnessed the Aegis of Euphedros and survived, but those who have recount it among the most impressive feats of sorcery ever. No one lays claim to the invention of such power and empty space where ancient worlds once stood bear the indelible mark of its passage. If one should uncover this power in his adventures and succeed in mastering the incantations, formulae, and observances required for its use, then the Dark Gods have blessed him with this greatest of unholy protections. It begins as the caster channels the warp directly through his very soul and body, then emitting pulses of energy as he begins to float above the ground. His body loses its material form, becoming ghostly and incorporeal, and his psychic powers gain in strength.

A successful Focus Power Test results in this power taking effect for a number of rounds equal to the sorcerer's Psy Rating. He may not use this power at the Fettered level, nor may he use any other powers during the duration of Aegis of Euphedros at the Unfettered level. The sorcerer also counts as Daemonic for the purposes of determining the effects of Psychic Strength. For the power's duration, the sorcerer gains the Incorporeal (and thus, also the Hover (6)) Trait, gains a +20 bonus to all Willpower Tests, and may only take actions to move or use other psychic powers whilst in this state. Focus Power Tests made by other creatures suffer a –10 penalty when targeting the sorcerer, as the chaotic energy he emits acts as a buffer between himself and all other psykers. All Psychic Bolt, Barrage, Blast, and Storm attacks made by the sorcerer gain the Warp Weapon and Tainted Qualities. Finally, all daemons and other warp entities (including those possessed by such entities) find the pulsating energy emanating from

the sorcerer unbearable and must end their turns at least ten metres away from the sorcerer if possible. If not, they must sacrifice all other actions to move as far away from him as possible during their turns.

Psychic Phenomena: Psychic Phenomena that occur whilst using this power are permanently attached to the power's area in one form or another, as per the GM's decision. For example, hoarfrost permanently covers everything in range, warp ghosts permanently haunt the space, or whenever the psyker returns to the area, he is affected by the Mind Warp effect. These effects remain permanent to the space where this power was used, not to the character that used them (i.e. the psyker does not permanently take a –5 to Willpower Tests due to Mind Warp, rather only takes the penalty when in the area Aegis of Euphedros was used in). Powerful effects such as Warp Madness may occur randomly or at the GM's desire. Perils of the Warp effects are not permanent.

MANTLE OF THE DAEMON PRINCE [CORRUPTION]

Alternate Names: Malefic Rebirth

Value: 700xp

Prerequisites: Psy Rating 6, Corruption 40+, Infamy 40+, Child of the Warp, Hatred (any)

Action: Full Action

Focus Power: Hard (–20) Corruption Test

Range: Self

Sustained: No

Subtype: Concentration

Description: The sorcerer's body undergoes a series of transformations; pincers replace his forearms and hands as horns sprout from his brow. Some say that such power is the beginnings of a sorcerer's true grasp at the station of daemon prince. Others say that such claims are the hubris of the naïve, for surely only the Dark Gods can grant such power and position. Regardless, the new form inspires fear in allies and foes alike as it forges carnage on the battlefield.

The psyker may not use this impressive power at the Fettered level. If the Focus Power Test is successful, he gains the Daemonic (X), Fear (3), and Warp Instability Traits where X equals half his Psy Rating, rounded up. In addition, he may select from up to two of the following packages of Traits to complete his transformation:

Daemonic Resistance: The psyker may select up to three of the following Traits: the Natural Armour (2), Regeneration (4), Sturdy, the Stuff of Nightmares, and Unnatural Toughness (3) Traits.

Bestial Form: The psyker may select up to three of the following Traits: the Amphibious, Amorphous, Dark-Sight, Flier (3), Multiple Arms (1), Quadruped, Toxic (2), and Unnatural Senses (5) Traits.

Predatory Gifts: The psyker gains the Deadly Natural Weapons, Unnatural Strength (3), and Warp Weapon Traits, and may select one of the following Weapon Qualities to apply to his new, fearsome fangs and claws: Crippling (3), Felling (3), Flame, Flexible, Tearing, Toxic (2), or Tainted.

Mantle of the Daemon Prince lasts for a number of rounds equal to the psyker's Psy Rating. If the psyker is reduced to 0 or fewer Wounds, the power immediately ends and he is Stunned for one round.

UNBALANCED MIND

Value: 500xp

Prerequisites: Psy Rating 5, Phantom Parry

Action: Reaction

Focus Power: Opposed Challenging (+0) Willpower Test

Range: 10 metres x Psy Rating

Sustained: No

Subtype: Attack, Concentration

Description: Nothing vexes the sorcerer more than having his mind come undone whilst channelling his powers. Unbalanced Mind, however, punishes the sorcerer for even considering to use his gifts in the first place. As he loses his grip on the empyrean forces, his powers take on a life of their own and the warp itself emerges to sow chaos in the power's wake.

As a reaction to another psyker manifesting a power, the sorcerer makes his Focus Power Test opposed by a Willpower Test made by the target psyker. Should the sorcerer win, he may choose new targets for the psychic power that the target tried to manifest or may cancel the power entirely. The target must roll on the Perils of the Warp chart (in addition to any other rolls he must make for Psychic Phenomena or Perils of the Warp due to rolling doubles, Pushing, etc.) and adds +5 to the roll for every Degree of Success the sorcerer achieved on his Focus Power Test. Finally, Unbalanced Mind stuns the target until the end of his next turn as he must gather his wits and refocus amidst the ensuing chaos.

WITHER HEX

Alternate Names: Dust to Dust

Value: 800xp

Prerequisites: Psy Rating 6, Willpower 40+, Hatred (any), Hex of Decrepitude

Action: Half Action

Focus Power: Challenging (+0) Willpower Test

Range: 5 metres x Psy Rating

Sustained: Half Action

Subtype: Attack, Concentration

Description: On the world of Q'sal, decrepitude and infirmity plague the dreams of those who have never experienced it, for on Q'sal, the extremes of age are occulted from view. Thus, the Wither Hex makes for a particularly cruel end to one's enemies by bringing such nightmares to life. This sorcery grasps life in a stranglehold, tearing its victim through decades of life in mere seconds until nothing remains but dust.

On the turn the sorcerer manifests Wither Hex and for each turn that he sustains it, he makes a Focus Power Test opposed by a **Difficult (-10) Toughness Test** made by the target. The psyker determines the Power Level of these Focus Power Tests when initiating the power. Only the first Test may trigger Psychic Phenomena or Perils of the Warp. On each round that the sorcerer succeeds, he agonisingly ages the target several years. The target suffers 1d5 levels of Fatigue, is stunned for that round, and takes 2d10 + Psy Rating temporary Damage to his Strength, Toughness, and Agility. If the target should win the opposed test, he suffers no ill effects for that round. If a creature survives the Wither Hex, it may not be targeted by that power again until Q'Sal completes its next orbit in the Vortex.

BIOMANCY POWERS

Of the many psychic disciplines to evolve within the galaxy, none have so intimate a connection with the psyker's body as biomancy. Of course, every psychic power requires that its user make some sacrifice or draw inward and thus has a personal component. However, few specifically devote themselves to drastically changing the body or drawing on the forces of one's life as the discipline of biomancy.

Many of the more primitive worlds of the Screaming Vortex seem to mould biomancers from the flesh of their inhabitants. On the Writhing World, encrusted as it is with a life of its own, the biomancer takes two forms from among its inhabitants: sorcerer-kings that manipulate huge living constructs to transport them across the planets surface and to the moons without, and tribal shamans, gifted with powers of survival on an otherwise inhospitable world. Those seduced by Malignia's lush and vital eco-system often perish when its true nature manifests in tooth and claw. However, the rare specimen trapped on the world's surface may learn to harness its vast reserves of biomantic energy and become as fierce as any native beast. Similarly, in Furia's dark oceans lurk men, no longer altogether human, who alter the nature of their flesh, allowing them to breath underwater and survive vast amounts of pressure. Though many practitioners of biomancy hail from less technologically advanced societies, sorcerers of all backgrounds have dabbled in its use.



BLOOD BOIL

Value: 300xp

Prerequisites: Psy Rating 3

Action: Half Action

Focus Power: Opposed Challenging (+0) Willpower Test

Range: 10 metres x Psy Rating

Sustained: Half Action

Subtype: Attack, Concentration

Description: The psyker attunes himself to the circulation of blood in his victim, slowly but surely increasing the pressure of the flow. At first, this produces the sensation of having just run a short distance as one's heart pumps faster and he feels the need to rest. Gradually, the sensation grows to worrying proportions as bruises erupt where capillaries begin to burst and flecks of light race about in his vision. Should the victim's body fail to resist the psyker's will, he finally collapses, blood running from his eyes, nose, and mouth.

On the turn that the psyker manifests this power, he makes his Focus Power Test opposed by the target's **Challenging (+0) Toughness Test**. The target suffers one level of Fatigue plus another level for every two additional degrees of success the psyker attains on his Focus Power Test. On subsequent turns, the psyker may maintain the power repeating the Opposed Test and dealing levels of Fatigue as stated previously. Should the target take levels of Fatigue equal to or greater than twice his Toughness Bonus, the effects of Blood Boil become lethal; on each subsequent turn, should the psyker win the Opposed Test, the target takes 1d10 + Psy Rating Rending Damage. If on any turn the target wins the Opposed Test, the power immediately ends. Daemons, warp entities, constructs, and other beings without a circulatory system or with a circulatory system that defies human understanding are immune to the effects of this power.

CELLULAR CONTROL

Value: 300xp

Prerequisites: Psy Rating 4, Toughness 40+

Action: Full Action

Focus Power: Challenging (+0) Willpower Test

Range: Self

Sustained: Free Action

Subtype: Concentration

Description: There is no telling how often its own limits cause the body to fail in the face of the horrors of the Screaming Vortex. Thus, those biomancers advanced in the mysteries of their study have uncovered the ability to manipulate, control, and even alter their own cellular structure to suit the demands of their environment. This versatile power allows, among other things, the psyker to survive extremes of temperature and pressure, to process oxygen more efficiently, to resist toxins, or to draw on reserves of metabolic energy.

The psyker gains one of the following benefits upon succeeding on his Focus Power Test, or two of the following if he scores five or more Degrees of Success on that roll:

- The psyker gains immunity to all poisons.
- The psyker ignores the effects of either extreme heat or extreme cold. The psyker still suffers damage from fire, although he may reduce that damage by an amount equal to his Toughness Bonus.

- The psyker gains immunity to the effects of Fatigue, including the -10 penalty to Tests and unconsciousness. However, he still suffers the levels of Fatigue and must pay the attendant price when this power ends.
- The psyker can survive in conditions of extreme pressure or in a vacuum.
- The psyker efficiently uses oxygen and may hold his breath for a number of hours equal to his Toughness Bonus. This effect may exceed the normal duration of the power and need not be maintained. However, the psyker must begin holding his breath while the power is in effect in order to gain this benefit.
- The psyker accesses reserves of energy, processing them at a greatly increased rate. He counts as having the Sprint Talent.

The duration of these effects last for as long as the psyker chooses to maintain the power. However, maintaining the power requires some effort and takes quite a toll on his body. The psyker may maintain the power for a number of rounds equal to his Toughness Bonus, at which time he must succeed on a **Challenging (+0) Toughness Test**. Failure causes the effects to immediately end and he suffers 1d10 R Damage as a result of his body struggling to right itself. He must make this test at intervals in rounds equal to his Toughness Bonus.

CHITIN SHELL

Alternate Names: Bone Hide, Shell Skin

Value: 200xp

Prerequisites: Psy Rating 2, Toughness 30+

Action: Half Action

Focus Power: Challenging (+0) Willpower Test

Range: Self

Sustained: Free Action

Subtype: Concentration

Description: Scavenging from his own body's nutrients, bone, and muscle, the psyker constructs organic protective plating to defend weak points left open by his synthetic armour. This armour contains dense carbon deposits set within a bone-like plating. Though it reduces his coordination and reflexes, it also grows as the psyker wills it and adds no weight to what he already carries. It is extraordinarily tough, and provides the sort of protection necessary to survive dreaded threats such as bolter fire or chainsword slashes.

Chitin Shell allows the psyker, upon completing the Focus Power Test required for its activation, to add Armour Points to areas of his body not already protected by synthetic or natural armour. This chitin may not be removed as it is fused to the psyker's skeletal and muscular systems, but as such it functions as an extension of his own body. Each Degree of Success on the Focus Power Test may be "spent" to add armour to one part of the body (head, body, both arms, or both legs). This armour has a rating of AP 2. However, the psyker may alternatively spend successes to increase the Armour Points on one of the above listed body parts on a one for one basis. For example, a psyker scores three Successes on his Focus Power Test and chooses to add chitin to his head and arms (spending two successes) and to increase the armour to his head by one (using the last success) for a result of a head with AP 3 armour and arms with AP 2 armour.

FLESH MOULD

Alternate Names: Malignia Charm

Value: 400xp

Prerequisites: Psy Rating 5, Toughness 50+

Action: Full Action

Focus Power: Hard (-20) Willpower Test

Range: Self

Sustained: Free Action

Subtype: Concentration

Description: For those who can master this power, will and body become one. Much as a techno-magos shapes metal into complex circuitry, elevating basic elements into objects of mechanical wonder, so too does the biomancer shape the flesh.

When using this power, the psyker may modify his body and choose one of the following options:

- He gains one of the following Traits: Amphibious, Amorphous, Burrower (3), Crawler, Flyer (4), Multiple Arms (3), Natural Armour (2), Natural Weapons, or Quadruped.
- He takes the form of another in a cunning effort at deceit, altering his appearance, vocal cords, and genetic signature (should he have access to such information). He gains a bonus to his Disguise Tests equal to ten times the number of Degrees of Success attained on his Focus Power Test.

The psyker may activate this power multiple times, choosing a new option with each activation.

LAST BREATH

Alternate Names: Drowning Gasps

Value: 300xp

Prerequisites: Psy Rating 3

Action: Half Action

Focus Power: Challenging (+0) Willpower Test

Range: 20 metres x Psy Rating

Sustained: No

Subtype: Attack, Concentration

Description: Suffocation invokes a degree of terror above and beyond many of the other violations one can commit against the body of another. A psyker with this curse may take control of the humours of the target's body, causing its lungs to secrete a thick, milky liquid. The suffocating foe must best the will of the psyker to expel the fluid and live.

On a successful Focus Power Test, the psyker gains command of the appropriate humours to secrete this vile liquid in the target's lungs. The target begins to suffer the effects of Suffocation (see page 257, **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook) and is considered to be under strenuous activity. If any of the required Toughness Tests succeeds, the target clears his throat and lungs and he is no longer suffocating (although any levels of Fatigue suffered remain).

NEURAL STORM

Alternate Names: Bio-Lighting

Value: 250xp

Prerequisites: None

Action: Half Action

Focus Power: Challenging (+0) Willpower Test

Range: 5 metres x Psy Rating

Sustained: No

Subtype: Attack, Concentration

Description: Drawing on and enhancing the natural electrical currents of the psyker's nervous system, he summons a bolt of power to shock his enemies. Unlike other psykers whose will and psychic potency determine the strength of their powers, the biomancer that channels the Neural Storm relies on his own fortitude.

Neural Storm is a Psychic Barrage attack that deals 1d10 + Toughness Bonus Energy Damage with a Pen value equal to the psyker's Psy Rating. Succeeding by three or more Degrees on the Focus Power Test, the psyker may add either the Shocking or the Haywire (5) Quality to this attack. With five or more Degrees of Success, he may add both Qualities instead.

REGENERATION

Alternate Names: Rebirth

Value: 400xp

Prerequisites: Psy Rating 5, Toughness 40+, Unnatural Healing

Action: Full Action

Focus Power: Difficult (-10) Willpower Test

Range: Self

Sustained: Full Action or Half Action, see below

Subtype: Concentration

Description: Of the many feats of biomancy, Regeneration perhaps ranks second in power to the act of creating life itself. The process of regeneration allows the psyker to not only mend wounds but also to regrow or reattach lost limbs or destroyed internal organs.

This power has two modes: active and rested. When using Regeneration during combat, performing strenuous activity, or in structured time, the active mode is used. This requires a Half Action to maintain and the psyker gains the Regeneration (4) Trait. He gains a bonus to his Toughness Tests made with the Regeneration Trait equal to his Psy Rating.

When resting or otherwise not engaged in strenuous activity, he may opt to use the rested version of this power instead. He heals an amount of Damage equal to his Psy Rating per day of rest while using the Regeneration power in this mode, starting with Critical Damage and ending with Light Damage. Though this mechanism of healing is far slower than the combat version, it allows the body to recover fully. With 1d5 weeks of rest, the psyker may even regrow any lost appendages and organs; reattaching lost limbs cuts this time in half.



SHARPENED SENSES

Alternate Names: Animal Awareness

Value: 300xp

Prerequisites: Psy Rating 3, Perception 30+

Action: Half Action

Focus Power: Challenging (+0) Willpower Test

Range: Self

Sustained: No

Subtype: Concentration

Description: The gift of the Sharpened Senses grants the psyker senses more fitting a beast than a human. Whilst this power is active, the psyker may enhance one of his natural senses and also gain a short ranged but potent unnatural sixth sense.

Successfully activating this power grants the psyker the Unnatural Senses (5) Trait in addition to enhancing one sense beyond its normal ability. The psyker receives +30 Bonus to any Perception based Test (such as with the Awareness Skill) when using the selected sense. Sharpening some senses grants additional benefits:

- **Smell:** Sharpening the sense of smell grants the psyker an additional +20 bonus on a Survival Skill Test to track when the psyker has an item belonging to the individual being tracked (a piece of clothing, a freshly severed appendage, etc.). This bonus stacks with the +30 granted normally by this power.
- **Touch:** A psyker with a heightened sense of touch may “see” objects as he touches them, regardless of available light. For example, he may run his fingers across embossed script to read it in a pitch-black room.
- **Taste:** Those trained in this power have had to test their senses as part of the process of learning its use. So honed is the psyker’s sense of taste while enhanced by this power that he can recognise the presence of poison in foods he samples by making a successful **Challenging (+0) Awareness Test**. This test is made prior to swallowing any food and thus, assuming the food is not laden with a massive dose of poison, he may spit it out before it takes effect.

Sharpened Senses lasts for a number of rounds equal to the psyker’s Psy Rating. This power may be activated multiple times, each time with a new sense enhanced (although the +30 bonus remains the same, regardless of how many times the power is used).

An unusual use of this power is to cause a reverse of its effects. Many experiences in the galaxy are best left for one’s enemies and as such, the canny biomancer turns off his senses when the situation calls for it. With a use of this power, the psyker may choose to turn off one of his senses (such as sight in order to avoid blindness in the face of intense light, or touch whilst under interrogation by cruel Eldar raiders). When doing so, he gains neither the +30 bonus to Perception based Tests nor the Unnatural Senses (5) Trait.



TOXIC SIPHON

Alternate Names: Unvenom, Tox Flush

Value: 200xp

Prerequisites: Psy Rating 2

Action: Half Action

Focus Power: Challenging (+0) Willpower Test

Range: Touch

Sustained: No

Subtype: Concentration

Description: When poison or other toxins enter the body and a dose of de-tox is not available, Toxic Siphon can work as a painful, if effective alternative. This power is only tolerable to the subject when compared to the poisons that it will combat, for many have said that they would have perhaps rethought its application if they had known of the deleterious effects. The toxic material immediately exits the unfortunate’s body through the most expedient method possible.

The Toxic Siphon removes poisons and other toxins from the target’s body, albeit at a cost. If the psyker succeeds on his Focus Power Test, he has successfully identified the locations of the toxins in the target’s body and removes them by uncontrolled vomiting, leaking from the eyes, leaching out of the skin, or by some other unpleasant means. Regardless, the target must make a **Challenging (+0) Toughness Test** or be stunned for 1d10 rounds minus his Toughness Bonus. A result of zero indicates that he is inured enough to the discomfort or pain caused by the Toxic Siphon and may act normally.

UNNATURAL HEALING

Alternate Names: Stitched Wounds

Value: 300xp

Prerequisites: Psy Rating 4

Action: Half Action

Focus Power: Challenging (+0) Willpower Test

Range: Touch

Sustained: No

Subtype: Concentration

Description: The body’s capacity to heal itself, closing wounds and regenerating tissue, sometimes fails to match the rate at which the universe sends agents to destroy it. When natural healing fails, the biomancer summons his not inconsiderable skill to aid his allies. Through intuitive knowledge of the body and psychic might, he can instantly suture lacerations, set and cement bones, and stop bleeding.

A successful Focus Power Test used with this power results in the target healing 1d10 + Psy Rating Damage. Additional uses of Unnatural Healing on the same target in the same day require the target to make a Toughness Test with a difficulty that increases by one step each time this power is used, starting at Hard. To illustrate, the first time the target receives healing he makes no Test, the second time he makes a **Hard (-20) Toughness Test**, the third time he makes a **Very Hard (-30) Toughness Test**, and so on. Failing this Toughness Test results in the target’s body rejecting the unnatural manipulations and it suffers 1d5 Rending Damage as a result.

PYROMANCY POWERS

Many disdain the manipulation of fire as a crude and limited psychic discipline, beneath the notice of a true practitioner of the sorcerer's arts. While this may be true, the ability to incinerate one's enemies with a gesture does generate a respect all its own. Within the Screaming Vortex, self-styled pyromancers can be found on many worlds.

On Q'Sal, the Sok'caeth, or Wielders of the Changing Fire, are a distrusted and even reviled band of mercenary sorcerers, whom are nevertheless often hired to fight in the constant feuds that plague the planet of mystery and magic. On Xurunt, the few psykers that manifest powers most often grow to control the elements, predicting the weather, calling lightning, and whispering over great distances. Thus, the rare fire-caller is a valued treasure indeed, for they are tasked with shaping and forging the metal harvested from the Onir that rise from the world's depths. A particularly adept fire-caller may be hobbled, his feet removed and placed with iron caps, the better to keep him from fleeing a Xur camp.

On Kurse, on the other hand, a pyromancer is hated above all other psy-casters. The shattered and irradiated war-world has some malign effect on the pyromancer's gifts and he becomes a conduit for the terrible toxins that plague Kurse. His powers do not just burn; they scour with harsh radiation or caustic chem-scalds. Such individuals are inevitably mad, and treated as one might treat a rabid wolf.

Of course, there are those sorcerers who count pyromancy as merely one tool amongst many in their arsenal. These individuals are often amongst the most dangerous of foes.

MANIFEST FLAME

Alternate Names: Gift of the Fateweaver, Impending Doom, Flicker, Called Fire

Value: 100xp

Prerequisites: None

Action: Half Action

Focus Power: Routine (+20) Willpower Test

Range: Self

Sustained: Free Action

Subtype: Concentration

Description: The most basic of the pyromancer's talents, this is nevertheless one of the most difficult to master. Some pyromancers imagine they are reaching inward, to harness the burning fires of their own soul (or in some cases, their boundless rage). Others speak of pricking the smallest of holes in reality, so a daemon of Tzeentch may reach through and bestow the briefest flicker of malefic fire in their hands.

When using this power, the psyker manifests a small globe of fire in his hands. The fire burns as long as the power is sustained, and hovers just above the psyker's hands but does not burn him. The fire is equivalent in brightness to a standard glow-globe, easily illuminating a room. It can also set flammable materials on fire. A truly desperate psyker might try and use it as a weapon, but it is too unwieldy to grant any tangible benefits; the real benefit of this power is that it provides a flame for the psyker to manipulate with other abilities.

SPECIAL RULE: OPEN FLAME

Pyromancy often specialises in manipulating fires that already exist, and the manifestation of a flame is one of the most fundamental powers of the pyromantic arts. Unless stated otherwise, all powers require a source of fire within a number of metres of the Heretic equal to the Psy Rating of the power he's manifesting.

FIRE BOLT

Alternate Names: Flamer's Bile, Scouring Blast, The First Canticle of Loringor

Value: 100xp

Prerequisites: Manifest Flame

Action: Free Action

Focus Power: Ordinary (+10) Willpower Test

Range: 15 metres x Psy Rating

Sustained: No

Subtype: Attack

Description: A simple trick, the psyker flicks a bolt of fire he has manifested or finds conveniently nearby at a foe. Many deluded lackeys of the Imperium consider this a gift from their Corpse-God sent to scour heretics from the earth, though Heretics know it will just as easily burn the "faithful." Some sorcerers use this ability to frighten their foes, shaping the flames into searing white lights, green-black spheres, or even obscenity-mouthing faces.

Fire Bolt is a Psychic Bolt that requires a source of flame to manifest, as per the open flame rule. It is treated as originating from the source of flame. It deals 1d10+Psy Rating Energy Damage; if the psyker scores five or more Degrees of Success and hits his target, the target is set on fire.

FIRE BARRAGE

Alternate Names: Flamer's Caress, The Second Canticle of Loringor

Value: 250xp

Prerequisites: Fire Bolt

Action: Free Action

Focus Power: Challenging (+0) Willpower Test

Range: 15 metres x Psy Rating

Sustained: No

Subtype: Attack

Description: A more complicated and nuanced version of the simple fire bolt, the psyker catches up multiple bolts of fire from a single source and hurls them in a buzzing swarm at his intended target.

Fire Barrage is a Psychic Barrage that requires a source of flame to manifest, as per the open flame rule. It is treated as originating from the source of flame. It deals 1d10+Psy Rating Energy Damage; if the caster scores four or more Degrees of Success, any targets hit are also set on fire.



FIRE STORM

Alternate Names: Flamer's Fury, The Third and Last Canticle of Loringor

Value: 500xp

Prerequisites: Fire Barrage

Action: Free Action

Focus Power: Difficult (-10) Willpower Test

Range: 15 metres x Psy Rating

Sustained: No

Subtype: Attack

Description: The psyker summons an intense conflagration from a single source and hurls it through the air at his target. The air itself often ignites, burning the poor foes to cinders.

Fire Storm is a Psychic Storm that requires a source of flame to manifest, as per the Open Flame rule. It is treated as originating from the source of flame. It deals 1d10+Psy Rating Energy Damage; if the psyker scores three or more Degrees of Success, any targets hit are also set on fire.

FLAMING GAUNTLETS

Alternate Names: Rage made Manifest, Burning Fist, Hand of Fire

Value: 200xp

Prerequisites: Manifest Flame

Action: Free Action

Focus Power: Ordinary (+10) Willpower Test

Sustained: Free Action

Subtype: Concentration

Description: An almost instinctual power of many pyromancers is the ability to shroud their fists in flames as they pummel their foes. Some have even been known to call upon this power accidentally, which inflates their reputation amongst more studied sorcerers as wild and unpredictable.

The psyker must have a fire source within range to manifest this power. Upon using it, flames slide around his hands and wreath them in flickering tongues as long as the power is maintained. This does not hurt the psyker, but his unarmed attacks do additional damage equal to his current Psy Rating and gain the Flame Quality. He does not count as armed when facing opponents with weapons while bare-handed. Anything he carries in his hands becomes damaged as if set on fire or exposed to high temperatures, with the exact effects dependent on the item and the GM's discretion.

This power's abilities stack with the Unarmed Warrior and Unarmed Master Talents in the following manner. With Unarmed Warrior, he now counts as armed even when facing opponents with weapons while bare handed, and his attacks deal 1d10 damage with the Primitive (7) Quality, instead of the standard 1d5-3. The additional Damage from this power stacks with it. Having the Unarmed Master Talent removes the Primitive (7) Quality from his fiery attacks.

INCINERATE

Alternate Names: The Final Touch, Roaring Summoner of Destruction

Value: 750xp

Prerequisites: Manifest Flame, One with the Flame

Action: Full Action

Focus Power: Hard (-20) Willpower Test

Range: 2 metres x Psy Rating

Sustained: Full Action

Subtype: Attack, Concentration

Description: Truly one of the most difficult tricks of the pyromantic sorcerer is the ability to call forth the inner flame of another being, incinerating them from within. The primitive fire-callers of nomadic tribes within the Vortex are wont to say that the pyromancer stokes the soul-fires until they burn too hot for the body to contain. Of course the forge-masters of the Hollows laugh at this notion, speaking of exciting the sub-molecules within the body until they generate the plasma fury of a star. Whatever the means, the results are the same: a spectacular self-immolation.

The psyker selects a single target (this can be a living being, or a vehicle, or other inanimate object). This power does not require an open flame as per the Open Flame rule. If the Focus Power Test is successful, the target takes 1d10+1 Energy Damage, ignoring Armour. In subsequent Rounds, the power deals the Damage dealt in the previous Round plus 1d10+1 additional Damage, also ignoring Armour. (So in Round 2, the power would deal 2d10+2 damage, while in Round 3, the power would deal 3d10+3 damage, and so forth).

The power requires the psyker's utmost concentration to maintain. If the psyker ever uses a Reaction while sustaining this power, the power immediately ends and must be manifested again.

MOLTEN MAN

Alternate Names: The Ninth Incantation of Rholian

Value: 700xp

Prerequisites: Psy Rating 6, At least four other pyromancy powers

Action: Half Action

Focus Power: Hard (-20) Willpower Test

Range: Self

Sustained: No

Subtype: Concentration

Description: To have transcended the physical form and become an avatar of pure energy is no simple feat, and thus only the wisest and most learned have mastered such a trick. In this form, the psyker does not merely destroy, but consumes all matter in fire.

Committing one's self to the form of the Molten Man results in the following consequences:

- All equipment and weaponry carried by the psyker immediately bursts into flames and disintegrates at his feet. Even metal fails to resist the heat being so close in proximity to the psyker in this state. This causes no damage to the psyker himself.
- Before accounting for Toughness and Armour, the psyker reduces all Damage from heat and fire and half of the Damage caused by plasma, las, and melta weapons.
- The psyker gains the following qualities: Stuff of Nightmares and Unnatural Toughness (3).
- The heat he radiates is so intense that all creatures and objects within five metres of the psyker suffer 1d5 Energy Damage at the beginning of each of the psyker's turns.
- The psyker also gains the Deadly Natural Weapons Trait and can deal 1d10 + Psy Rating + Strength Bonus Energy Damage with his touch.

Molten Man lasts for a number of rounds equal to the psyker's Psy Rating, at which time he reverts to his normal form and suffers 1d5 levels of Fatigue due to the shock of the escaping heat and the resultant cold.

ONE WITH THE FLAME

Alternate Names: Sculpt Flame, Flameweaver, Sok'caeth's Dance of Control

Value: 400xp

Prerequisites: None

Action: Full Action

Focus Power: Difficult (-10) Willpower Test

Range: 5 metres x Psy Rating

Sustained: Half Action

Subtype: Concentration, Attack

Description: The Sok'caeth of Q'Sal are particularly infamous for their ability to control the flames around them through sinuous, flowing dances as the flames respond to their every gesture. To sculpt the flames, the sorcerers claim, one must invite the fire to dance with them, not try to control it.

The psyker must have an available source of flame to use this power, as per the Open Flame rule. A successful Focus Power Test allows the psyker to do one (and only one) of the following to a fire:

- Expand a fire up to one metre in any (or all) directions per Degree of Success on the Focus Power Test. If there is nothing to burn in this area, the fire remains there for one round before returning to its original size. Otherwise, the combustibles catch fire and the fire continues to burn. Anyone caught in the fire must make an **Ordinary (+10) Agility Test** or catch fire.
- Shrink the area of a fire up to one metre in any (or all) directions per Degree of Success on the Focus Power Test. This can extinguish the fire if it is shrunk to zero metres in size.
- Create animated shapes in the flames, such as people, creatures, or objects.
- Send a gout of flame coursing through the air to a range of two times the psyker's Psy Rating in metres from the original fire. If there is nothing to burn in this area, the fire remains there for one round before going out. Otherwise, the combustibles catch fire and the fire continues to burn in a one metre by one metre area. Anyone caught in the fire must make an **Ordinary (+10) Agility Test** or catch fire.
- Cause the fire to either drastically increase in brightness, filling the immediate area with bright light (if it wasn't already), or spew choking smoke and ash. If the psyker chooses the second option, an area within 2d10 metres of the fire in all directions counts as being filled with smoke (see the **BLACK CRUSADE Core Rulebook**, page 245) for 1d10 Rounds.

If the psyker chooses to sustain this power, each round he can choose a new effect. If the effect requires Degrees of Success to determine the magnitude of the effect, he uses the Degrees of Success scored on the initial Focus Power Test.



EXPANDED RITES AND RITUALS

"Build me a body of steel and fire, mortal! I wish to walk among you and slaughter the innocent!"

—Ked'zrenell, the Dark Talon

The Rites and Rituals presented in the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook give a general overview of how both the GM and players can construct rituals to suit their own needs, the consequences of failure, and a number of example rituals used to summon the more iconic Chaos daemons. This section contains additional examples of Rites and Rituals that can be used for a myriad of dark deeds, such as psychically bonding minions, contacting daemonic entities, breaking daemonic steeds, and even binding daemons in order to create unholy Daemon Engines.

NEW RITES AND RITUALS

The Rites and Rituals listed below follow the same format as the rules from the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook, but have more specific uses than simply summoning the daemon of a specific Chaos God. A GM can insert these Rites and Rituals into an ongoing campaign as obstacles in the path of the Heretics obtaining the power they crave, or at the start of an adventure as part of their Compact. Players might wish to use one of these Rites and Rituals to enhance their own standing, punish their enemies, or to simply cause mayhem and destruction. In all cases it is up to the GM to determine both how difficult a Rite or Ritual is, or even whether the Rite or Ritual would be possible in the first place (for example, attempting to summon a daemon whilst trapped in a thrice-blessed psychically warded cell on an Imperial Shrine World as the sycophantic voices of an ecclesiastical choir continually spew praise to the Corpse-God might make such an act virtually impossible). The existing Rituals from the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook can use the new Expanded Ritual Modifiers Table if the GM wishes.

RITE OF SUNDERING

While it is true that those cursed (or gifted) with the ability to manipulate the warp and draw forth its energies can use it to cause destruction on a tremendous level, the reality is that even the most formidable sorcerer can only use but a fraction of the might the warp holds. In an effort to enhance the potency of their abilities, some sorcerers have learnt of a ritual that can break the veil between reality and the immaterium. Known as the Rites of Sundering, this series of risky and potentially devastating rituals can cause raw energy to bleed through into reality, allowing the psyker greater access to the warp. The effects of the rite tend to escalate quickly, and once started the sorcerer has virtually no control over the scale or magnitude of what they have wrought.

Requirements: Only a Heretic or character with the Psyker Trait as well as the Psyniscience and Forbidden Lore (The Warp) Skills can perform this rite; having Scholastic Lore (Occult) or Forbidden Lore (Psykers) also adds +10 to the final Test. The Rite of Sundering should ideally be performed in

an area that is undergoing an upheaval of some sort, such as the midst of a battle, within a million-strong horde of cultists chanting before a demagogue, or even during another ritual that involves summoning large groups of daemons. Once the correct conditions have been found, the psyker must pass a **Difficult (-10) Forbidden Lore (The Warp) Test** to successfully conduct the rite, modified by **Table 6-7: Summoning Ritual Modifiers** (page 229 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook).

Effects: A radius equal to the psyker's Psy Rating in kilometres (measured from the psyker) becomes infused with the energy of the warp. All psykers treat their Psy Rating as being two levels higher, all Focus Power Tests gain a +10 modifier, any Rites and Rituals that involve either summoning daemons or directly accessing the warp become two levels easier, and any and all forms of psychic resistance (including pieces of wargear that negate Psychic Powers, such as psychic hoods) become half as effective. Every round this rite remains in effect the GM should roll once on the Psychic Phenomena Table (see page 210 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook). Each Heretic or character gains 1d5 Corruption Points for every full hour spent within the area of effect. Characters with the Daemonic Trait do not gain Corruption Points, but are immune to Daemonic Instability whilst within the area.

Duration: 2d5 x Psy Rating hours. To indicate the wild nature of the power, add an extra hour for every Degree of Success on the Forbidden Lore Test after the first if that number is even, and subtract it if the number is odd. Every other hour, the GM should also randomly alter the radius and point of origin by 1d5 hundred metres.

Cost: Although the Rite of Sundering is often used to gain an advantage, the sheer uncontrollable nature of its effects means that eventually everything within the area begins to suffer. Everyone, aside from those with the Daemonic Trait, must make a **Difficult (-10) Willpower Test** for every half hour they spend within the area of effect. If this Test is failed they suffer 1 Level of Fatigue and lose 1d10 Wounds (reduced by Willpower Bonus, not by Toughness of Armour). Anyone who gains three or more Degrees of Failure also gains a randomly determined mutation (see Gifts of the Gods, page 290 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook).

The Price of Failure: If the Rite of Sundering is unsuccessful then the psyker that conducted the rite must Test for the Contempt of the Warp (see page 227 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook). Additionally, to represent the unrestrained backlash from the warp, the GM rolls once on the Perils of the Warp Table (see page 211, **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook) for each Degree of Failure the psyker scored on the Forbidden Lore Test.



RITE OF WILD FURY

No daemon can ever be truly controlled. No matter the power of a mortal master, all daemons possess the will and the ability to unshackle their bonds and bring doom and destruction to any they see fit. Some daemons, however, are more uncontrollable or bestial than others. A Bloodletter is an intelligent and malevolent force, capable of wielding grim weapons in its clawed talons, yet a Screamer of Tzeentch is a far more instinctual creature, wheeling and diving across the unseen eddies of the warp as it searches for prey. Summoning daemoniac beasts is a risky proposition, as a Heretic cannot reason with a Fiend of Slaanesh or a Flamer of Tzeentch. They are, in a sense, animalistic, and always respond violently to those that would attempt to control them.

Requirements: Summoning a daemoniac beast or steed such as a Flamer of Tzeentch or Beast of Nurgle uses the same basis as any of the standard demonic summoning rituals (see page 229 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook for examples). The type of beast the Heretics are attempting to bring into the world determines the ritual template (i.e. if attempting to summon a Flesh Hound of Khorne, use the ritual for summoning a Bloodletter as a starting point). As daemoniac beasts respond just as easily (if not better) to stimuli from the material plane, the Heretics need not create larger areas of slaughter, pleasure, disease, or change than they would otherwise have to do for a standard daemon. The rite requires a **Difficult (-10) Forbidden Lore (Daemonology) Test**, modified by **Table 6-7: Summoning Ritual Modifiers** (page 229 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook), but GMs are free to modify this should circumstances dictate. If the daemoniac beast is successfully summoned, then a **Difficult (-10) Daemoniac Mastery Test** must be taken in order to control it (note this is not the same as controlling the beast for the purposes of using it as a mount—that requires a separate ritual, the Ritual of Breaking; see page 66).

Effects: A daemoniac beast, specific to the Chaos God the players asked for, appears at the centre of the summoning area.

Duration: The daemoniac beast remains corporeal for 1d5+5 rounds, plus an additional round for every additional Degree of Success on the Test to complete the ritual. At the GM's discretion, the daemon may be summoned for a specific task, in which case it remains corporeal long enough to accomplish the task.

Cost: Whether successful or not, the ritual and the wild nature of the summoned beast causes two immediate rolls on the Psychic Phenomena Table (see page 210 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook).

The Price of Failure: Failure results in a Test for the Contempt of the Warp (see page 227 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook), modified by +10 for every Degree of Failure after the first.



RITUAL OF BINDING

Daemons are immensely powerful beings within their hellish realm, but even the most dominant greater daemon can fade back into the warp if it spends too long in the natural world. Many mortals and would-be warlords have recognised that tying a daemoniac entity to an object, such as a specially designed machine chariot or rune-encrusted cannon, keeps it grounded in reality for greater lengths of time and, through arcane lore and special rituals, even greater daemons can be bound to objects or devices so that they might lend their unending fury to its operation. Of course, not all daemons do this willingly, and the consequences for entrapping an unwilling daemon can be dire.

Requirements: The Ritual of Binding is similar to how the Heretics might create a Daemon Weapon, but is instead used in the creation of Daemon Engines. Creating one of these unholy fusions of flesh and machine is a three-step process, the first of which is to obtain or create the machine or vessel that the daemon will eventually inhabit. Daemon Engines take many forms, from the huge Khornate Blood Slaughterers and Nurgle Blight Drones, to the towering Slaaneshi Subjugators and majestic Tzeentchian Fire Lords. Obtaining the appropriate shell for a Daemon Engine should itself be a major effort, ideally even be the basis for a Compact. The second step is to actually summon the daemon, and the method for this depends on the type of daemon that the Heretics wish to summon. If the Heretics wish to create a Daemon Engine fuelled by a daemoniac beast such as Screamer of Tzeentch for example, then use the Rite of Wild Fury. The Heretics must always ensure that the conditions for



the summoning match the preferences of the Chaos God the daemon is aligned with. The third step is the act of binding; this takes the place of any Daemonic Mastery Test, as rather than attempting to control their newly summoned daemon, the Heretics are instead attempting to channel the daemon into their empty mechanical vessel. The binding is done via a single **Hellish (-60) Forbidden Lore (Daemonology) (Int) Test, Table 6-7: Summoning Ritual Modifiers** (see page 229 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook).

Effects: The daemon is bound to the machine that was created as its vessel. The daemon is now treated as a Daemon Engine.

Duration: Unlike regular summoning rituals in which the daemon feeds off the energy of the ritual that brought it into reality until it fades into nothing, the effects of binding a daemon can be eternal. It is entirely possible that once bound, the Daemon cannot leave the object and is essentially affixed in the material plane until such time as it gathers enough power to free itself (assuming it even wants to—not every daemon dislikes the idea of being melded to a towering machine of death) or is set free by someone with the power to unravel the binding. Destroying the Daemon Engine can also release the daemonic entity from within.

Cost: The ritual is taxing even to the most powerful of Heretics, and every participant in the ritual suffers 4d10 damage to every Characteristic. This damage lasts 2d10 hours, adding 1 hour for every level in the Size Trait for the newly created daemon engine. Additionally, two rolls on the Psychic Phenomena Table (see page 210, **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook) must be made, applying the results to all involved in the ritual.

The Price of Failure: The binding fails to take and the daemon breaks free of the Heretic's control. If the daemon was an unwilling participant in the ritual, it moves to attack the Heretics immediately. If the daemon was a willing participant, it simply dissolves back into the warp, cursing the Heretics for their failure. In both cases, a roll for Contempt of the Warp (see page 227 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook) must be made, modified by +10 for every Degree of Failure after the first.

RITUAL OF BONDING

Sometimes simple loyalty is insufficient, and a master of many minions might require them to be further bonded to his will. For the Heretic that wants to ensure total and utter obedience in all things, as well as the ability to see through the eyes of his minions and know what they know, there is an ancient and dangerous ritual that can be used to achieve this. The Ritual of Bonding allows a Heretic to psychically tie a minion to his own psyche, giving greater control as well as greater situational awareness.

Requirements: The Heretic has to have a Minion of Chaos to start with (Lesser, Standard, or Greater), as well as someone with the Psyker Trait to perform the Ritual; a Heretic can perform it himself if he is able. The ritual must be performed somewhere very quiet and far isolated from others—the melding of the minds is a delicate process and too many conflicting intellects may disrupt the ritual. The character with the Psyker Trait performing the ritual must pass a **Very Hard (-30) Forbidden Lore (The Warp) (Int) Test, Table 6-7: Summoning Ritual Modifiers** (page 229 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook), in order to successfully perform the ritual, modified by -20 if the location

is neither quiet or isolated. If successful, the Heretic that is to be bonded to the Minion must pass an **Opposed Very Hard (-30) Willpower Test** against the Minion's Willpower, with the Heretic's chances modified by +10 for each Degree of Success after the first on the initial Forbidden Lore Test.

Effects: The Minion of Chaos is now bound to the Heretic. The Heretic may now see through the eyes of the Minion and vice versa (and both may use any Perception-based Skills, Talents, and Traits that the other might have). There is a limit on the range of 2d10 kilometres, but this ability works through solid walls, across the void, and even if one of the pair is blinded. Psychic wards (such as Gellar Fields) interfere with this connection, however, and the Heretic must pass a **Hard (-20) Willpower Test** to utilise the link. In combat, neither can be Surprised if the other is not Surprised. The Minion also becomes completely subservient to the Heretic, and is always automatically assumed to pass any Loyalty Tests it is required to make, even for suicidal actions. If the Minion is killed, his master must take a **Very Hard (-30) Willpower Test** or suffer 2d10 permanent Willpower Damage. This Damage is treated as a psychic attack for the purpose of Resistance.

Duration: Bonding is permanent, severed only by the death of either the Heretic or the Minion.

Cost: Bonding one mind to another is an exhaustive experience, and can leave all involved drained for days afterwards. Regardless of whether the ritual is successful, all participants gain Fatigue equal to their Toughness Bonus and instantly fall unconscious for 1d5 hours. Once they have awoken, recovering from this Fatigue takes four times longer than normal.

The Price of Failure: There is a considerable amount of psychic backlash that occurs when this ritual is performed incorrectly. The psyker performing the ritual can be temporarily stripped of his psychic ability, the target of the bonding is often left blinded and bleeding, and the poor lesser being that was to be bound can end up dead. If the bonding fails to take place, the psyker that performed the ritual must pass an **Arduous (-40) Willpower Test** or be unable to cast any psychic powers for 1d5 days. The Heretic that was the target of the ritual must pass an **Hard (-20) Toughness Test** or be left unconscious for 1d5 hours, blind for 1d5 days, and suffer 1d10 wounds ignoring Toughness and Armour. Note that if the Heretic was both the target of the ritual and performed the ritual then he must take both Tests. The Minion that was set to be bound to the Heretic must pass a **Challenging (+0) Toughness Test**, modified by -10 for every Degree of Failure after the first on the original Forbidden Lore Test. If the Minion fails this Test, he automatically dies.



RITUAL OF BREAKING

For many Heretics, there is no greater symbol of authority than a warlord riding into battle astride a mighty daemonic steed. Breaking such a creature to their will and using it to carry forth the desires of the Dark Gods is a sure sign of domination, and many Heretics have lost their lives—and their souls—whilst attempting to tame a Juggernaut of Khorne, catch a Slaaneshi Steed, or reshape a Screamer into a graceful Disc of Tzeentch.

Requirements: Before a Heretic can enact a Ritual of Breaking and claim a daemonic mount of his own, he must first summon the daemon that is to act as a mount. Most daemons cannot be used as mounts—no one is foolish enough to use a Horror or a Flesh Hound as a mount—so generally this ritual is limited to Juggernauts of Khorne, Steeds of Slaanesh, and Screamers of Tzeentch (the latter must be reshaped into Discs—see page 104 for the additional difficulties this presents). Followers of Nurgle may instead attempt to summon some form of disgusting mount (a Beast of Nurgle perhaps); unaligned daemonic steeds do exist, and the GM should determine if breaking such a creature would be easier or more difficult depending on its form. Daemons to be used as mounts are always summoned using the Rite of Wild Fury, following all the standard rules for that rite. The conditions for both the summoning and the breaking of the daemon also differ depending on the type of daemon, Khorne favouring death and slaughter, Slaanesh pleasure and pain, and so on. After the daemon is summoned, the Heretic is not required to pass a Daemonic Mastery Test, as this ritual replaces that Test. In all instances, and assuming the daemon is summoned correctly, the Ritual of Breaking requires a **Hard (–20) Forbidden Lore (Daemonology) (Int) Test**, modified by **Table 6–7: Summoning Ritual Modifiers** (page 229 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook), followed by an **Opposed Challenging (+0) Willpower Test** against the steed's Willpower Characteristic.

Effects: The daemonic steed is now broken to the will of the Heretic and can be ridden and controlled in accordance with the rules for Wrangling (see page 111 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook). Additionally, breaking a daemonic steed is a noteworthy task, and the Heretic gains 2d5 Infamy.

Duration: As long as the summoned daemon remains corporeal. If the Heretic can sustain the daemon, such as through the slaughter of living beings, bathing it in psychic energy, or by keeping it enraptured and overwhelmed with new sensations, then the daemon may be kept indefinitely. The breaking is not permanent, however, and if the daemon is ever banished to the warp (for whatever reason), then the control is lost.

Cost: The battle of wills between a daemonic steed and the Heretic should be intense and take 10d5 hours, with the number of Degrees of Success in the Opposed Willpower Test subtracted that duration. The Heretic also gains 1 level of Fatigue for every 10 hours in the ritual, again subtracting the Degrees of Success from the number. The GM may also apply Injuries to the Heretic as well (breaking a Juggernaut *can* result in the odd broken bone!).

The Price of Failure: If the Heretic fails to break the daemonic steed, it attacks him immediately before returning to the warp; treat this as a Surprise round.

RITUAL OF FUTURES FORETOLD

Many psykers harness the Ruinous Powers in order to gain a glimpse into the future, hoping that even a few moments of such visions will grant them dominion over their adversaries. Many fools have lost their minds attempting to divine what is to come, and even those with the proper training and discipline can risk madness from even the briefest glance into the strands of possible fates.

Requirements: Only a Heretic or character with the Psyker Trait, as well as the Skills Psyniscience, Forbidden Lore (Daemonology), and Forbidden Lore (The Warp) can perform this rite. Possessing any one of the following also adds +1 to the final Test: Common Lore (Adeptus Astra Telepathica), Scholastic Lore (Numerology), Scholastic Lore (Occult), or Forbidden Lore (Psykers). This ritual must be performed in an area where the Heretics wish to look directly into the future and find what is about to happen in that exact location. They may be looking for the identity of someone who is pursuing them, or looking to see if something they have built will still be standing in a few days time; they could be looking for themselves to ensure they survive whatever dark deed they are about to undertake, or anything that involves looking directly into the future. The psyker undertaking the ritual is required to pass a **Very Hard (–30) Psyniscience (Per) Test**, modified by **Table 6–7: Summoning Ritual Modifiers** (page 229 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook). Other psykers that meet the requirements for this ritual may assist the psyker, adding +10 for each psyker involved.

Effects: The Heretic creates a window into the future—no larger than 20m x 20m—that shows them what might come to happen in that exact location. The future is never perfectly clear, however, and what they see is somewhat blurry. Sound echoes horribly, and thus a **Very Hard (–30) Perception Test** is needed to discern intelligible speech. The Heretics cannot interact with anything they see, as they are looking into a warp-based window. The vision extends as far as 1 day into the future, with an additional day added for each Degree of Success on the Psyniscience Test. Such visions are never 100% accurate, though—such is the nature of the warp and the whims of Fate.

Duration: The window lasts for a number of minutes equal to half the Willpower Bonus (rounding up) of the psyker that took the Psyniscience Test, plus one minute for every Degree of Success after the first on the Test.

Cost: The psyker, and any who helped him, gain 1d10 levels of Fatigue after the window has dissipated. Additionally, assuming the Psyniscience Test was successful, everyone looking into the future must take an **Ordinary (+10) Willpower Test** or suffer 1d5 permanent Willpower damage.

The Price of Failure: If the Psyniscience Test is failed, roll once on the Psychic Phenomena Table (see page 210 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook) for every Degree of Failure. The ritual cannot be re-performed in this area for 1d10 hours.





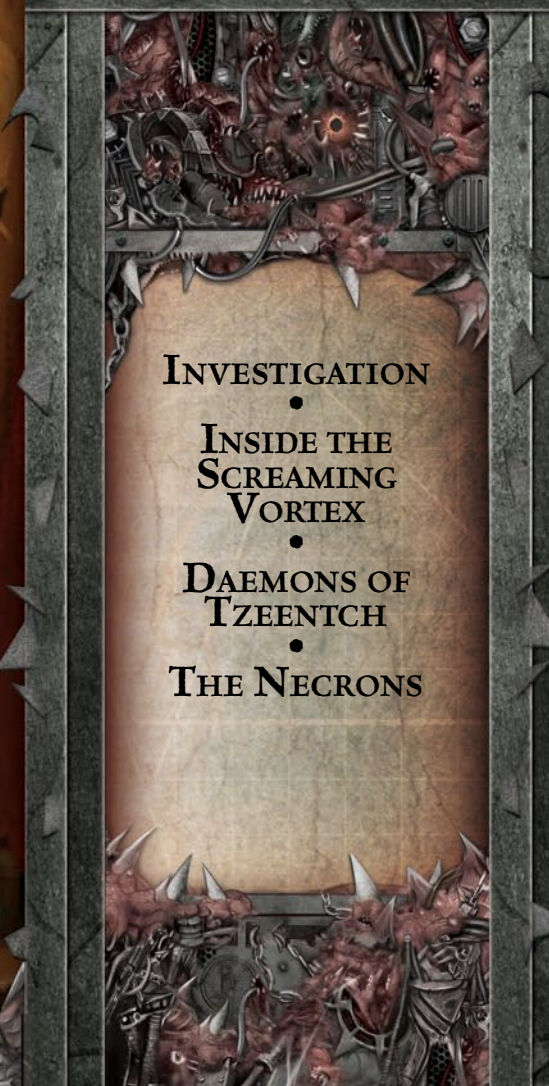
ARCHITECTS OF DESTINY

INVESTIGATION

•
INSIDE THE
SCREAMING
VORTEX

•
DAEMONS OF
TZEENTCH

•
THE NECRONS



CHAPTER III: ARCHITECTS OF DESTINY

"Your arrogance is only matched by your ignorance! Send ships, send men, send even the Angels of Death if you like. But know that you cannot tame the Vortex, where there is no law but Chaos, no emperor but Tzeentch, and no changing the fate that awaits us all."

—Final recorded words of Arch-Deacon Aesop Herodotus
(Excommunicate Traitoris)

The Screaming Vortex is an ever-twisting and ever-changing spiral of worlds and rival factions. Here there are few places without some intrigue to be investigated, some power to be grasped, or some new and terrible foe to fight. Beyond all this conflict, mystery, and death sits the Architect of Destiny, the Master Manipulator, and the Lord of Lies—the Chaos God Tzeentch—and with every waking moment the agents of Tzeentch work tirelessly to complete the labyrinthine schemes and plots dictated to them by their master's eternally changing whims. Yet each of them is naught but a pawn in the Great Game Tzeentch plays with his rival Chaos Gods, and any victory, be it the subversion of an entire world or the enslavement of a single mortal mind, is another small step towards total supremacy.

The Screaming Vortex hosts many important worlds, all of which have some role to play in Tzeentch's schemes. Q'Sal is a world of great tension, where the sorcerer-technocrats of its three great cities follow their own twisted paths to dominance. Dread Korvaska is a gloomy, unnatural planet of violent upheaval and change that defies all known logic. The Hollows is a crumbling realm in where devastation is a daily event and two rival forges strive endlessly in an unwinnable battle for supremacy. The hellish landscape of the Flaming Tomb hides a great mystery as the daemons of Tzeentch frolic across its shifting molten surface. The Cat's Cradle is a collection of daemon-infested planets linked by miraculous warp tunnels known as Cradlethreads. Finally, the Pillars of Eternity is a world of ice and death where Tzeentch-worshipping nomadic tribes wander the surface whilst an ancient and antithetical alien race slumbers just beneath their feet, slowly awakening from millions of years of slumber.

Each of these worlds contains new and terrifying adversaries for GMs to use, ranging from the Burning Men of the Flaming Tombs to the Mutants of Korvaska. The Pillars of Eternity hold their own terrors in the form of the Necrons. These worlds also provide a great span of opportunities for bands of Heretics to gain both Infamy and Corruption, and can work as either the start or end point when using this chapter's Investigation rules. With these rules, Heretics can investigate their enemies and discover their plots, research and locate ancient artefacts of dreadful potency, and possibly learn words of power that could give them dominance over lesser mortals and—for those with the fortitude to try—the daemons of the warp.



INVESTIGATION

"You discovered my plots, you brought an end to my schemes; every wheel I set in motion has been broken and my deeds now fully revealed. Just as planned..."

—Thrall-King L'Fant Senester, prior to his Ascension to Daemonhood.

The blessings of the Dark Gods do not simply come to those that ask for them, and not every conflict between the servants of Chaos can be resolved through death and destruction. Often a subtler approach is necessary, and any would-be Chaos Lord will need to spend time examining and learning these ways. Although **BLACK CRUSADE** is centrally a game about the deeds and actions of Heretics as they advance along the fine path between endless infamy and total corruption, times will arise when those that serve the Chaos Gods must take a step back and search for answers hidden from lesser beings if they are to fully divine their fate. These following Investigation rules are designed to guide GMs in the creation of Investigations for their **BLACK CRUSADE** games, adding additional depth to the endless intrigues and plots that surround all those who would Ascend.

USING AN INVESTIGATION

Many, though certainly not all, Investigations can be broken down into distinct parts: the introduction to the Investigation, finding and interpreting the evidence, tracking down what is required (an adversary responsible or the information the Heretics are seeking), confronting the adversary or finding the information, and then dealing with the aftermath.

THE INTRODUCTION

The first step is to provide the Heretics with something to investigate. The Heretics' motives are also established at this time. Their motive might be the search for rivals who have been plaguing them for some time, perhaps looking for their base of operations or something very important to them that the Heretics could destroy or corrupt. The motive could be the search for more arcane knowledge, such as the True Name of a daemon, the methods required to perform a particular ritual, or the location of ancient and powerful artefacts. At other times, the Heretics may simply stumble upon, be directed to, or even forced by greater powers into a given Investigation-worthy scene or event, and the mystery can unfold from there.

SETTING THE SCENE

Once the introduction has been established, the GM will need to flesh out the three main details of the event that required the Heretics' intervention in the first place. These are:

The Adversary—This could be an individual or group who are directly attempting to destroy the Heretics, or steal or corrupt something belonging to the Heretics or their allies; or it might simply be someone who is between the Heretics and the information they seek.

The Mystery—This is the event that the Heretics are investigating. Maybe the Heretics have been left stranded on Q'Sal after their transport was sabotaged by an unknown cult, or maybe a grand Tzeentchian Sorcerer has vanished, leaving his extensive artefact collection unguarded and the Heretics must learn where this hidden sanctum truly lies so that they might pillage it for its secrets.

The Setting—The Investigation needs to be grounded within a specific place, such as the ash planes of Dread Korvaska or the Slave-Habs of the Hollows.

CLUES AND EVIDENCE

At the heart of any good mystery lies a clue, that piece of evidence the Heretics can use to puzzle together what is happening (or has happened) that will propel the plot forward. In some cases, the initial clue will be handed to the Heretics by an ally. Other times, the Heretics will be forced to gather the evidence for themselves, carefully sifting through the information they have gathered. Evidence can be as abstract or concrete as the GM desires. It can be a mysterious vox communiqué that may never be deciphered but is still fought over, or the remnants of a failed ritual that spurs the Heretics to discover its secrets and powers.

FOLLOWING LEADS

During this stage of the Investigation, the Heretics more fully uncover the plot. They begin to piece together the details of whatever originally necessitated the Investigation. Pacing and the appropriate establishment of dramatic tension are the most important elements of this section. Sometimes this stage of the Investigation will involve a chase, such as piloting a stolen lighter into orbit before a cell of rival cultists can escape with the location of the missing sorcerer's hidden sanctum, or catching a hated Inquisitorial agent who might have absconded with a grimoire that holds the partial True Name of a powerful Lord of Change.

During this portion of the Investigation, the Heretics may also encounter all manner of complications. Their adversary may discover that he is being followed and may start covering his trail and eliminating anyone who could help the Heretics pursue him further. If the Investigation has stalled, the GM may consider providing the Heretics with a break in the case in order to get things back on track, such as a cultist barely clinging to life after a failed attempt to summon a herald of Slaanesh, or perhaps an enemy of the missing sorcerer who promises to help the Heretics find the hidden sanctum if she gets a share in the spoils. During this portion of the Investigation, the GM can also provide the Heretics with plot-specific events as a way of further explaining story elements that pertain to the Investigation at hand.

THE SHOWDOWN

Once the Heretics have uncovered or cornered their adversaries, the showdown can begin. This section usually relies on the combat rules, though a proper Investigation into the weakness of a particularly powerful foe is often crucial to its defeat. There are numerous types of adversaries to choose from and this is also an opportunity to set a memorable scene in which the environment is just as much an obstacle in the Heretics' path as their foe.

THE RESOLUTION

This is the point when the Heretics discover how successful they were at finding the information they desire, or destroying the agents who have been working against them. It is at this stage that the immediate consequences of their actions are made known and sometimes their adversary may escape, either as a part of the plot or as a result of the actions of the Heretics. If the Heretics were successful, they can be rewarded with new resources and equipment, or perhaps even gain Infamy within the Vortex. If their Investigation was a failure, they can be punished or abandoned by those they would call allies, losing Infamy or even gaining Corruption. Here the Heretics can be rewarded for quick thinking (or penalised for the opposite). The GM can foreshadow future threats and other consequences at this point.

WORKING BACKWARDS

When building an Investigation adventure, it can be quite helpful if the GM works backwards from his intended goal. Rather than determining what the Heretics will be uncovering, and then who is behind the crime, the GM can craft a compelling villain or obstacle and decide why the Heretics would get involved. Armed with a fleshed out adversary, the GM is free to craft a more realistic storyline. The GM can determine an appropriate showdown and creative minions in the process. Working backwards from the adversary also gives the GM a better grasp of the adversary's proper motivations. An understanding of what motivates him and why he would stand in the Heretics' way can be used as a potential break in the case, or additional clues when the pacing starts to slow down. The GM can do this without an adversary, using an exciting showdown location, a creative idea for a chase, or even just a brutal crime scene as a starting point for the creation of the mystery. By working from the middle, the GM can also break the formula. Creatively dodging or baffling player expectations can provide an enjoyable evening of gaming if done correctly. This can be tricky, however, as the Heretics might feel like failure was a forgone conclusion in some Investigations, though if properly played out can be just as satisfying as a stellar victory.

ELEMENTS OF AN INVESTIGATION

An Investigation is often a smaller part of a larger adventure, but if the Investigation is the main adventure in and of itself, there are a few key details the GM should determine in advance. Investigations that represent a whole story—beginning, middle, and end—are in need of four elements: an

MULTIPLE PIECES OF EVIDENCE

The Heretics may uncover multiple pieces of evidence, and these could lead them to two or more separate destinations. This is a great way to split an Investigation and make it non-linear. The Heretics will have to choose the order on which they would like to follow the evidence, and under circumstances in which time is a factor, they may decide to split the group and send Heretics to cover multiple clues simultaneously.

introduction, an adversary for the Heretics to pursue, a clearer description of the mystery the Heretics are unravelling, and a setting in which to do their investigating.

THE INTRODUCTION

This portion of the Investigation is designed to provide the Heretics with the motivation for starting the Investigation and seeing it through. It provides a crucial hook and sets the tone for the rest of the Investigation. There are numerous other ways for a GM to begin an Investigation; perhaps one of the Heretics learns a partial ritual of Daemonhood from a sorcerer-lord he had met before, or receives a communiqué from himself warning of a future event!

THE ADVERSARY

At this point, the GM may wish to begin to characterise the main adversary of whatever event necessitated the Investigation. This allows the GM to further plan out the theme of his Investigation and can affect the type of adversaries he plans on using. Trying to learn the True Name of a greater daemon might lead to a different kind of atmosphere than uncovering the identities of undercover Inquisitorial agents. Part of this process is figuring out what motivates the adversary. The end goal of the adversary can be as simple or as complicated as the GM likes, but it will usually factor heavily into the nature of the mission. This is especially important when setting up what the success and failure conditions are and what the Heretics need to do to achieve or avoid them. Chapter XI: Adversaries of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook is a good source for sample adversaries, ranging from vengeful greater daemons to mysterious Harlequin Shadowseers.

THE MYSTERY

Once the GM has a good adversary, it is time to tie him to a particular plot. The Heretics need to know or possess the capacity to find out how their adversary is connected to the mystery, perhaps via a piece of evidence tied directly to the adversary's origins, or something left behind at a failed ritual. Perhaps the Heretics are helping the rulers of the Velklir track an assassin, or they may be trying to locate an escaped slave that knows the location of a hidden artefact sanctum. Sometimes an Investigation's piece of Evidence (see page 71 for further details) flows naturally from the mystery at hand, and other times establishing the clue can provide the spark that eventually leads to a fully fleshed out Investigation.

THE SETTING

The Heretics now have a reason to start their Investigation, and the GM likely has an idea of what it is they may find once they get there, but the Investigation still needs a setting. The setting should have a sense of character all its own. The Screaming Vortex contains an untold number of worlds, and all are influenced by the warp and the Ruinous Powers in some way. This means that any type of terrain or combination of landscapes is possible. Even time itself is inconsistent within the warp, so a setting could encompass present, past and future events. As a final touch, the GM may wish to pre-plan how the Heretics will reach their destination or, if the GM feels so inclined, he may let the Heretics take care of the logistics themselves.

INVESTIGATION EVENTS

Investigation Events are a formal way of handling the Heretics' interactions with others while gathering, examining, and analysing information as part of a goal. These rules primarily offer a framework for GMs to use in preparation for an Investigation-heavy **BLACK CRUSADE** game and secondarily offer Heretics extended options when using their investigation skills.

IN THE BEGINNING...

Establishing where the Heretics find their first major clue is an easy way to set the theme for the rest of the Investigation. Will the Heretics be stealthily searching a heavily patrolled library of closely-guarded secrets or will they be searching a series of slave pits looking for information? Will they be scrutinising a crime scene in the depths of a hive or will they be plunging into trackless wastes in pursuit of their prey?

To find a physical clue, or to find any other details necessary to start their Investigation, the Heretics will usually have to pass an **Ordinary (+10) Awareness Test**, modified by both the sort of environment they are searching in and the skill of the adversary and what lengths he went to in order to hide his tracks (see **Table 3-1: Search Modifiers**).

Miscellaneous Modifiers

The Awareness Test to pick through a given scene can be further modified by the Heretics' equipment, resources, and thoroughness, at the GM's discretion.



TABLE 3-1: SEARCH MODIFIERS

Environmental Factors

Roll	Scene	Modifier	Examples
01-25	Pristine	+10	Arcane Library
26-50	Clean	+0	Hab-Units
51-75	Cluttered	-10	Hive City Streets
76-00	Total Mess	-20	Crumbling Underhive

Adversary's Skill

Roll	Scene	Modifier	Examples
01-25	Careless	+10	Crime of Passion, Khornate Ritual Massacre
26-50	Careful	+0	Paranoid sorcerer, professional criminal
51-75	Expert	-10	Trained assassin, Inquisitorial agent
76-00	Highly Trained	-20	Officio Assassinorum operative, Eldar Warlock

THE EVIDENCE

At the heart of any Investigation is a crucial piece of evidence, the clue from which the Heretics must extrapolate the details of the event that they are investigating (be it something they wish to find or learn, or someone they need to stop, help or locate). The GM may pick out a piece of evidence that suits a plot that he already has in mind, or he may start with a clue and use it as his inspiration for fashioning an Investigation story. For the purposes of an Investigation, the clue is broadly used to describe anything the Heretics may come across that will propel the Investigation forward.

Linked Skills

A Linked Skill is a Skill that is tied to a particular piece of evidence or clue and is used to investigate that particular item. An ancient star chart would be investigated via the Scholastic Lore (Astromancy) Skill, whereas Forbidden Lore (Inquisition) might allow the Heretics to find out the identity of an Inquisitorial agent in their midst. Linked Skills serve as an easy way to come up with a theme for an Investigation. When a given piece of evidence has an appropriate Linked Skill or two, Heretics who possess those skills will have a much easier time with the Investigation. Using a Linked Skill allows the GM to gauge how difficult a given Investigation will be for a group. Linked Skills also make brainstorming plot ideas for the Investigation much easier, and the GM should always establish which Skills would be considered "linked" to each clue or piece of evidence.

INVESTIGATION SKILL TEST

Each Investigation has an associated Investigation Skill Test. The Investigation Skill Test uses the Linked Skill associated with whatever clue or piece of evidence lies at the heart of the Investigation. The Difficulty of the Investigation Skill Test depends on the Investigation's Complexity. Complexity also determines the Base Time the Investigation will take to complete. The GM should choose from or roll on **Table 3-2: Investigation Benchmarks** (see page 73) to determine what

THE TICKING CLOCK...

The GM can add tension by keeping strict track of time. Adding plot point events that are set to happen on a regular schedule and/or using a deadline to measure an Investigation's success or failure are both valid ways to keep an Investigation interesting.

the Complexity and Base Time will be for his Investigation. A success on the Investigation Skill Test allows the Heretic to roll 1d10 and add the appropriate Characteristic Bonus (as determined by the Characteristic Bonus used for the Test). This value in hours is added to the time considered successfully spent on the Investigation. For every Degree of Success after the first, he may roll another 1d10 and subtract this value in hours from the Base Time the Investigation is projected to take. This represents the Heretics skilfully making leaps of logic and drawing on past experience in order to solve the mystery. Once the Heretics have progressed the Investigation by a preset amount of time, the GM may trigger a Plot Point (see page 73).

A failure on the Investigation Test indicates that no progress has been made. Failing an Investigation Test by three or more Degrees of Failure indicates that the Investigation has suffered a serious setback. The GM should add 1d10 hours to the Base Time required to complete the Investigation and may trigger a Complication (see below). Failing by five or more Degrees indicates that the Investigation has ground to a complete halt. The GM may either declare the Investigation a failure, or trigger a Break in the Case (see below) to allow the Heretics to get the Investigation back on track. The GM may alternatively decide to trigger a Complication, Break in the Case, or Plot Point at any time he deems it narratively appropriate to do so and, for Investigations of Arduous or greater Complexity, the GM can reduce or increase the Total Time or Base Time (based on the results of an Investigation Skill Test) by percentage increments instead of hours.

Assisting an Investigation

An Investigation Skill Test can benefit from Assistance (see page 38 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook). Each assisting ally reduces the difficulty of the Investigation Skill Test by one step. Each assisting ally must have a Linked Skill appropriate to the piece of information being investigated and no more than two allies can assist on a single Test. Assistance does not affect the Base Time of an Investigation Skill Test. Sometimes Heretics will have ideas about how to further an Investigation that are beyond the scope of a Skill Test. If a Heretic takes a particular action that the GM deems helpful to the Investigation, even if it is not particularly Skill-related, the GM can reduce the difficulty of the Investigation Skill Test or, in the case of a successful Investigation Skill Test, award the Investigation a number of Degrees of Successes based on how helpful the Heretic's actions were. If a Heretic has taken an action that the GM decides will ultimately be harmful to the Investigation, the GM can increase the difficulty of the Investigation Skill Test, or penalise a failed Investigation Skill Test with extra Degrees of Failure.

The Next Step

Once the time spent equals the Investigation's Base Time, the Investigation is a success. The Heretics receive the information they are looking for and may continue on to whatever the GM has planned for them.

COMPLICATIONS, BREAKS, AND PLOT POINTS

Each Investigation has additional events that can be triggered at various points. Complications occur when the Heretics accrue too many Degrees of Failure or hit specific triggers. Breaks in the Case occur when the Investigation completely stalls out and the GM wants to give the Heretics a second chance instead of declaring the Investigation a failure. Plot Points occur as a way for the GM to further the narrative and add additional flavour to the adventure.

Complications

Complications are challenges that occur during the Investigation. A Complication usually manifests as an in-game problem that needs to be either role played or fought through. Complications can include false leads throwing the Heretics off the right path, vital evidence being stolen, their disguises revealed, enemy factions attempting to stop the Investigation by force, or agents of a higher authority getting in the way. The possibilities are endless and the GM should always try to come up with a unique complication for the Heretics to face. The GM should provide a bonus to the next Investigation Skill Test the Heretics take if they resolve the Complication successfully.

Breaks in the Case

Failing the Investigation Test by five or more Degrees of Failure means that the Investigation has ground to a halt. The GM can allow the Heretics to fail the Investigation, or he can use a Break in the Case to get the Investigation moving again. This could come in the form of an anonymous tip pointing the Heretics back in the right direction, or perhaps a rival of their adversary offering some extra advice, or even another event taking place similar to the event that started the entire Investigation in the first place (such as the same failed ritual being attempted again). Each Break in the Case represents an opportunity that the Heretics can use to find new and different avenues for their Investigation. It may involve bringing to light information about the evidence they have already gathered or it may involve new evidence altogether.



TABLE 3-2: INVESTIGATION BENCHMARKS

Roll	Complexity	Difficulty	Examples	Base Time
01–10	Simple	Easy	Discovering marketplace gossip; finding out who runs the local slave guild.	1 hour
11–25	Basic	Routine	Learning the alignment of a powerful champion; discovering the general history of an area.	6 hours
26–40	Drudging	Ordinary	Discovering the more prominent cults in an area.	24 hours
41–60	Taxing	Challenging	Identifying an obscure poison; finding the identity of underground artefact traders.	72 hours
61–75	Laborious	Difficult	Learning the history of a daemon entity; rediscovering something the Inquisition covered up.	14 days
76–90	Involved	Hard	Translating an entire tome of ancient rituals; discovering a True Name of a daemon.	1 month
91–00	Labyrinthine	Very Hard	Learning the full True Name of a powerful greater daemon; learning how to construct a daemon engine; infiltrating an enemy cult and usurping their leadership.	1d5 years

Plot Points

Plot Points are challenges that the Heretics must overcome that tie into the main story or that reveal a critical part of the plot. Plot Points can be generic, but they are often tied to a given piece of evidence's Linked Skill. Plot Points can range from basic combat where the Heretics need to fight their way out of trouble, to a new discovery that reveals something more about their adversary, to a twist that throws them in a new direction or changes the way they viewed a previous piece of evidence, or even more details about the overall narrative within the Investigation. As with Complications and Breaks in the Case, the GM is encouraged to come up with new and interesting Plot Points to further the Investigation.

Plot Points are storytelling elements first and foremost, so it is entirely appropriate to mix and match them. Because a given piece of evidence's Linked Skill is so often tied thematically to the plot of the ongoing Investigation, it is often a good idea to incorporate the theme of that Skill into the Investigation as one of the Plot Points (such as machinery and technology if the Linked Skill was based around Tech-Use, or warp travel and voidship technology if the Linked Skill was based around the Navigate (Warp) Skill).

ENDING THE INVESTIGATION

The final step is resolving the Investigation. The GM should look at how successful or unsuccessful the Heretics were in seeing the Investigation to its close and reward or penalise them as appropriate.

Success

First and foremost, the most important result of a successful Investigation is that the Heretics get whatever piece of information they seek. Sometimes this will be the data that leads them directly to the next part of the adventure. Other times it will be important information to be used later. More rewards for the Heretics succeeding include equipment, experience, Infamy, contacts, and, where appropriate, Corruption. Generally speaking, a successful Investigation should see the Heretics rise above where they once were—there is no altruism within the Vortex, so any Investigation will likely be conducted out of selfishness or self-preservation. GMs should reward ruthless Heretics who successfully complete Investigations, especially if they emerge from the Investigation more powerful than when they first started.

Failure

The GM should also have a few failure conditions written into the Investigation. This can be as simple as a certain cumulative amount of Degrees of Failure on the Investigation Skill Test, whether or not a certain Plot Point is botched by the Heretics, or even a hard time limit. Penalties for the Heretics failing can include the loss of an important NPC, demotion and a loss of Infamy, Corruption, the ire of a powerful daemon, the loss of Dark Patronage from the Dark Gods, or a host of other negative consequences. The Screaming Vortex is an unforgiving place, so GMs are encouraged to be quite unforgiving themselves.



INSIDE THE SCREAMING VORTEX

"Of one thing, we can be certain. There can be no known living creatures or worlds in the anomaly you call the Screaming Vortex."

—Lexographer Milosh Tarnassus to the Collegium Tenebrae

Though the Eye of Terror is possibly the largest and most well known area of warp space intrusion, multiple others are scattered around the galaxy. The Screaming Vortex is one such anomaly, born of the same cataclysm which ruined the Eldar civilisation and created the Eye in its wake. Unlike the Eye or the Maelstrom which manifest as massive rents in real space, the Vortex is aptly named, being a whirlpool descending into darkness. Very few cast their eyes towards this region of space as it is painful to do so. Once caught in its aetheric current, Astropaths and Navigators find it immensely difficult to break free and the constant wailing of those who perished long ago weakens their resolve. Many have sought to peer into the Vortex and been reduced to what the Imperium considers lunacy or heresy. It is for this reason, among many other lesser ones, that the Screaming Vortex lies quietly and waits to vomit forth its own brand of torment on the Imperium of Man.

In the Screaming Vortex, the standard laws of physics, science, and time do not always hold true. The fabric of the warp blends into what was once real space. Planets and other celestial phenomena that were swallowed up by the encroaching whirlpool over the many millennia now bear little resemblance to what they were before and, in some cases, exist where they should not. Navigation here requires direct connection to the warp, either by sorcerer, psyker, or daemonic guide. The Imperial crew that accidentally finds itself in the Screaming Vortex rapidly loses themselves to the seeming randomness generated by the seething energy around them and soon adds their own voices to the choir of the damned.

The Imperium knows next to nothing about the Screaming Vortex, and what little they do know indicates only that there are some inhabited worlds in the outer edge of the maelstrom. Dubbed the Gloaming Worlds, they are the more civilised and developed worlds in the Vortex. They are also where the majority of the human population lives. Though not all of them are inhabited, many are and not all by humankind. Most of the void-faring traffic is found in this area of space, as to go deeper into the whirlpool is to risk both life and soul to the extremely turbulent storms found in the Inner Ring.

The Inner Ring is largely considered ill-served to all but the most determined or insane. Whereas the Gloaming Worlds show signs of the warp peeking through making it impossible to navigate, the Inner Ring seems to actively try to lose ships and destroy them, adding the voices of those lost to the choir of souls moaning for release. Even within the Vortex, precious little is known about the worlds found here. Occasionally, a person, group, or ship emerges from the Ascendant Spiral to share the knowledge they have gained in an effort to start

a new crusade against the Imperium. More often than not, these individuals are considered impossibly mad, sometimes rightfully so, and are slain outright. Those strong enough to have withstood what the Inner Ring and Lower Vortex have revealed, however, enlighten their new followers with the truth of the warp and the power they can earn. These are the future warlords and leaders who will bring carnage to the Imperium and shake the Corpse-God from his throne.

Below the Inner Ring lies the Lower Vortex, an area of space so saturated with the energies of Chaos that the mere sight of it drives most mortals insane. There are many theories and stories regarding what horrors exist at the heart of the Screaming Vortex, but to date no single account can be verified. It is likely that all of it and none of it are accurate. What is confirmed is that very few who have made the journey to the Lower Vortex have returned at all, much less with any semblance of sanity.

GETTING INTO THE SCREAMING VORTEX

There are many avenues to enter the Screaming Vortex, most of them extremely unstable. As a result, finding a way in other than the 13th Station of Passage is a challenge unto itself. Unlike the Eye of Terror, which almost seems to welcome new minions and followers to the Dark Gods, the Screaming Vortex welcomes no one, ally or enemy, without at least some sort of offering. Though the 13th Station is the most stable and reliable, there are two other entry areas that have been navigated often enough to consider:

- **Exile:** This planet just on the fringe of real space and the outer ring of the Vortex has a single city on it. Here, those looking for an alternate route to the Gloaming Worlds can locate a captain heading that way. The prices are very high, but as yet they have not lost a single ship to the warp. This is also the furthest the Golden Ships of Q'Sal have been able to travel. Q'Sallian captains rarely come here and, when they do, it is often on a specific task from one of the city-masters.
- **Harrowed Space:** Following in the footsteps of some of the more notorious pirate captains, this warp nebula is reputed to be able to breach into both real space and the Inner Ring, some even claim to the Lower Vortex. The risk is extremely high and finding a captain brazen enough to attempt it is almost impossible, but any who do may find power in being able to reach both sides of the veil.

THE OFFERING

Whichever way players use to enter the Screaming Vortex, there should be some sort of ritual that is played out in-game. As part of the offering to the daemonic guide or the Ruinous Powers to grant them safe passage, there should be a sacrifice by each player that is personal, and if multiple trips are made, each offering should be different. The Screaming Vortex is a dangerous area of space and should never be entered or left without some sort of barter with powers beyond their capabilities.

Q'SAL

"Q'Sal always astounds me. Everyone in the prime of their life and with all the things a man could want. It makes me quite nervous."

—Leviticus Schrupf, soul trader

Self-sufficient, largely peaceful, and highly industrious, Q'Sal is in many ways what any world in the Imperium would strive to be. It has no discernible pollution, very little in actual crime, and a trade balance that would be the envy of any sector capital world. The Imperium, however, would raze the planet to the ground simply because all of it is made manifest by the freedom of its inhabitants to use the benefits of the warp, especially foul sorcery. They would doubly raze it if they knew of the dark secrets buried under the seemingly calm façade. Ruled over by the three cities of Tarnor, Velklir, and Surgub, it is surely one of the most important and subtly dangerous worlds of the Vortex.

The juncture of the sixth and seventh anteceduals of the Vortex is a unique place in the anomaly, as normally turbulent space is negated when approaching the system. The counter storm around the planetary system is created by the specific arrangements of the three moons surrounding the planet, Malkys, Wenshai, and Entori, in conjunction with the powerful sorceries created by the Q'Sallians themselves. As the positions of the moons change, so do the careful calculations of the Velk Astromancers and terrible sacrifices to the Master of Fate needed to maintain the calming of the warp. The moons themselves are crucial as each of them has its own special properties. Malkys is a collapsing gas giant, filled with all manner of fuel sources and poisonous substances, both useful in the crafting of new charms and weapons. Wenshai is a death moon, capable of both sustaining and taking life with equal ease, and littered with the bones of those who have attempted to conquer Q'Sal. Entori is a dead rock, devoid of any atmosphere or vegetation yet housing one mysterious structure that pre-dates the earliest known civilisations, along with many sorcerous wards in case whatever once lived there rises again. Though each of the moons is large enough to be its own planet, the sorcerers have somehow tethered them to the planet and use them for Q'Sal's own benefit.

From space, the planet looks almost pristine, unlike most of the planets of the Vortex. While there are a few large inhabited areas, the rest of the planet appears largely uninhabited and calm. Once inside the atmosphere, it is possible to see the farms along the coast and in the heartland of the landmasses as well as the massive forge complexes that dot the landscape. Even in the deserts near Tarnor, the complex irrigation systems and iridescent domes make the landscape more welcoming than they would be without them. Like Chaos itself, though, Q'Sal hides its true nature behind these attractive lies.

Closer examinations reveal small areas of blighted ground. Few know their true origin, but all know that no life can thrive within them, and no weather system seems to affect them. Those who dare delve into these regions find no reasons for such anomalies, though the wisest of the ruling technosorcerers know better than even to travel near them. The occasional storms that ravage the outlying areas of the surface seem to bead off these pockets like water over drops of wax, leaving no trace and no change. They litter the surface like foul ink-blots, the most obvious sign of Q'Sal's true nature.



There is constant tension between the cities. While this is a perpetual state of activity, it occasionally breaks out into aggressive espionage, trade wars, and furtive violence. None of these disturbances lasts for very long, as the one thing the three cities all agree on is that one faction cannot become so dominant that it rules over the other two. The Pact of R'Suleir, blood-bound several centuries ago with the souls of nearly a third of the remaining populace, prohibits all-out conflict between the cities. This has not stopped the exceptionally arrogant or insane, of course, while the vast majority simply have learned to conduct their warfare through sorcerous machinations and duplicitous dealings that cannot be directly traced back to the originator. The crushing of overt conflict has led the rulers to concentrate their power though, and one day these pustules will burst forth in a planet-wide war that will surely destroy Q'Sal, if not huge swaths of the Vortex itself.

Much of Q'Sal belies the sorcerous nature of the planet. There is a massive void-docking ring that literally surrounds the entire planet, shipyards where the most sought-after vessels are crafted, and the multiple forge complexes of the three cities from which various arcane creations emerge. Again, closer examinations reveal the secrets of power on Q'Sal: the baleful runes burned into metal cooled by streaming blood, the cries of the tortured souls bound with invisible chains as they are folded into warp-charms, devices that flicker into horrid shapes out of the corner of view, and other marks that the Ruinous Powers, not simple technology, are the true masters of the planet.

III: ARCHITECTS OF DESTINY

CRAFTED OF SORCERY, TRADED FOR SOULS

While an equal representation of the three cities nominally runs the orbital shipyards, each constantly vies for greater importance and control. Double-deals and bait-and-switch are commonplace in the docking ring as operatives from different cities will occasionally sabotage private business dealings of another city in order to promote their own materials. While this may seem underhanded and counter-productive, no one faction is ever successful for long, as the other two cities will rapidly move to counter it. They also swiftly act to counter anyone who would harm them, and few dare cross the traders of Q'Sal as they are well-known for their ability to plot and plan revenge. Numerous stories of weapons "accidentally" malfunctioning and killing the user who failed to pay their full due in souls, or items disappearing at the least opportune moment after renegeing on promises, litter taprooms across the Vortex. Nevertheless, some people believe they can outwit the Arcanists, and invariably end up quickly erased from common memory, their souls added to the endless numbers that fuel Q'Sal's foul industries.

To trade with Q'Sal is to trade in souls, for in exchange for their expertise, they ask only for new souls. Whether in the form of living slaves that toil on their farms and in their forges, to souls entombed in cunningly made traps and receptacles, the sorcerer-technocrats accept nothing else for their efforts. They often insist the raw materials for their efforts are also provided such as mere base materials of bronze or stone, using their own resources only when specialised materials are needed that they do not reveal their secrets.

The shipyards above Q'Sal are marvels indeed, with huge talons of rune-inscribed metal grasping vessels in claws which will not relax until soul-debts are paid in full. Here the Golden Ships are built and docked for travel across the Vortex. These ships are sleek and gleaming, forged more from insane imagination than blunt metal, and the finest in this nightmare region. Many find to their dismay that these arcane constructs founder once they depart the Vortex though, for the sorcerer calculations used in creating the ships are not viable in base reality. Q'Sal manufactures more common ships to fill such needs, smelted in cold void and hardened to survive away from the warp-effluent that permeates the Screaming Vortex.

The docking ring is spined with lance batteries and warp cannons, as well as hidden pens of fighter craft and daemon engines. Thrall wizards stand eternal watches, soul-bound to vast ocularies to scry for approaching threats. These defences and more have repelled all attempts to take the rings for the last three thousand years.

On the surface, the arcane forges of all three cities are in perpetual motion. Through day and night, apprentices and slaves work until they meet their master's exacting demands. Their products are unmatched in the Vortex, with perhaps only the crude technologies from the Hollows on par with the wondrous creations of Q'Sal.

The Q'Sal Soul Trade is somewhat unique in the Screaming Vortex. While there are other daemonic entities that require sacrifice to garner their favour, Q'Sal is the singular planet of living beings who only trades their wares for living or trapped souls. When asked why they trade in souls, the standard answer

is only silence. Many theorise that Q'Sal needs them to use as bait to capture the daemons for their engines of war. This is true, but only a fraction are needed for such simple activities. The vast majority are fated for a much crueller end. Nations of souls are smelted down to oily elixirs only used to lubricate the tremendous daemon-lathes themselves. The remains of entire populations end as distillations, their souls refined through passage across hot coals of roasting daemon-flesh into pure essences of endless, pathetic pain which burn with a pure, blue flame hot enough to melt adamantium. Endless numbers of souls come to Q'Sal in payment each day, and while many do indeed drive the planet's arcane industries, many are desired simply on the whim of the planet's mad rulers for no other reason than it amuses them.

Devotees of the Imperial Corpse-God are especially favoured for such entertainment. Many find their souls attenuated into threads of purest despair and strung into the musical instruments the sorcerers of Tarnor favour to play for their valued guests. Others are woven into shimmering clothes that shift as the souls within are tormented through the mere contact with their owner's warp-tainted skin. More are mixed with the mortar used in constructing especially unnatural towers in Surgub, the better to help them attain such impossible heights. It is said those who wore the Rosette are fed through portals crossing insane dimensions impossible to comprehend, and the blasted remains fed into glittering gardens of cerulean and fuchsia. The fruits of these labours softly cry with each bite, weeping streams of thin blood from the fleshy pulp. Such is the fate of those who fall to the Changer of Ways and his followers on Q'Sal.



Each of the cities maintains a specific area of expertise, which helps ensure constant rivalry and conflict. In Velklir, the astronomer-binders appreciate the true freedom of the warp, obsessively observing and seeking to contain it in their cunning soul traps and binding rituals. The deserts near Tarnor show their penchant for enabling the warp to actively express itself through unique newly constructed forms that mirror their dark visions. Surgub, isolated along the coast, believes it alone truly understands the spirit of the warp, working with it to control its flow across the Sea of Souls into the soft reality inside the Vortex. Alone, each city is mighty and capable of creating devastating weapons of destruction. Together, they could very well be an unstoppable force, if any one power could unite them to cease their mad internecine fighting.

POLITICS AND INTRIGUE, BLOOD AND SOULS

Much can be said about the quality of the goods that come from Q'Sal—they are exquisitely made and potent in the hands of those who can afford and master them. That many of these are weapons of war is no accident, as the potent sorceries and warped technologies of the sorcerer-technocrats put them in high demand with the would-be warlords of the Vortex. It also locks them into an eternal rivalry with the Hollows. Though the Q'Sallians lean more toward the side of warp-infused creations, those in search of garnering power are always looking for any means to enhance their abilities.

Other than the Hollows, there are virtually no other competitors to Q'Sal in the manufacture and development of weaponry and power sources. There are others in the outer ring of the Screaming Vortex, such as the Binders of Dwimmer, who are able to create similar items, but no others have the capacity for mass production save the Mechanicus. Most of the other sources pale in quality to what any of the three cities can produce, but occasionally a curious Magister will roam the other Gloaming Worlds to see if there are other aspects of his or her craft that he can improve on or add to. These rare wanderers provide the occasional sparks of radically new ideas that improve the quality and nature of the planet's artifice.

On-planet, however, the cities constantly bicker and vie for their own power and a greater share of the soul trade. The machinations to garner power or weaken rivals is bound only by the pact, which expressly forbids outright war. Anything short of that is fair game, so sabotage, double-dealing, and false accusations are not uncommon, nor are assassinations. Despite all that, it is clear that each of the cities knows that its sister cities are necessary for survival. In the rare instances when ideas are shared, truly amazing things have happened. Aether Rays and the Golden Ships are the direct results of all three cities working more or less together, but these are rare occasions indeed and normally require a singular individual whose power and personality can bind the madness of the cities into one vision.

Of the Q'Sallians themselves, like their planet on the surface, they present an ideal society. All are uniformly handsome and healthy, eternally in their prime. Few outsiders dare inquire of those who do not conform to such ideals, however, and those who do are never seen again. Despite the rule of Tzeentch on the planet, Q'Sal hides its mutable nature away from the

rest of the Vortex. Those with obvious physical deformities are flesh-sculpted into more appealing shapes, fractions of their souls used to appease the daemon-lathes that carve their forms. Those gifted with mutations from the Changer of Ways sacrifice their lives to the glory of Tzeentch in massive pyres in secret locations in each city, part of the Pact of R'Suleir that imposes unnatural order upon the wild chaos of the planet. Such offerings appear to mollify their god, for such insanities seem to appeal his twisted nature. Few grow old, using their sorcerous powers to maintain youthful appearance both for themselves and their retainers as a sign of their might, but those who do are rendered down into foul liquids that slake the thirst of labourers working the daemon-forges. Q'Sal values its appearance above almost all else, and its people are as carefully used for this as much as the rest of the planet.

SURGUB

The island city of Surgub lies in the southern hemisphere of Q'Sal at the Bay of Crelix. Roughly 25 kilometres long and 8 kilometres wide (though the dimensions change with each measurement), the island portion of the city serves as the main hub of trade. The bulk of the population lives in the lower tiers of the city's many crystalline spires. Most of the forges are not located in the city itself, as they are inherently dangerous to the population centre. The surrounding smaller islands along the coast house the majority of the most advanced and experimental smithies, as well as many of the caged daemons awaiting binding into new engines and charms.

The architecture on Surgub extends ever upward, a constant declaration of each denizen's superiority over his neighbours. Personal prestige is measured by the height of a sorcerer's tower, with those on par with the ruling Factors living so far above the city floor that they are often unable to see the surface. The bulk of the population lives much closer to the surface, but few save slaves actually touch ground. Surgubites believe that direct connection with the earth grounds their own personal energies and thus is an affront to Tzeentch, making them less able to control the warp energies around them.

Isolated from the other cities, Surgub boasts the most advanced production centre on the planet aside from the shipyards. Surgubites claim that the relative peace enables them to commune far more easily with the Architect of Fate and therefore design creations more aligned with his overall purpose. The grand-theorists of Velklir and the builder-demagogues in Tarnor disagree vehemently, of course, stating that the island's penchant for constant re-iteration of old work does not denote advancement. This does nothing to dissuade the Surgubite architects, who meld stone with warp-energies to defy gravity itself in their insane designs.

Of the three cities, Surgub has traditionally held a view of improving on what is currently known until it reaches its pinnacle. Their constant willingness to mutate old designs has led to tremendous breakthroughs in their main area of expertise: channelling power. No one on the planet understands the flow of warp energy better than a sorcerer from Surgub. Their innate sense of how to bend, slow, and enhance the flow of power has prevented many mishaps in the forges and allowed some of their more amazing creations to be made. The Factors of Surgub even claim that the only

reason R'Suleir was able to bind the Auruntaur was because of a visiting master channeller who rushed to the aid of the constructor-savant. Few believe this to be true, but the stories of the beast's creation do leave many questions unanswered.

Ruling over the city and its forges are the Fourteen Factors, whose palaces stand at the highest points of the spires that crown the city. Rarely seen anywhere remotely close to the ground, these mysterious sorcerers are among the most powerful beings in the city. The Factors watch the three moons' passage and meet only when there are at least two moons in auspicious alignment, with the location of their meeting places determined by which two align, and where. No two meetings are ever held in the same place.

Aside from their seemingly absolute political power, the Factors also wield powerful magics the likes of which very few have ever mastered. Many say that to stand in even one of the Factor's presence is to invite madness and a longing for death. Whether or not this is actually true, the general population lives in fear of these beings, halting all activity should they make a decree or begin designating new ordinances for the city.

Below the Factors are the Forgemasters, artisans and sorcerers without peer outside of Q'Sal. Each operates in his own inscrutable fashion and controls his own tower-complex, where he is able to build items and devices of power. In these halls, the sorcerer's will reigns supreme, and slaves toil constantly to ensure that the output of the forge is never questioned. Outside these halls, each vies for more power and the downfall (literally, in many cases) of their rivals. Schemes within schemes are common, all glorifying their god with each plot and betrayal in his name.

TARNOR

Out in the northern deserts of Q'Sal, the iridescent city of Tarnor is splayed out across the sands like some bizarre gelatinous creature lifted from the depths of the ocean. Easily the largest of the three cities in surface area, Tarnor lays claim to the most efficient and well-developed systems of irrigation and energy maintenance on the planet. Covered aqueducts of glowing marble connect the mountain lowlands to bring cooled water to the city, each sip tainted with the subtle energies of the enscrolled marble.

Most of the city is made of dome-shaped buildings, multi-coloured and ever-changing with the whim of their magister. While these structures are indeed impressive, the real city rests under the sand level, buried away from prying eyes or sorcerous scrying. Most of these colourful domes are retractable, allowing for massive creations to be driven out from the depths below and unleashed upon the Vortex.

Even though each of the other cities has a basic shuttle port inside its walls, Tarnor's flat and spacious landscape makes it the only viable alternative for the main access point off world for the goods they sell and the souls they collect. Here the bulk lifters for the war engines and vehicles, as well as the transports for the living payment, have plenty of open space to land and load. Surrounding the starport is a secondary market for incoming souls used for the Q'Sallians themselves. Here, individual sorcerers are able to hire compatriots from other cities to aid in their projects for a price. Novice sorcerers are usually found here collecting the expertise and contacts they will need to prosper in their dangerous profession, though many never survive their first deal.

Below the surface is a vast subterranean labyrinth where the bulk of the residents live. The layout is one monstrous, unruly settlement quite unlike the ordered area above ground, which changes as various power factions fight each other for prized access ways. Corridors move daily, depending on which sect is dominant, and entire blocks may evaporate into forthcoming nightmares when powerful rivals clash. These would be loud, bustling places in any other city, but in Tarnor they are some of the quietest places on the planet.

Due to the Arch Qaestor's decree, speech is forbidden for the next 180 years due to what were considered blasphemous utterances about the history of Q'Sal. Only a handful of people know what was said and an even smaller number actually heard the words spoken aloud. No native of the city dares say a word, communicating with only complex sign language while their calm-faced masks reveal nothing. Visitors in Tarnor find it exceptionally difficult to make deals unless they understand the signs themselves or hire those willing to translate, a lucrative occupation for many of the lower classes deep in the city.

Even though no one speaks, the one sound that is routinely heard within the city limits is music. Haunting melodies and lilting strings mix with the beats of rhythms so complex a mad mathematician must have concocted them. During the daylight hours, the tones blend together as the harmonies seem to enhance work production in both the slaves and the sorcerers. At night, however, stranger, darker melodies creep into the music and the overall sound is far more dissonant. Visitors who have tried to locate the sources roam throughout the city, never finding anything more than a loss of sleep. Many have postulated that the night music has served as a secondary mode of communication for those who know about the Transgression, and perhaps seek to bring those words into greater circulation. The few who have believed this and worked to decipher have become utterly mad and suddenly disappeared soon afterward.

Tarnor is considered by the other cities to be the stodgy old maid of the three sisters. While the sorcerers there are incredible craftsmen and builders, they are not well known for innovation. In most "discussions" about new creations, especially in the shipyards, Tarnese sorcerers seek to preserve the perfection of the past rather than alter the designs that Tzeentch favoured in the past. Tarnor was the home of R'Suleir and the "birthplace" of the Auruntaur, perhaps the greatest creation of Q'Sal, so their view does have merit. Where Tarnese artisans do excel and push the limits of their capabilities is in refining materials beyond their natural limits. The resilient fabrics of the Aether Rays as well as the gossamer hulls of the Golden Ships are products of this city, making some of their wares the most valued in the Vortex. No one on Q'Sal doubts the reliability and strength of what Tarnor builds, only whether or not they maintain their steadfast dedication to the Grand Architect's design.





VELKLIR

Velklir also faces some of the harshest climates on Q'Sal. Though Tarnor contends with the intense heat of the desert and Surgub occasionally has coastal storms, Velklir is in a perpetual state of cold atop the southern edge of the Corstag Mountain range. The city would normally have a more temperate climate, but the its heights leave it fully exposed to weather from all directions. The mountain range blocks the thunderstorms at lower levels, but they offer no protection in the heights and the storms hit with tremendous power and dazzling lightning, which the sorcerer-auguries carefully study. The population has adapted to the weather well, however, only coming down off the peaks when necessary to associate with and educate their "less informed" brethren.

The walls along the main roads to the city are covered with the faces of past tyrants of Velklir. Carved out of crystal-flecked basalt, the rigid countenances of the former rulers show the seriousness of the Velk's passion for their craft. They also serve as a warning to any non-Q'Sallian who enters the city. Though their cutthroat reputation is already well-known, many off-worlders have come to Velklir to barter and haggle with the Astromancers and had a change of heart when the eyes of the city's past see through their plans.

The highest peak of the southern range, Mount Al' K'Dok flattens out into a great plateau where the bulk of the towers, observatories, and labs are located. Slightly smaller peaks nearby contain some of the more volatile laboratories and city processes, as well as housing vast gardens devoted to myriad colourful plant life. These gardens contribute a unique fungi found only in this area. Originally only a minor strain, it was strengthened with rendered fats and diets of the last visions of dying slaves, and is now a major food source for the city's elite rulers.

Atop the plateau, arrayed against the star-filled sky, are the countless astrolabes, telescopes, and scrying engines of the Velk sorcerers. In Velklir, more than the other two cities, techno-sorcery is pushed to its limit each day. From determining the correct portents to complete a new incantation to binding daemons of immense power into items for sale, the mountain city spares no effort in finding the newest and most fantastical ways to leverage their talents. This obsession drives them to commit increasingly reckless acts of sorcery and divination, frequently rending the veil to the warp and seeking information they were not meant to have. Individual seers have been known to spend weeks in total seclusion pondering the next mystery or designing the next incantation. Though similar efforts are not unheard of in Surgub or Tarnor, to the Velk, it is ingrained in the very nature of the city. As a result, the Velk consider themselves the most skilled sorcerers on the planet, while the practitioners in both Surgub and Tarnor scoff at these reckless applications of the art and shake their heads at the losses incurred with the all-too-common failures.

Lending credence to their self-proclaimed superiority are the city's dual specialities. Velklir is widely known for the quality of the navigational materials from the Astral Seers, whose products guide almost all worthy vessels in the Screaming Vortex. These range from charts showing the movement of stars yet to be born, sapphire mirrors that reveal warp vortices, books bound in daemon-hide with pages that scream their fury at the void and clear pathways across the Emyrean, and mysterious devices of metal and flesh that twist with unseen ætheric winds. All these and more are the hallmark of Velklir, impossible constructions that could not possibly function outside of this mad realm.

The Seers have resources constantly scrying for new signs and movement in the heavens (and hells) to help improve the quality of the artefacts they make and therefore the soul count they receive. Visiting sorcerers from other cities are never allowed into the main observatory, for fear of gleaning information or by some fluke discovering something the Seers themselves did not. Though not as tall as some of the towers of Surgub, those sorcerers claim their direct connection to the more elemental state of change makes them far better servants to Tzeentch.

The other speciality in the mountain city is the containment of warp energy, both raw and daemonic. It is no surprise that the city has its share of accidents given that it works with power in its most basic form, but the Velk pride themselves on their ability to put massive power into items of any size. From the rune-covered stone tablets that power the Golden Ships to the intricate inscriptions placed along the blades of their signature rapiers, Velklir's artisan-scientists are known for the sheer power they entomb into their creations.

Sorcerer-Technocrats of Q'Sal

Every native of Q'Sal exhibits some level of psychic awareness and ability. Most are limited, but the most powerful rise to become the powers that drive the planet. These are the Sorcerer-Technocrats, naturally gifted psykers and engineers who dominate the planet with their creations. Whether they build devices to see the future or weapons to break starships, the forges of these three cities and the arcane engineers who run them are the most vital resource of the planet. Their skills at sorcery are only matched by the byzantine plots they spin around each other, labyrinths of duplicity which tie them together in knots of lies and deception.

Sorcerer-Technocrat of Q'Sal (Elite)

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
26	26	3I	35	3I	45	36	5I	34	19

Move: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 15

Armour: Mesh Combat Cloak (4 All)

Total TB: 3

Skills: Logic (Int) +10, Inquiry (Int) +10, Commerce (Int), Deceive (Fel), Forbidden Lore (Psykers) (Int), Psyniscience (Per), Common Lore (Screaming Vortex) (Int), Scholastic Lore (Legend) (Int), Tech Use (Int)+10, Trade (Shipwright) (Int).

Talents: Fearless, Psy Rating 3, any two psychic powers from Unaligned or Tzeentch lists.

Traits: Psyker.

Weapons: Power Blade (1d10+8E; Pen:5; Power Field, Balanced) *or* Warp Staff (1d10 I; Pen 0), Laspistol (Pistol; 30m; 1d10+2E; Pen:0; Clip:30; Half, Reliable) *or* Hand Cannon (Pistol; 35m; 1d10+4I; Pen:2; Clip: 5; 2 Full).

Gear: Finely made heavy robes, Tarnor Mirror Mask (Tarnor Only), various warp charms and trinkets.

Additional Skills/Talents by City Affiliation:

Surgub: Forbidden Lore (Warp) (Int), Psyniscience (WP) +10, Trade (Shipwright) (Int) +10, Warp Sense, +1 Psychic power.

Tarnor: Forbidden Lore (Daemonology, Archeotech) (Int), Linguistics (Tarnor Sign) (Int), Trade (Armourer) (Int).

Velklir: Navigate (Stellar, Warp), Scholastic Lore (Numerology, Astromancy), Trade (Astrographer).



DAEMON ENGINES

Daemon engines are bizarre and frightening hybrids of mechanical ingenuity and arcane impossibility. Fusing a daemon to a mechanical construct requires the most precise calculations on both ends of the ætheric spectrum. Any mistake in the incantation often lets the daemon loose, or worse. Any defect in the construction results in the daemon having complete control of a mechanism of mass destruction that was to be its prison. As a result, the forge-masters of all three cities take extreme precautions to prevent mishaps, or at least contain them quickly.

Unlike vehicles or war engines, daemon engines trade off the overt durability of total mechanisation for increasing their shock value through fear and warp-spawned abilities. As a result, all daemon engines have the following restrictions:

- As they are sentient, daemon engines use regular living creature's stat-line and overall rules.
- All daemon engines have the Daemon Engine Trait (see below).
- Any crew bound inside or to the engine cannot be separately targeted as they are melded into the construct.

Should the engine receive Critical Damage, the extent of the damage is measured not only in the systems needing repair, but also in the unravelling of the carefully laid runes and bindings upon the daemon inside. As these bindings are ruined, the daemonic entity may try to exert itself and break the holds the sorcerers have placed on it. If it breaks free, we to anyone nearby as a daemon's anger knows no limit! Use **Table 3-3: Daemon Engine Critical Hit Chart** on page 82 for determining Critical Damage on a daemon engine.



Æther Ray

The Æther Ray is a relatively new construct, designed after the Pact of R'Suleir was enacted as a symbol of the newly united planet. This period ended quickly, but not before this new daemon engine took flight. These act as both a transport for the elite of the planet as well as a powerful symbol of a city's might. Those viewing the beast soaring above them know the terrible power enchaind within, and the even greater power it took to keep such a creature bound in service.

Built on a light alloy chassis and draped with metallic fabric daubed with runes that burn the eye, the main chassis is massive and smooth, more akin to ocean life than the air. Once infused with the essence of bound Screamer of Tzeentch, however, it shows its true nature. The fabric hardens as the foul energies permeate the material, translating gross matter into a fleshy alloy that ill-refracts light and brushes off gravity. Sharpened wings grow out from the sides, and an iridescent fluked tail emerges from the rear. Quasi-organic strands extrude along the back, ready for those who dare ride atop the beast to grab hold for their very lives. When the change is complete, the form reveals the daemons used in its creation, a huge flattened metallic ray now ready to take flight. The very air around it shimmers with the contained hate of the daemons bound within, eager for escape and destruction.

Each Æther Ray is bound to a specific sorcerer with runes infused with tendrils of his soul, so while theft is impractical, sabotage is not uncommon. Slight alterations in the runic bindings have enabled some to be used for travel across the void, using globes that appear as thin as soap bubbles to contain lives of the riders. Further research suggests that warp travel is also possible, though no one is known to have tried. To ride atop a Ray, knowing that if the daemon should break its shackles even the smallest amount can lead to a painful, plummeting death, is fearful enough. To ride one through the Sea of Souls could lead to a fate far worse, for death would be only the beginning of an eternity of torments. Some whisper that this has already been accomplished, and Æther Rays are ready to glide above new worlds to spread the might of Q'Sal across the Vortex.

Æther Rays are commonly crafted in three sizes, depending on the desires of their sorcerer-creator. Passengers ride along the back and sides of the daemon engine, holding on via cleverly extruded grips and foot anchors as they fly to their inscribed destination, praying to the Changer of Ways that his eyes not turn to them whilst in transit.



NEW TRAITS

Daemon Engine (X): The creature is a hybrid of daemon and machine, fusing technology and sorcery in a way that is both seamless and horrifying. The visual impact of these entities strikes fear into friend and foe alike and provides it additional protection against standard armaments. The daemon engine has the combined effects of From Beyond and The Stuff of Nightmares and is therefore immune to Fear, Pinning, Stunning, Insanity, Poison, and Disease. It cannot be controlled by Psychic Powers that affect the mind, as it is bound to the sorcerous runes holding the construct together. In addition, daemon engines gain a Toughness bonus equal to the number in parentheses, which like that for the Daemonic trait, can be negated by force weapons, holy/sanctified weapons, or direct damage psychic powers.

Warp Shroud: Much like the Void Shields of the Imperium, the Sorcerers of Q'Sal have found ways to protect their larger creations from damage. The Shroud manifests as a thin nimbus of flame around the construct and protects it from all harm save that from Blessed, Sanctified, or Force weaponry or Psychic Powers. It acts as an additional 2d10 points of armour, but can be possibly brought down when the daemon engine takes Critical Damage.

Æther Ray (Personal)

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
26	45	50	50	55	32	46	45	--	--

Movement: 5/10/15/30 (Flying)

Wounds: 54

Armour: None

Total TB: 10

Skills: Awareness (Per) +10, Dodge (Ag) +10, Piloting Mastery (Int), Psyniscience (WP) +10.

Talents: None.

Traits: Daemon Engine (5), Fear (2), Flyer (5), Size (7), Warp Shroud.

Passenger Capacity: 3.

Weapons: Ram (3d10+5 I; Pen 2; Devastating (2), Razor Sharp); Hull-mounted Daemonic Breath (Heavy; 200m; S/-/-; 3d10+10 E; Pen 5; Devastating (6); Recharge, Spray, Warp Weapon).

Creating Æther Rays of Larger Sizes

To create Æther Rays for the larger Group and Team sizes, apply the following modifiers and rules:

Group: +5 to Weapon Skill, Strength, and Toughness, -2 to Agility, +1 to Flyer and Size. Passenger Capacity grows to 9.

Team: +10 to Weapon Skill, Strength, and Toughness, -5 to Agility, +2 to Flyer and Size. Passenger Capacity grows to 18 and the Daemon Engine Trait is now 6 (and thus the Toughness Bonus is now 11).

TABLE 3-3: DAEEMON ENGINE CRITICAL HIT CHART

Roll	Result
01-3	Distracting Blow: The daemon is annoyed by the touch from its enemies' weapons. It must take a Willpower Test with a level of 50 not to engage the source of that attack in its next attack. If it was already focused on this target, then it will move with all haste to fully engage the target with both weapons. If the Engine has a Warp Shroud, it is brought down on a 1d10 roll of 6 or less.
4-6	Ablative Strike: The attack strips layers of armour off the engine as well as some of the protective runes. Reduce its Armour by 1d10 points. In addition, any future Critical Damage results receive a bonus of +2 on this chart. This is a cumulative bonus should multiple Ablative Strikes affect the daemon engine. Warp Shrouds are brought down on a 1d10 roll of 8 or less.
7-8	Weapon Damaged: Randomly select one of the daemon engine's weapons. That weapon bears the brunt of the attack and takes the full effects of the blow. Roll 1d10, and on a roll of 7 or more, the weapon can be used the next round. Otherwise, the weapon is inoperable until repaired at a later time.
9	Penetrating Hit: A powerful attack breaches the construct's structure and weakens the bindings that hold the daemon inside. Its armour is reduced by 1d10 points, it loses its Warp Shroud, and roll an additional 2d10 points of Damage. As the hull has been breached in some capacity, roll a further 1d10 and on a roll of 9 or 10, the daemon engine suffers a Daemon Unbound! result below.
10	Daemon Unbound! The attack is strong enough or well-placed enough that it undoes the bindings that hold the daemon in the war machine. For all game purposes, the engine is vaporised as the daemon is released into the material world. The sudden release of warp energy causes an explosion with a 2d10x10 metre radius, leaving a crater in its place. Anyone caught within the blast radius suffers 5d10+10E damage ignoring Armour (unless warded against psychic abilities). Reduce the Damage by 2 points for every full 10 metres the target is away from the exploding engine. Alternatively, the GM can reduce the blast to 2d10+5E and a demon can manifest, freed from its shackles. It may offer the players thanks, engage them in combat, attack their foes, or do all three and more depending on the alignment of the daemon and the adventure underway.

Mirrorfiend

The Mirrorfiend is a construct exclusively of Tarnor and is one of the more sought after designs from the desert city. Slightly smaller than a battle tank, it appears as a glimmering, polished beast that reflects base reality into constantly altering shapes on its silvered surface. Shaped like one of the giant beetles of the desert, it moves with an unnatural grace and speed that contradicts its massive form. When on the ground, the body is supported by six spindly legs that do not seem capable of supporting its weight, with insectoid wings of spun light that somehow allow it to scuttle through the air as easily as it does on the land.

Trapped in each shell is a named greater daemon of the Architect of Fate, furious at its imprisonment and eager to wreck its vengeance upon all mortals. The originally dull lead vessel shimmers as the daemon merges with metal, a fraction of its essence transmuting the base shell into a reflector so perfect that light appears to shy away from its surface with disdain, eager to bounce away from such matter.

Chained into its metal cage, the daemon within the Mirrorfiend exerts what power it can onto the outside world through its psychic powers and the metal claws of its new body. Scores of sorcerer-handlers prod the creature against their foes, seeking for the Mirrorfiend to rend only their enemies. They carefully watch the binding wards for signs of decay lest the daemon escape, knowing that Tzeentch is pleased with their display of power only as long as they maintain it.

When sent into battle, massive pincers of daemonflesh emerge, each a symbol of the soul-lust barely constrained within. Its power also emerges as invasive tendrils of warp energies, delving into those near it with twisting visions that reflect the memories of its foes with doubts and fears even as its surface reflects their visages into mutated shapes. Many weak mortals fall to their knees questioning their very existence even before the Mirrorfiend grows near enough to snip off their heads, ending all such doubts. Some Mirrorfiends have even tricked their creators with such powers, breaking free and wrecking death on all around them before returning into the warp. Depending on the soul-chains used to bind it, the daemon engine may also display a

wide range of psychic talents. While armour falls to its mandibles, other targets fall prey to blasts of raw sorcerous energy. All those who witness such destruction know it is only an echo of Q'Sal's possible might should it unite against the rest of the Vortex.

Mirrorfiend									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
39	35	48 ⁸	54 ¹¹	38 ⁸	57	50	62	45	--

Movement: (Ground) 14/28/42/84 (Flying) 10/20/30/60

Wounds: 36

Armour: Machine Trait (27 all)

Total TB: 11

Crew: Daemonic Essence.

Skills: Awareness (Per) +20, Dodge (Ag), Invocation (WP) +20, Psyniscience (WP) +20.

Talents: Ambidextrous, Independent Targeting, Two Weapon Wielder (Melee & Ranged).

Traits: Daemon Engine (6), Fear (3), Flyer (10), Machine (27), Mirror of Souls†, Psy Rating (6), Psyker, Quadruped (2), Size (7), Warp Shroud.

†**Mirror of Souls:** When engaging a Mirrorfiend in close combat, a player must make a **Challenging (+0) Willpower Test** before actually attacking, as the polished surface of the beast reflects back every poor choice the character has made in its lifetime. Characters tied to the Ecclesiarchy or who are sanctioned psykers get a -10 penalty to their test as their images show their beloved God-Emperor as nothing more than a shrivelled husk. Success means he may continue his attack, but he loses a Half Action for his troubles while Failure Stuns the character for 1d5 turns.

Weapons: Head-mounted Daemon Pincers (4d10+20 R; Pen 2; Warp Weapon).

Psychic Powers: The Mirrorfiend has access to all the Unaligned, Tzeentch, and Telepathy powers. As a Half Action it may use any two powers every turn it does not engage in close combat, but one power if engaged.

The Auruntaur

Born of a catastrophic mishap within the forges of Tarnor during the last ruinous wars, the Auruntaur literally stands above any war engine produced on Q'Sal. Thus far, only one has been created as its designer and binder, R'Suleir the Grand, sacrificed himself and his life's work to bind the daemonic monstrosity to his construct. When he realised the power of the daemon he had entreated, he sacrificed the entire slave pool and all his apprentices to control the daemon. This created the single largest war creation to come from the planet. Since the loss of the original designer, however, it is unlikely that there will be another, as any construction like it would break the pact which has maintained the peace.

Only slightly smaller in height than a Reaver Battle Titan, the Auruntaur is a golden, four-legged creature of destruction, built largely of ensorcelled materials and housing a daemon of immense power. Where the main body is entirely mechanical, the centaur-like upper torso is mostly daemonic. The two arms sport relatively close-range weaponry for something of its huge size, but they are no less devastating to their targets. The right arm is mechanical, covered in spines that almost appear alive but are made of hardened brass. It is tipped with a huge, rune-etched blade of capable of slicing vehicles in half. The left arm is akin to that from a gargantuan Flamer of Tzeentch, fleshy and mutable. It vomits forth great gouts of warp flame, and creatures and vehicles alike are either altered or destroyed under these iridescent fires.

The Auruntaur has no head; instead, mounted firmly in the chest of the torso, are a single red, cyclopean eye and a platform jutting out mid-abdomen, ringed with spikes suggesting a fanged under bite. Atop the platform, bound by the final incantations of the master artificer, R'Suleir's most accomplished apprentices still struggle to maintain control of the daemon. None of them show signs of aging or fading in power, but there are many who wonder how long that will last and what will happen should any of them falter and the daemon gain control.

In generations past, the Auruntaur has awoken to action but none can fathom what drives its actions. It quelled a renegade slave rebellion in Tarnor, but also released a warp-fire plague that burned much of Velklir. It destroyed an entire section of Surgub's outskirts, crashing towers into the sea, but then marched to eradicate an invasion for blood-crazed Khornate warriors. These excursions are thankfully short-lived, few relishing the site of this massive creation marching towards its unknowable destinations. Many of the more power-hungry and mad techno-sorcerers have tried to entreat the daemon-engine to work for them, but are met with infuriating silence. For the last two hundred years, the Auruntaur has been totally inactive, standing vigil over one of the blighted areas at the equator as though expecting something to emerge from the dead zone. Entire cults have sprung up near it to worship the daemonic machine, their sacrifices perhaps to a god that does not bear witness to their rites. Many of the elite keep wary eyes and warp-auguries focused on the Auruntaur, afraid both that the mad engine might come to life and that it will not should Q'Sal need it to survive.

Auruntaur (Master)

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
45	55	72	64	51	32	46	45	--	--

Movement: 22/44/66/132

Wounds: 243

Armour: Machine Trait (54 all)

Total TB: 14

Crew: Daemonic Essence and Cabal of nine bound Sorcerers.

Skills: Awareness (Per) +20, Dodge (Ag), Psyniscience (WP) +10.

Talents: Ambidextrous, Independent Targeting, Two Weapon Wielder (Melee & Ranged).

Traits: Daemon Engine (8), Fear (4), Machine (54), Quadruped, Size (10), Warp Shroud.

Weapons: Daemonblade (5d10+19 E; Pen 12; Warp Weapon), Arm Spines (2d10+12 R; Pen: 5; Rending), and a gigantic Flamer arm (Heavy; 200m; S/-/-; 4d10+9 E; Pen 6; Firestorm of Change†, Flame, Recharge, Spray).

†**Firestorm of Change:** If the Flamer weapon arm wounds a living creature and does not kill it outright, the target must pass a **Difficult (-10) Willpower Test** or gain 1d10 Corruption Points. If it causes Critical Damage to non-living targets, add 1d5 to the Critical Damage done. These points count as a Failing and thus any penalties for Failure should apply.



THE HOLLOWS

"Torn asunder by war and united by hate. Twin Forges hammering out the chorus of battle, crafting talons of death upon brass wings. Lies, threats, contradictions, and half-truths are the local tongue. If the Hollows does not rip itself apart first, it is a lovely place to visit."

—Asrodel the Fated

Amongst the Gloaming Worlds on the outer ring of the Screaming Vortex, few worlds are as immediately recognisable as the Hollows. From the void, the planet seems oddly deserving of the name; like a dismembered corpse, only a little more than half a world spins in orbit. The upper hemisphere is mostly intact, crumbling remains spiralling outwards from the lower half where only a stem has been left behind. Like a rotten, half-eaten fruit cast into the stars, the Hollows is a world that could only exist within the reality-bending zone of a warp storm.

HELLWHISPER

It was not always so—once, when it was whole, this world bore the name Hellwhisper. Rich in natural resources, habitable by a wide array of biologies, and strategically located within the Vortex, Hellwhisper was a rich prize that drew the attention of a group of outcasts from the tech-priests of Mars.

Led by Arch-Magos Elikous, the Heretekes established three massive forge complexes on Hellwhisper and swiftly earned a reputation for producing large quantities of useful technology to the denizens of the Vortex. Elikous left two of the forges to his most brilliant protégés and locked himself away in the third forge, the largest and most advanced facility. There, Elikous focused his brilliant mind and prodigious technical skills upon a mysterious project of his own devising. No records remain to explain Elikous' obsession, but there are many whispered legends of what happened next.

Most of the surviving accounts vary wildly in details and often contradict each other, but the most detailed of these records are the hololiths of Graz'tzar. According to those leximechanics possessing the proper protocols to access such proscribed data, Graz'tzar—first Prophitect of the Stygian Order—spoke only after several sessions of torture and recounted the following tale:

Shrieking daemons emerged from every portal and crevice of Elikous' Forge, and the very metal itself flowed and twisted in bizarre new configurations. The ground trembled and massive manufactorium blocks flexed like muscle and sinew. Bellowing a cyclopean birth cry, the forge-daemon—for no other name could describe such a colossal creature—began an apocalyptic rampage across Hellwhisper. The remaining two Forges deployed terrifying new weapons of legendary devastation, Chaos Titans, and armies of cyber-enhanced followers in an attempt to put down the maddened, city-sized beast. The battle raged for untold weeks, but in the end, the two Forges prevailed—battered and spent, but victorious. No sign of Arch-Magos Elikous was ever found amongst the wreckage of his warp-twisted, ambulatory Forge.



ETERNAL WAR

Whatever the true fate of Arch-Magos Elikous may have been, the survivors of both remaining Forges wasted no time in declaring themselves the true heir to Elikous' legacy, triggering a struggle for control over the planet's abundant resources that has gone on for six centuries.

Hellwhisper was carved up like a feast between the two warring Forges, stripped of vast amounts of heavy metals, chemicals, and precious ores. Deep-core mining devoured huge amounts of the planet's lower hemisphere, depleting nearly half the world's total mass and beginning what was perhaps inevitable from the start. Hellwhisper was gone, and only the Hollows remained.

Now, the planet is consumed by the flames of war; armies of barely-trained menials equipped with bionic war-implants and shock-pikes clash with sophisticated battle servitors while orbital strikes lance down into formations of scuttling Velocireapers threatening the flanks of disciplined mechanical troops. The two Forges employ much more unusual forces as well, willing to utilise ludicrously destructive weapons, soldiers, and stratagems to settle their ancient grudge once and for all.

Although the conflict still grinds on, over the last decade the advantage has been grasped by the forces of the Exospectre, and Forge Castir holds the upper hand on the Hollows. While the armies of Forge Polix still control vital areas of the Hollows—

The viridian glow of a hololith lit up the small control cathedrum, displaying the malignant red glow of the intruders and the daggered icons of Tech-assassins responding to the alert. Garthin wrapped his tattered robe tighter around his augmetics and felt a coil of pure, white-hot fear settling deep into his core. He could feel the power pouring through the complex. The Exospectre had arrived, and in the reflected glow of the hololith in his master's vid-ceptors, Garthin knew there was no escape.

"Master, I... please, let me explain." Garthin's voice babbled through his vox-synthesiser in a rushed blurt of corrupted binary, his fear making him careless in the poor coding of his communication.

The Exospectre said nothing, only glided closer until Garthin was forced to arch his neck in order to meet the Magos' searing gaze. Two hunched servitors attended at the Exospectre's side, their eyes obscured by riveted brass plates inscribed with twisted runes. Ichor and oils dripped from cracks in their plating.

A mechadendrite slithered out from beneath the Exospectre's tattered cloak, its spiked end glistening with foul-smelling oils. The mechadendrite darted forward, stabbing the data-spike into a matching receptor stitched into one of the servitor's skulls. Motionless, the Exospectre paused while the servitor adjusted, shivering. Its mouth opened, lips crawling as a resonant voice issued from the slave creature.

"Let me tell you how much you have failed, Garthin. There are 387.44 kilometres of runemarked circuits in wafer-thin layers filling this sub-complex. If the word "failure" was engraved upon every nanoangstrom of those thousands of metres, it would not equal one one-billionth of the failure you have displayed at this singular moment."

Garthin threw himself down to his knees, pressing his metallic forehead to the floor.

"Master, I beg you..." He began, only to be cut off by his master's voice. The words were croaked from the servitor's gray, fleshless lips, its face spasming with the force of each syllable, the power burning out his augmetics with each utterance.

"When my great work is complete, worlds will burn. And yet you dither. You prevaricate. You delay. You... are an obstacle. Obstacles must be removed."

Garthin jerked spasmodically to his feet, gaze darting to the door for escape. The hatchway hissed open, revealing ranks of masked Excrucimancers moving in implacable union. Their steps echoed heavily across the cathedrum as they reached for him.

Garthin issued a thin scream, a despairing wail rendered into binary through his vox-synthesiser that abruptly cut off as he was surrounded by the masked figures. Coldly, the Exospectre observed and issued one last command before turning to leave.

"Prepare him. His current form is unacceptable. He is to become an Aposticator, a living reminder of the price of inadequacy."

such as the Forgeflow and Mechmoor—they have slowly been forced back into a defensive posture. Any significant change in this bitter conflict is likely to be wrought from without rather than within—a fact that has not escaped the two rival Magi, who even now seek for allies and mercenaries to support their bid for absolute domination of the Hollows.

Both Magos Onuris and the Exospectre are constantly focused on the war between them, but both would also be greatly interested in tipping the balance of power by gaining an advantage in technology or allies. The Exospectre has already located and plundered a Necron tomb, claiming its technology for his own uses. This act has spurred Magos Onuris to try to establish contact with Necron forces in the Screaming Vortex, hoping to locate a Necron Lord with whom he can bargain for assistance against his hated foe.

FORGE CASTIR

Surrounded by acres of ruined scrap metal and wrecked debris of countless machines, Forge Castir rises like a rust-red mountain many miles above the ground. The Forge belches forth a volcanic plume of toxic gases from the many smelters and manufactorums within. Outside, long, twisting arteries of mag-rails convey raw materials into the forge and sophisticated technology out to far-flung outposts and sub-forges.

A spiderwebbed maze-like system of corridors—lined with pipes, sparking wires, valves and turning cogs—connects the various areas of Forge Castir. Each level is divided into a series of chambers containing individual works in progress. Each item crafted by Forge Castir is an individual, unique piece—many of them masterwork examples of their kind. More than a few items held in chambers near the apex of the forge incorporate various xenos technology and systems, but only a bare handful have anything to do with the energies of the warp. It is not uncommon to find alien traders rubbing shoulders with Chaos Space Marines and would-be champions of the Dark Gods, all seeking a particular weapon or item custom-made from depths of Forge Castir.

The very highest level is crammed with humming cogitators, lovingly maintained by a hand-tuned host of servitors. These cogitators are purpose-built with specific data-matrices to collect and study individual machine-spirits, assigning different areas to catalogue and segregate them by complex occult formulae.

Some Hereteks whisper that entirely new machine-spirits are crafted in the upper levels of Forge Castir, synthesised from the forced combinations of the strongest, most aggressive, or most insane of machine-spirits that the Forge has carefully selected for such traits. These gene-locked infotombs and data-transects are engraved with minute lines of binary micro-runes and charms to ward off unauthorised access. However, from time to time, a memory cloud of suppressed data escapes even these precautions and infects servitors and Hereteks alike until it is brutally expunged by the Excrucimancers.

The Exospectre

Undisputed master of Forge Castir, self-proclaimed heir to Hellwhisper, and—for the present—pre-eminent Arch-Heretek of the Hollows, the Exospectre is a name that rings with dread and glory in equal measure across many of the Gloaming Worlds. The Exospectre has no other name that is known within the Screaming Vortex, but rumours and conjecture of his origins are nearly ubiquitous throughout the Gloaming Worlds. One of the most prevalent theories is that he was once an orthodox and trusted tech-priest of the Adeptus Mechanicus, possibly as high-ranking as an Arch-Magos. Others claim that he came from amongst the ranks of the Lords Dragon, a secretive and nearly mythical order that polices the Cult Mechanicus from within the Calixis Sector. Some of these suspicions have been noted in a sealed file kept at the Tricorn Palace on Scintilla, capital world of that Sector, although few are allowed access.

In appearance, he is a towering figure over two metres in height, his bulky form concealed by layers of mouldering, ragged robes that swathe him from head to toe. A host of slithering mechadendrites are all the limbs he requires, and the susurrus of oiled metallic scales accompanies his every move. Eccentric even by the standards of Heretekes, the Exospectre does not normally speak, preferring instead to plug one of his mechadendrites into a number of special servitors specially-modified to issue his commands. Some agents of the Inquisition have claimed that the Exospectre possesses multiple bodies, each kept in its own stasis chamber connected to a transmat altar.

In temperament, the Exospectre is a cold and demanding personality, requiring the absolute maximum effort from those who serve him. He has proven on numerous occasions willing to casually execute even high-ranking subordinates who fail him. Hirelings, hangers-on, and followers have not proven immune to his wrath for failing to display the proper respect he feels is his due. It is written in the Temple of Lies on the planet Kymerus that there are few tasks more hazardous than entering into a pact with the master of Forge Castir.

Despite his formidable reputation, many Heretekes seek out the Hollows in order to apprentice themselves to the Exospectre and learn what they can of his secrets. The style of technology within Forge Castir is a product of the Exospectre's genius intellect and desire for precision-crafted individual works; nearly all of the technology he personally oversees requires vast amounts of resources and time due to his search for perfection in every rivet, cog, and node. Amongst the Exospectre's finest creations are the Aposticators, the Tech-Assassins and their Velocireaper hunting packs, the Prophitects, and the Excrucimancers.



FORGE POLIX

At the heart of an enormous fissure in the surface of the Hollows lies Forge Polix. Formed into a cube of brass and steel many kilometres tall, crackling warp energy coruscates along circuit-like designs inlaid upon its surface in minute detail. Near the guttering spring of the Forgeflow, Forge Polix is hellishly lit by the subterranean dark crimson glow of magma.

Nearly every portion of Forge Polix is given over to mass production; huge assembly lines churn out arms, armour, and other devices as automated stamping presses and die-castings create blades, bionics, and vehicle hulls. Much of the raw labour force of Forge Polix comes from the ranks of twisted mutants, with overseers cracking whips and guiding the efforts of shambling Chaos Spawn chained to gargantuan cogwheel assemblies. Workers expire daily in great numbers attempting to meet the ever-rising quotas and demands of the Forge's master.

The raw stuff of the Empyrean permeates Forge Polix, drawn in and concentrated by the efforts of the Idolatrex Magi. These Heretekes create, monitor, and modify various chaos gates, warp agitators, daemon lures, and other arcane devices designed to trap and store the power of the warp. Many ships from Q'sal have been known to dock at Forge Polix and exchange soul-engines in return for technology, slaves, and other favours.

Vast amounts of the Forge actually lie beneath the surface, extending deeply down into the Hollows' crust. Here, Magos Onuris has built his research vaults, gene-lathes, ecologiae-cells, and aenigmatoriums—areas where he keeps his most unusual and dangerous experiments. The more interesting and unstable mutations are kept in a "pain garden" of transparent vats filled with writhing flesh.

Zzzarel, sorcerer of Q'sal, inscribed an account of his secret visit to Forge Polix upon the flesh of a hundred slaves. The sorcerer claimed that Magos Onuris possessed a chained Juggernaut of Khorne, kept barely under control in a heavily warded chamber, attempting to unravel the secrets behind the daemon-beast's half-mechanical form. He relates that this affront to the Blood God was especially pleasing to Zzzarel's own master. The sorcerer went on to describe a gleaming river of molten steel flowing through the centre of the forge, a river he believes was actually the pumping blood from the heart of a bizarre alien creature Onuris had incorporated into the very foundations of his forge.

Magos Onuris

Overlord of Forge Polix and a masterful mech-wright, Magos Onuris greedily covets the entirety of the Hollows for himself. Like his rival the Exospectre, few know any solid details of his past; the story propagated amongst his apprentices is that he was once a celebrated Artisan of the Auxilia Myrmidon. Stymied in his desire to study and craft new technologies that incorporated warp energy, he was cast out from the Adeptus Mechanicus after a savage struggle that spread strife across three Knight Worlds. Explorator Cassian of Sanctum has disputed this tale as a fabrication, suggesting instead that Onuris is an expatriate from the hellforges of Xana II. Further muddying the waters, fragmentary records on Altar-Templum-Calixis-Est-17 contain some supporting evidence for both possibilities.



With a mind as twisted as it is brilliant, Magos Onuris has an unhealthy obsession with blending the warp and technology together into new and unconventional forms. The ever-mutating Death-Masques are one of the Magos' most infamous creations, alongside the newer and less-well-known Harrowhounds. Onuris himself is often accompanied by a reeking, lurching "honour guard" of Chaos Spawn, former assistants and the inevitable result of tampering too often with warp energy. The Magos accepts apprentices regardless of temperament or even skill, pragmatically assuming that most will die or mutate uncontrollably before they can learn enough to become dangerous to him. Many of his more talented and disciplined assistants are taught secret lore relating to combining the warp and technology, becoming Idolitrex Magi. These apprentices are given much more latitude and trust, and many venture forth deeper into the Screaming Vortex on special missions for their patron.

Magos Onuris possesses few mechadendrites for his hulking form, preferring bionic limbs and tracked lower body locomotive function. Portions of the Magos' body remain biological, kept by his own preference. However, these biological portions are often renewed or switched out with vat-cloned tissue so that the Magos may personally study the results of new and interesting mutations. Onuris has an odd fixation with masks and has hand-crafted more than a dozen for his own countenance. Each mask is unique, many containing miniaturised weapons and devious devices of his own design. Some of his apprentices believe that a

handful of these masks are identical to the faces of enemies that challenged the Magos' rule of Forge Polix and failed.

One explanation for Forge Polix' remarkable resilience in the war for the Hollows is Magos Onuris' unparalleled control and direction of his battle servitors. Time and again, only the perfectly executed manoeuvres of Onuris' forces have turned certain defeat into bloody victory. The infamous renegade Nina Black declared that the Magos' accomplishments are built upon a rare and powerful Prime Logis Key that he had somehow acquired and bent to his own use, but no one has been able to confirm such an outlandish story.

REGIONS OF THE HOLLOWS

While only a shadow of its former size and mass, the Hollows still contains many diverse and disparate areas of interest. The war that rages across the Hollows shapes every metre, from the tunnel-studded Stem to the ghastly corpse-laden Mechmoor to the plains of the Shimmering Waste.

The Forgeflow

Like a suppurating wound, the Forgeflow is a massive magma tap that once led to the planet's molten core. Since the Hollows' diminution, the flow has slowed to a trickle, yet it still provides unfathomable amounts of raw materials directly to Forge Polix. Magos Onuris' control of this important location is one of the reasons he and the forces of Forge Polix have survived as long as they have in the struggle for control of the Hollows. Clans of mutants called "scrap-scavs" dutifully scavenge chunks of ore, corpses of the fallen, and any salvaged metal they can find to dump into the immense rendering facility at the Forgeflow's edge, separating out every last useful gram.

The never-ending hunger of Forge Polix's industry has whipped the labour force in this region into a frenzy. Ramshackle shuttles transfer out to the corona of asteroids in orbit, breaking them down chunk by chunk to transfer down into the Forgeflow's starving maw. Many claim that the Forgeflow can melt down entire starships belonging to intruders or unwary visitors. There is a well-known bounty for such ships that has led Covenant X to tow wrecked voidships here on occasion in return for repairs and upgrades to their vessels.

Toxic gases churn in the many canyons and wandering, lava-choked ravines that extend around the Forgeflow's source. Raging daemons bound in chains of iron and rune-carved ceramite turn the massive cogwheels that control the magma's flow from lock to lock, channelled off towards various reclamation facilities and conduits into the heart of Forge Polix. Vast nutrient vats containing slumbering Death-Masques line the upper reaches, a guard force to mercilessly crush resistance should any revolt of the scrap-scavs erupt—as it often has, despite the penalty.

Recently, a Chaos Space Marine-led warband of Heretics invaded a small portion of the Forgeflow above the tertiary magma-fall. There, they have begun extorting tolls for its use, causing Magos Onuris to offer a lavish reward for the intruders' permanent removal.

Mechmoor

Kilometre after kilometre of befouled, toxic swamps make up the region known as the Mechmoor. Poisonous fumes and mists from the Forgeflow gather here, permeating the land and air with venomous smoke. Thick patches of mist float in curious currents, questing tendrils of fog seeming to seek out any motion or sign of life. Mammoth ruins jut upwards from the swamp in various places, seeming to defy the ground's efforts to engulf them. These ruins are marked with unknown runes and many of the veterans of the Exospectre's forces believe the monuments to be remnants of the third Forge, long ago lost and nearly forgotten.

This area has been the front line in the major struggle between Forges Castir and Polix, a battlefield for countless skirmishes and ambushes between the two groups. Hordes of mutated Skitarii and battle servitors fight awkwardly through the marsh, only for the survivors to be swallowed in the twisting murk, never to be seen again. Pathways through Mechmoor are rare and impermanent—it is easy for sophisticated tracking systems to become hopelessly lost amongst a host of phantom signals and rusted debris. A handful of landmarks exist, but fixing their precise location has proven to be a difficult task even for a veteran scout.

The environment is not the only danger in Mechmoor—roving bands of creatures have been encountered amongst the corpse-bogs, buried deep within the obscuring mists. Travellers have described the creatures as being simian-like humanoids in profile, cannibals that feed upon the corpses of the fallen. Cal-noran, a Heretek of Forge Castir, asserts that the creatures are in fact the alien Jokaero, inexplicably drawn to the region by the astounding variety of technology to be found lying amongst the open graves of fallen warriors.

Another hazard are a number of wreckage pits, the collected remains of destroyed vehicles, servitors, and automatons destroyed in the fighting. These pits are breeding grounds for the Hollowkynd, strange mechanical creatures that house maddened machine-spirits. The Exospectre's forces have spread the rumour that the Mechmoor Hollowkynd are the result of Magos Onuris' corruption of a Prime Logis Key. Furthermore, the agents of Forge Castir point to this story as "evidence" of Onuris' growing madness and unsuitability for rule over the Hollows.

The Scraplands

Surrounding the outskirts of Forge Castir are the Scraplands—a continent-sized collection of wrecked and abandoned vehicles, rusted weaponry, malfunctioning servitors and crazed machine-spirits. Amongst the vast swathes of debris can be found nearly anything—from a fragment of a machine altar to a ship's cogitator to a flickering hololith mapping out most of the lower Vortex—although the effort required to locate a particular item can vary from a glance to centuries of careful sifting through the heaped mountains of junk and wreckage.



Some areas of the Scraplands are organised into neat rows, whilst others are simply haphazard piles and ridges of torn, twisted debris. Small, scattered groups of humans eke out a base subsistence, feeding upon dark red fungus growing in between towering piles of junk and drinking fouled water flowing in sludgy creeks along fissures caked with broken technology. Heavily patrolled by Aposticators, the organised portions of the Scraplands are generally safer and easier to search, although there is a tariff to be paid to the Exospectre for such benefits. Further out, the unsorted drifts of junk are instead prowled by wild Hollowkynd and infested with all manner of vicious vermin, both mechanical and biological.

A few enterprising warbands have set up temporary trading camps or search zones within the Scraplands, but these never last long—the remnants of abandoned campsites are many, more than a few liberally decorated with the corpses of the would-be entrepreneurs. Some of these warbands have carried wild tales of the Scraplands with them after departing the Hollows. The most common story revolves around a large group of madly cackling Chaos Dreadnoughts wandering the junk-drifts, each one with mismatched, patchwork limbs constructed from a dozen different mechanical sources. Another legend states that a lone Heretek (or possibly a far-flung actual tech-priest), unaffiliated with either of the great forges, has created a hidden manufactory. Inside, he toils with makeshift tools, constructing a ramshackle Titan from the enormous piles of wreckage available.



FINDING TECH IN THE SCRAPLANDS

Heretics may attempt to locate particular items in the Scraplands by making an Acquisition Test (see pages 305–306 in the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook). At the GM's discretion, a Heretic may substitute his Perception Characteristic for his Infamy when searching this area; however, doing so entails a risk. A failure on this Test draws the attention of the Exospectre, who demands tribute or vengeance, depending on whether the Heretic is a potential ally or enemy. The GM should carefully consider what kinds of things are appropriate to be obtained from the Scraplands, and that searching this region takes some time, especially for the more rare and unusual items. Near-Unique and Unique items should be all but impossible to acquire without spending decades or even centuries sifting through the dross. However, if the player characters have the resources and time to spend (or a minion or three to dispatch upon this task), then by all means, they should have the chance to find what they seek!

The Scraplands have seemingly always been part of the Hollows and, from time to time, pockets of strange matter are encountered within its boundaries; portions of xenos terrain, flora, fauna, and even chunks of starships have been found here. Magos Onuris has hinted that the Scraplands may, in fact, be one of an unknown number of termini for weapons such as the dreaded vortex grenade and other such warp-based weapons—the dumping ground for when such devices open temporary rifts into the Empyrean.

The Shimmering Waste

Beyond the farthest runnel of the Forgeflow lies the Shimmering Waste: a glass-encrusted, irradiated desert region that encompasses a large percentage of the Hollows' remaining surface area. The Waste is inhabited by the Scav Tribes, nomadic bands of mutants who have grouped together for protection from the Hollows' main dangers. The Scav Tribes possess many unusually stable mutations amongst their gene-pool, and their tribesmen are grouped into several distinct castes, each with its own unique abilities and traditions. Often, the tribes will trade with one forge or the other (and rarely, both), exchanging their own tribesmen to be turned into servitors or worse in return for supplies and technology. On occasion, a tribe's caravan may take shelter with one of the forges for a brief time, only to eventually return to the Waste to avoid being entirely caught up in the ongoing war.

The Wastes are plagued by horrific shardstorms, a unique weather pattern stirred up by gale-force winds that scour the surface with silica flakes, making travel and combat of any kind difficult at best. Nevertheless, the remote location and possibilities for conquest have drawn more than a few warbands into the Waste, and the Exospectre has begun plans to send a portion of his forces there to root them out.

The Stem

The Stem is the remaining portion of the planet's core, extending raggedly below the main hemisphere. While Mechmoor is the location for the majority of conflicts in the battle for dominance of the Hollows, the most savage fighting has occurred around the Stem. Tech-assassins prowl the crumbling edges, taking ruthless advantage of the gravity fluctuations to leap gracefully from rock to rock in pursuit of their prey. Burrowing Termite transport machines relentlessly drill new paths towards flanking positions, and entire regiments of mole mortar teams fire coordinated barrages at enemy strongpoints.

Gravity tends to shift unexpectedly around the Stem, and those travelling in the region know that one wrong move can send an unwary visitor tumbling helplessly out into space. The atmosphere is thin and tenuous at best, requiring vac-suits and respirators to ensure long-term survival.

The Exospectre has a number of his hand-picked Prophitects seeking to craft some way to use the planet's core itself as a weapon, although many have counselled their master that doing so would irrevocably burst the Hollows apart into a collection of asteroids.

FIGHTING IN THE STEM

Conditions in the Stem follow the rules for Low Gravity Worlds (see page 43 in the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook), with one additional hazard. If a character fails an Agility Test for navigating difficult terrain by three or more Degrees of Failure, he has reached escape velocity from the Stem and should now be considered floating in the void. Characters struck by weapons with the Concussive Trait (or, at the GM's discretion, affected by any similar condition—such as being grappled and thrown) are also required to pass a **Challenging (+0) Agility Test** or be flung into space.



Death-Masque

The industry of Forge Polix is often tainted with the energies of the Empyrean, a product of its master's unhealthy obsession of matching the warp and technology. Magos Onuris is fascinated by the prospect of gaining a measure of control over the Warp's formless corruption, and few of his creations embody this more than the Death-Masques.

Not quite a living creature and much more than a combat servitor, a Death-Masque combines the unstable form of a Chaos Spawn with a massive metal skull-mask from which extends a number of electrodes, wires, and conduits deep into the spawn's shifting flesh. The mask itself contains a number of simple augur arrays and a complex arcanocogitator that, in combination with a regimen of forbidden drugs and bloody rituals, forms a control system to direct the creature's actions and can even stimulate its own flesh to contort and change upon command. Thus does the Death-Masque mutate and twist every inch of its own body to better adapt to its enemy and honour Tzeentch.

Magos Onuris is quite proud of his achievement and keeps a large number of Death-Masques prowling the corridors of Forge Polix and the rim of the Forgeflow, ever alert for attackers from his rival. Although Death-Masques are most commonly encountered on the Hollows, a handful have been traded to other warlords and creatures of influence in the Screaming Vortex. More than a few have ended up as curiosities on Q'sal and gladiator-beasts on the Writhing World. Kravek the Apostate claims to have encountered a wild pack of Death-Masques running loose in the deepest jungles of Malignia. If true, surely Magos Onuris would bargain well for the return of his lost minions.

Death-Masque (Elite)

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
65	35	60 ¹²	60 ¹²	30	10	25	35	--	--

Movement: 4/8/12/24

Wounds: 60

Armour: Metal Mask (Head 10)

Total TB: 12

Skills: Athletics (S) +10, Awareness (P) +30, Dodge (Ag) +10, Parry (WS), Stealth (Ag) +10, Survival (Per) +20.

Talents: Berserk Charge, Swift Attack, True Grit.

Traits: Brutal Charge, Dark-sight, Deadly Natural Weapon, Fear (3), From Beyond, Machine (6), Multiple Arms (4), Size (5), Undying, Unnatural Senses (30), Unnatural Strength (6), Unnatural Toughness (6).

Weapons: Claws, Fangs, Fists, Tentacles, and other Strange Things (1d10+12 R; Pen 4).

Mutable Body: A Death-Masque can reshape its body with bizarre mutations seemingly at will. As a Free Action once per Round, a Death-Masque can do one of the following:

- Change the Damage type of its attacks from Rending to Impact or vice versa. At the GM's discretion, other Damage types are also possible.

- Gain any one Weapon Quality (applying to its Claws, Fangs, Fists, or Strange Things) from the following list: Concussive (3), Crippling (3), Devastating (3), Felling (3), Flexible, Razor Sharp, Snare (3), Tearing, Tainted, Toxic (3), Warp Weapon.

- Gain any one Trait from the following list: Amphibious, Burrower (6), Crawler†, Fear (4), Flyer (12), Multiple Arms (6), Regeneration (3), Size (Enormous)†.

Death-Masques can only maintain one mutation at a time. To maintain more than one, the Death-Masque must pass a **Challenging (+0) Toughness Test** for each additional mutation. Mutations last for 1d5+3 Rounds.

† This selection does not affect the creature's Movement value.



Harrowhound

The war for control of the Hollows has raged for many years and, over time, both rival Forges have gained varying amounts of knowledge about the tools, weapons, and soldiers of the foe. The Exospectre's finely-crafted Velocireapers particularly incensed Magos Onuris of Forge Polix, who found the creatures to be exceptionally annoying. When the fifth iteration of Onuris' gene-lathed Twist Hulks failed in their attempt to scale the Shalerazor Cliffs due to a flank attack by Velocireapers, the Magos swore he would make the Exospectre pay.

Bending his own prodigious talents to the task, Onuris drew upon his vast understanding of integrating the warp and technology together and crafted a cunning shell surrounding a captive warp entity. The shell resembled a massive metal canine, its joints and eyes blazing with corruptive radiance. Pleased with the outcome, Onuris dubbed the new creation a Harrowhound.

Unfortunately, at first the new creations were nearly impossible to control. The beasts would rampage mindlessly, attacking anything in sight until the warp energy within them eventually burned out the shell entirely and the beast would disincorporate. To correct this flaw, Onuris forged a psyber-link between the Harrowhound and a possessed operator guiding the creature from the safety of a rune-carved war casket.

Soon after this refinement, packs of Harrowhounds were loosed at the Battle of Blood Well, skilfully overwhelming prowling Tech-assassins and driving off their attendant Velocireaper escorts. The constructs also threw more than a few maniples of elite Fell Skitarii into disarray, but the outcome of one battle—however well executed—did not change the course of the fight for Forge Polix. The war still wages though, and one day Onuris will have his revenge.

Harrowhounds are excellent trackers, rivalling anything in service to the Corpse-God in their ability to hunt down and kill prey in a variety of environments. The metal skin of the Harrowhound's shell is quite durable, and their daemonic nature gives them many advantages over any creature of flesh and blood. However, even the most carefully-built frame eventually fails when attempting to contain raw warp energy, and Harrowhounds are no exception. It is only a matter of time before the Exospectre picks up on this weakness and devises a way to exploit it.

Daemonic Presence: All enemies within 10 metres of a Harrowhound suffer a -10 penalty to Willpower Tests.

Barely-Contained Warp Entity: All Rolls on **Table 6-2: Psychic Phenomena** (see page 210 in the **BLACK CRUSADE Core Rulebook**) are increased by +20 if the Psyker triggering the roll is within 10 metres or less of a Harrowhound. All creatures attacked in melee by a Harrowhound must pass a **Challenging (+0) Toughness Test** or suffer 1d5 Corruption Points.

Hollowkynd

Many mechanical abominations have been raised upon the Hollows, crafted out of cunning tech-heresy and necessity as tools in a bitter struggle for control of the remaining planet. However, some of the most singular and unusual perversions of technology born on the Hollows are not the product of careful research or mad genius. Rather, they are the result of misfortune and chance, accidents sprung from the acres of unattended technology, broken wiring, and the fumbling efforts of half-functional servitors.

One such creature is named the Hollowkynd—shambling humanoid shapes formed of scrap metal, sparking electronics, and broken gears, they wander the Scrapyard and the Shimmering Waste, seeking to find and devour any fleshly creature they can find to ease the torment of their existence.

A Hollowkynd's body has bound within it a gestalt of many tortured machine-spirits. The Hollowkynd constantly keen in binary static, the screams sometimes rising in pitch and volume when tracking prey or leaping to the attack. The howling mob of machine-spirits within a Hollowkynd's body is nearly-mindless with rage, desiring only destruction.

Whilst the Hollowkynd's scrap-metal body is quite dangerous on its own, it is the creature's ability to interfere with and exert some influence over other technology that truly makes it an exceptional threat. Even the Dark Magos of the Hollows are wary when confronting large packs of Hollowkynd, for battle-servitors and Tech-assassins alike can find themselves greatly hampered, attacking phantoms or tearing at their own implants in a frenzy of self-hatred.

Desperate for any advantage he can claim in the war for the Hollows, Magos Onuris has set a number of his finest Idolitrex Magos to the task of finding some way to communicate with the Hollowkynd in hopes of enlisting them against Forge Castir. So far, his efforts have led only to failure.

Harrowhound (Elite)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
55	--	40 ⁸	50 ¹⁰	50	30	55	45	--	--

Movement: 10/20/20/60

Armour: None (All 8)

Skills: Athletics (S) +10, Awareness (Per) +10, Dodge (Ag), Scrutiny (Per), Stealth (Ag) +10, Survival (Per) +30.

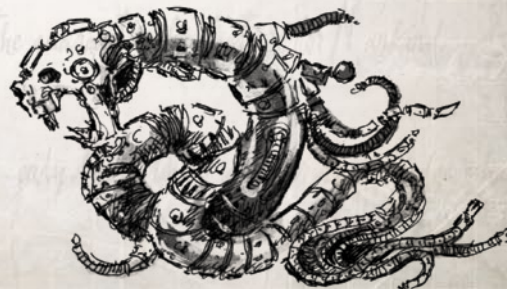
Talents: Double Team, Hard Target, Takedown, Thunder Charge.

Traits: Daemonic (5), Dark Sight, Deadly Natural Weapon, Fear (2), From Beyond, Quadruped, Machine (8), Stuff of Nightmares, Sturdy, Unnatural Strength (4).

Weapons: Piston-driven Jaws (1d10+10 R; Pen 4; Razor Sharp).

Wounds: 30

Total TB: 10



Hollowkynd (Elite)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
45	45	40	40	20	40	45	55	--	--

Movement: 3/6/9/18
Armour: Scrap Metal (All 6)
Skills: Awareness (Per), Dodge (Ag), Intimidate (WP), Logic (Int) +20, Security (Int) +20, Tech-Use (Int) +20.
Talents: Fearless, Ferric Summons, Flesh Render, Mimic.
Traits: Dark-sight, Deadly Natural Weapons, Fear (2), Machine (6), Multiple Arms (4), Possession†, Size (5), Stuff of Nightmares, Unnatural Strength (4), Unnatural Toughness (4).
 †May only be used against creatures with the Machine Trait or creatures with an appropriate cybernetic implant (i.e., Logis Implant, Cerebral Implant, etc.).

Weapons: Encoded static discharge (30m; S/3/-; 1d10+10 E; Pen 4; Haywire [2], Shocking), metal limbs (1d10+8 R; Pen 0; Concussive [1], Tearing).

Binary Wail: As a Standard Action, a Hollowkynd may issue a Binary Wail, affecting all enemies within 30 metres. The Hollowkynd may choose one of the following effects:

- The Hollowkynd makes an Opposed Tech-Use Test to take over control of any servitor. The servitor may act immediately and is under the Hollowkynd's control until the servitor is deactivated or the Hollowkynd is slain.
- The Hollowkynd makes an Opposed Tech-Use Test against enemy foes to Jam any and all of their ranged weapons that do not possess the Reliable Quality within the affected area.
- The Hollowkynd makes an Opposed Tech-Use Test to Stun any creature with one or more appropriate cybernetic implants (i.e., Logis Implant, Cerebral Implant, etc.) or any creature with the Machine Trait for 1d5 Rounds. Alternatively, instead of causing the Stun effect, the Hollowkynd can choose to afflict the affected creature with Hallucinogenic Effects (see page 150 in the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook).

The Hollowkynd affects the entire area with a Haywire Field Effect (see page 151 in the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook). Against normal technology, a Hollowkynd using its Binary Wail has the same effect as a Scrap Code Generator (see page 186 in the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook).

Aposticator

The Exospectre does not tolerate failure. Although many Heretekks seek him out to learn his secrets and labour in his forge as a path to greatness, many more scheme against him to serve their own ambition. Those Heretekks who anger the Exospectre are taken away by masked Excrucimancers into the deepest chambers of Forge Castir to be transformed into hideous conglomerate beasts known as Aposticators.

An Aposticator is a writhing mass of mechadendrites many times longer than a man's height. At the creature's apex is a spheroid conglomeration of bionics formed from the heads of those Heretekks unfortunate enough to earn the Exospectre's wrath. These heads are welded together and wired into one singular—and quite insane—consciousness. Conditioned using stolen xenos torture devices into absolute and unquestioning loyalty, Aposticators serve the Exospectre as guardians, patrollers, and shock troops in the low-gravity conditions of the Stem, where they stride or hover across the ruined setting.

From time to time, the Exospectre despatches Aposticators to serve as interim commanders for Forge Castir before a more permanent leader is sent. Even veteran maniples are uneasy at serving under Aposticators, the eerie, harmonically-distorted gestalt voice of the sundered Heretekks making up its body hardly inspiring confidence under the best of conditions.

Aposticator (Elite)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
50	35	50	40	40	40	35	50	20	--

Movement: 6/12/18/30
Armour: Plundered Mechadendrites (All 8)
Skills: Awareness (Per), Command (Fel) +10, Dodge (Ag) +20, Intimidate (WP), Parry (WS) +20, Security (Int) +10, Stealth (Ag) +20, Tech-Use (Int) +20.

Talents: Air of Authority, Baleful Dirge, Combat Master, Disturbing Voice, Lightning Attack, Pity the Weak, Step Aside, Swift Attack, Two-weapon Wielder (Melee), Whirlwind of Death.

Traits: Burrower (6), Dark-sight, Fear (3), Hoverer (10), Machine (8), Mechanicus Implants, Multiple Arms (6), Size (Enormous), Sonar Sense, Undying, Unnatural Strength (5), Unnatural Toughness (4).

Weapons: Ballistic Mechadendrites (30m; S/2/-; 1d10+5 E; Pen 2; Reliable, Storm), Manipulator Mechadendrites (1d10+12 I; Pen 0), in-built Powerblades (1d10+10 E; Pen 6; Power Field), plus one of the following: Meltagun (Basic; 20m; S/-/-; 2d10+13 E; Pen 12; Clip 6; Rld 2Full; Melta), Plasma Gun (Basic; 100m; S/2/-; 1d10+12 E; Pen 10; Clip 24; Rld 5 Full; Maximal, Overheats), or Warp-Render Cannon (Heavy; 100m; S/-/-; 3d10 E; Pen 0; Clip 8; Rld 4 Full; Blast (3), Recharge, Warp Weapon).

Accursed Machine: All enemies with the Machine Trait or enemy vehicles within 10 metres of the Aposticator suffer a -10 Penalty to WS and BS Tests.

Bizarre Contraption: Aposticators possess an in-built Refractor Field (see page 178 in the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook) and the following cybernetic implants: Embedded Auspex, Interface Port, and a Servo-Arm. The GM may, at his discretion, add any other cybernetic or bionic implants he deems appropriate.

Host of Mechadendrites: Aposticators gain a +20 bonus to WS and Strength Tests when Grappling and may maintain it as a Free Action. They also possess at least one of each (and more, at the GM's discretion) of the following additional mechadendrites: Medicae/Torture, Optical, and Utility Mechadendrite.

THE CAT'S CRADLE

"Intelligence becomes ignorance through a cunning illusion of life. My existence is a cunning dream of life, my purpose to exchange intelligence with ignorance and transform the materium into the unreal."

—Sorcerer-Lord Visitain, Aspirant of Tzeentch

Within the deepest recesses of the Gloaming Worlds lies a region of space caressed by warp currents and tendrils of the raw Immaterium seeping forth from the boundary of the Inner Ring. Known as the Cat's Cradle, this area is a playground for daemons and powerful sorcerers, speckled with dozens of worlds—some that orbit stars normally, others drifting alone in the void. A number of these worlds are merely illusion, a glamour cast upon the void to fool the eye and sensors of any passing being or vessel.

Plagued with trickery, illusions, and deceit, the worlds of the Cat's Cradle are places where logic and solidity can no longer be counted upon. This region is ruled only by the whims of those beings powerful enough to establish their own domains within.

THE CRADLETHREADS

The realm of the Cat's Cradle is linked together with ancient, interstitial paths that connect each world to the next in a bewildering pattern. These "Cradlethreads," as they are known, are similar to the Webway of the Eldar in that a traveller may pass along them from world to world without the need for a starship. However, few Cradlethreads are known to exist beyond the Cat's Cradle region itself, and many believe that there are none large enough to accommodate starships in the first place. To walk a cradlethread is to step into a column of scintillating light, which becomes blindingly bright at the core. Somehow simultaneously made of all colours and yet none, the radiance of a cradlethread can be spotted from some distance away under normal conditions and reaches to great heights, attenuating towards the upper reaches of a world's atmosphere (assuming it has one).

All that is required is a few short steps, and the traveller finds himself elsewhere, transported to another world of the Cat's Cradle. The arrangements of the cradlethreads and the ease with which they are found vary from world to world, but there is a pattern to be discerned. Many worlds of the Cat's Cradle have incomplete and partial maps showing the paths of cradlethreads that connect them. The Arch-Scholar Kazmir once suggested that the cradlethreads were "a very functional trap," describing the Cat's Cradle as a noose awaiting the necks of the ill-prepared. Kazmir's theory pointed out that cradlethreads are all too often found in convenient locations for travel to be natural, suspecting that instead they were arranged deliberately to guide unwary travellers to the most dangerous and bizarre regions possible—a trap woven into the very skein of the warp.



WALKING THE THREADS

Travelling along the threads of the Cat's Cradle is swift, but often risky. The energies of the warp are closely aligned with the cradlethreads, and walking the worlds of the Cat's Cradle in this manner often suffuses the traveller in the raw stuff of the immaterium.

Using a Cradlethread inflicts 5 points of Corruption. A character may, however, attempt a **Challenging (+0) Scrutiny Test**. If successful, the character suffers one fewer point of Corruption for every Degree of Success on this Test.

Cradlethreads can be detected by a Psyniscience Test (see page 107 in the **BLACK CRUSADE CORE** Rulebook).

It is important to note that the Cradlethreads are certainly convenient, but rarely safe. Generally, the easier a Cradlethread is to find, the greater the threat—either of the Cradlethread delivering the traveller into danger, sending the traveller to a random location, or the Cradlethread itself snapping mid-transit.

Studying a Cradlethread for a full minute and passing a **Challenging (+0) Navigation (Warp), Scholastic Lore (Occult), or Forbidden Lore (Warp) Test** can determine a Cradlethread's likely destination and risk level.

A GM should consider carefully before having a Cradlethread snap for a Player Character's transit, but emphasising the risks of this method of travel is certainly encouraged.

WORLDS OF THE CAT'S CRADLE

Worlds within the Cat's Cradle appear and vanish often at random, and thus the term is used somewhat loosely within the region. There is no guarantee of permanence. Some planets, once visited within the Cat's Cradle, even vanish upon the first visitor stepping upon its surface. However, three prominent realms have lasted longer than many others: Ravelcloak, The Farce, and Recondium.

Ravelcloak

At the very edge of the Inner Ring floats a golden orb, a scintillating lure and terminus of hundreds of cradlethreads. Ravelcloak, as this world has been named by its ruler, is a tempting plum for any would-be warlord to snatch and add to his conquests—and a fatal trap for those who attempt to gather it into their grasp. Millennia ago, this world was discovered by a powerful and ascendant Chaos Sorcerer named Visitain during his explorations of the Screaming Vortex. The final survivor of his warband, Visitain's minions and fellow seekers on the Path to Glory had all fallen victim to hideous fates. The sorcerer claimed Ravelcloak as his own. However, rather than spend his time in quiet contemplation, Visitain spent centuries crafting Ravelcloak into a finely woven eternal labyrinth designed to entrap intruders and destroy their souls. None would surpass his genius, the Sorcerer decided, and thus any who sought passage into the Inner Ring would instead become his playthings.



Visitain possessed great power and cunning, enough to achieve a transformation of his chosen world; Ravelcloak became shrouded in magical mists, its surface layered with phantom webs, mirror-like mazes, and doorways leading only into endless abyss. Ravelcloak stands as a bar to the gate to the Inner Ring, and many aspiring champions of Chaos view passing through Ravelcloak as a legendary challenge that will surely bring surpassing glory to any who can master it. Indeed, the snares awaiting upon Ravelcloak are complex and seemingly endless in number and variation; no two are truly alike.

However, Visitain's hubris is as great as his ability; he believes that none are as capable as he at designing and defeating contests of wits. Each puzzle and trial contains at least one loophole that may be exploited if the captive is lucky or clever enough to discover it. The Sorcerer takes great pleasure in personally taunting any warbands that become ensnared in his deceptions and subterfuge, although this practice has led to a number of defeats when he has underestimated his foes.



The Farce

Perhaps one of the most infamous planets of the Cat's Cradle is the home of a greater daemon of Tzeentch, a Lord of Change known as Sar'tir. This Lord of Change and a coterie of Shaper-Artisan sorcerers from Q'sal created a baroque and twisted world built entirely as a theatre. Called "The Farce," the world consists of ever-changing vistas of stages, stadiums, and amphitheatres. Each theatre is connected to the others by gravity-defying corridors, staircases, and tunnels constructed at impossible angles. The planet is inhabited by seemingly endless rows of silent observers surrounding each stage. The audience is rarely known to move or speak, their purpose focused upon the players and the scenes acted out. Sar'tir takes great pleasure in putting on elaborate pantomimes that mimic foibles of Human and Eldar civilisations. These caricatures are acted out by captives from across the galaxy, representatives of many different races and creeds. Enchanted chains are wrapped around the actors' bodies, forcing them to work their way from scene to scene or face waves of searing agony or death, consumed by eldritch fires. Sar'tir seems to enjoy the shows put on by the most recalcitrant and resistant actors, cackling wildly with glee as Imperial Inquisitors and Chaos Space Marines alike grind out their lines through clenched jaws and stiffly move to their allotted positions upon the stage.

One of the most welcoming worlds of the Cat's Cradle, the Farce offers many pleasures and perquisites for visitors that pass a series of simple tests. Those who fail or refuse to submit to the testing are added to Sar'tir's collection of performers, for such is the price of attendance charged. From time to time, the Lord of Change extends special invitations to particularly powerful daemons and warlords within the Screaming Vortex to witness his latest masterpiece and observe his newest captives in the throes of their forced levity.

Sar'tir's knowledge of plays and pantomimes is seemingly inexhaustible, and there are a number of secrets hidden within the most ancient and rare performances that are displayed within the Farce. News of such a show draws many visitors despite the planet's particular dangers. Rumours have spread throughout the Vortex that Sar'tir has somehow acquired a troupe of Harlequins, and he intends something truly special and significant for these Eldar—a performance of his own creation that promises to reveal hints about many of the most obscure enigmas.

Recondium

A single landmass dominates this world, almost entirely covered by a maze of imposing, interconnected gothic structures. A tiny portion of space within these structures is set aside as cramped living spaces, crooked hallways, and a variety of other functions necessary for human life, but they are given only the barest possible room and resources. The rest of Recondium is used as carefully catalogued storage for books of knowledge, a library known by some as the One Archive. To many visitors, Recondium and the One Archive appear as a sombre place of learning, an exemplary vision of order and solidity amongst the Cat's Cradle. However, this appearance is a thin veil over a multitude of ongoing savage conflicts between camps of scholars.



Known as the Canonicults, these bands of fervent scribes relentlessly scour the books of the One Archive attempting to make sense of the universe. Such an impossible task is taken to absurd heights within the One Archive, for new and contradictory volumes appear at irregular yet incessant intervals, driving the canonicultists into frenzied struggles over the “correct” interpretation of reality. The graven stones of Kezzel, kept within a high orrery in the One Archive, claim that the transition of knowledge on Recondium is the result of a cruel game orchestrated by a powerful daemon lord of Tzeentch. However, many of the stones of Kezzel are but fragments, the victims of some of the most brutal fighting amongst the canonicults.

The inhabitants of Recondium are drawn from a thousand worlds across the galaxy. Any obsessed researcher may occasionally come across a cleverly hidden passage that describes how to access myriad variations of “the truth.” Only the most dedicated and radical of scholars find such instructions, but those that do are guided to a ritual that—when performed correctly—brings the scholar directly to Recondium, no matter the distance involved. Recently, the ranks of the canonicultists have swelled with the arrival of a number of researchers from the Library of Knowing upon Fenksworld, in the Calixis Sector.

The endless squabbling and shrill cries of the competing canonicultists makes Recondium unwelcome to many visitors, but such is the wealth of knowledge within the One Archive—even as random and contrary as it may be—that many would-be conquerors are drawn like moths to a flame. Such warbands seek hints and glimpses at dark patterns that lead to power and glory.

THEMES OF THE CAT’S CRADLE

For GM’s intending to use the Cat’s Cradle in their **Black Crusade** campaign, it is important to remember the core themes and elements of the region.

REAL OR UNREAL

The unique nature of the Cat’s Cradle is perfect for GM’s to include glimpses of past or future events, old or new adversaries, or interesting and unusual locales that the players may eventually encounter. It is important to note that a GM should generally steer away from using the illusions of the Cat’s Cradle to punish his players. Instead, the illusions should be an exciting feature of the region—used to enhance the story rather than throw up roadblocks for the player’s progress. Illusions can also be used as a great warning device; a rival warband or powerful NPC can showcase the threat involved by falling prey to the Cat’s Cradle, making the players feel wiser for avoiding the danger.

EMBRACE THE ABSURD

Within the Cat’s Cradle, nearly anything is possible; a sorcerer or psyker of sufficient power can carve out his own realm, shaped by his will into illusory paradise or phantom hellzone. Few have enough power to make such illusions permanent, but the concept is one that a GM can use to introduce the wildest extremes of the Warhammer 40,000 universe. From ravening Tyranid swarms to contact with the Emperor himself, the dreamstuff of the Cat’s Cradle can produce very memorable scenes!

CONSPICUOUS CONSPIRACY

The inhabitants of the Cat’s Cradle are often focused entirely upon their own affairs and rarely take note of visitors. However, when interlopers are eventually noticed, a dozen plots are spun instantly around the intruder’s every move. From Machiavellian manoeuvrings to random whims, players in the Cat’s Cradle should be aware that, much like its namesake, any disturbance of the threads quickly transmits to the rest of the region. If the players accomplish a great task or discover a long-lost secret, they should expect to receive emissaries and messages from Cat’s Cradle notables post haste.



DREAD KORVASKA

"I have been a slave on Ghibelline and a prisoner on Sacgrave, and I would rather be in those places than ever set foot on that accursed planet again."

—Enoch Vruskt, Sergeant, Q'Sal Exploration Force

Defying all basic laws of known physics, Korvaska is somehow able to sustain life. Huddled close to its brown dwarf star, the surface of the planet is just above freezing and gets colder the farther one goes underground. There is nothing that lends itself to having either a breathable atmosphere or any viable ecosystem, yet both exist. Ash plains and basalt mountains define the borders of a landscape heavily dotted with marshlands and dark forests. Almost oppressive in its coldness and shadow, Korvaska is appropriately called the Dread Planet.

The Hereteks of the Hollows have taken a special interest in the star itself, noting that by their best estimate it should have died many millennia ago. Along with the best estimate of the planet's age, it is conceivable that Korvaska is the oldest planet in the Vortex. What the Hereteks have also noted is that the star's orbit is perfectly regular, somehow ignoring the fluctuating tides of the Vortex and allowing it to slip through both the Gloaming Worlds and the Lower Vortex. Along its path, no other stars or systems exist, only cold desolate space. Though no explanation exists yet for the orbit, the star seems to gain energy and density as it makes its passes through the Lower Vortex, almost as though it has consciously changed its path as a matter of survival over the long ages.

Adding to the harsh climate and ash storms that ravage the planet, Korvaska also goes through periods of great upheaval where the actual physiognomy of the planet's crust shifts and roils into new shapes and configurations. The only known component of these shifts is that they largely occur when the planet is within the Lower Vortex. During such times, the planet's surface shifts, roils, and turns, folding parts of its surface back towards the centre and moving other sections around the circumference. These upheavals happen without any apparent sign of tectonic activity or geological catalyst, a phenomenon that puzzles both the Sorcerers of Q'Sal and the Hereteks of the Hollows. Both planets have sent exploration teams to Korvaska and have little in return save for missing or destroyed ships and the ravings of lunacy.

Littered around the planet are ruins of multiple civilisations, half-buried and largely destroyed. Shattered arches of deadened wraithbone juxtapose themselves against cracked walls of veined black diamond. Amidst these ruins, many say that the remnants of long lost technologies lie in wait as well as weapons of terrible power. It is these that Heretics on the path to glory seek on Korvaska. Many make the attempt, but few return unscathed, fewer still having found what they sought. Most of the ruin sites are in some way accessible and descend far below the surface of the planet through labyrinthine tunnels that almost seem modular and ever-changing.

These tunnels seem to go farther and farther into the planet, bending at seemingly impossible angles and doubling back to locations on the surface. While navigation topside is very difficult, within the caverns it is almost impossible even by advanced auspex or warp-eye charms. At multiple points throughout the tunnels, runic stones lay in walls and floors of the tunnels, some duplicated, and others singular. Only the Dark Magi and the Q'Sallian sorcerers have been able to even remotely penetrate the depths of the ruins and the planet, and only in the periods of time when the planet is firmly in the Gloaming Worlds. Both groups agree that they are some sort of marker system but both refuse to collaborate for fear of giving the other group an upper hand in their research. Even so, very little is known about where the tunnels go or what the stones mean.

THE OASES

There are pockets of land that do not ever change on Korvaska, even during the upheavals and the ash storms. In these locations on the planet there are self-contained pockets some 50 kilometres in diameter, each one full of edible plant life, animal life, and fresh water. The oases appear to be perfect in every way, fully self-sustaining and somehow protected from the rest of the planet's harsh environment. It is not, however, a permanent place to stay.

Several hours after a sentient creature enters it, an oasis will actively seek to expel the creature from its borders. For most visitors, it begins with the vague sense of being hunted. The native flora and fauna also start to change and alter into more aggressive and dangerous versions of their former selves. This is a rapid process, as the presence of the perceived intruders seems to agitate and spur the metamorphosis. Some of the earliest explorers of the planet claimed that they were attacked by some form of shambling vegetative life, but this has never been corroborated. The oases seem almost aware, knowing that should any sentient life stay permanently, then it would not be able to survive. Whatever causes this to happen, all visitors to Korvaska know that gathering supplies in these places of respite should be done quickly and efficiently.

The oases also seem to have some sort of protection from the mutants of Korvaska. No mutant has been successfully able to set foot in an oasis and live more than ten minutes afterward. Many have tried and perished and some of the crueller expeditions have detailed reports of capturing mutants that attacked them and subjected them to the fate of the oases. Some turn to dust, others to sludge, but all of them return back to the planet again in one form or another.





THE WINNOWING

The first explorers to return after encountering Korvaska named the shifting of the planet the Winnowing. Trapped on the planet briefly to repair their ship, they witnessed the first recorded mutations in the planet's surface and were appropriately terrified. As they watched entire mountains swallowed up and new marshes form over deserts, some claimed to feel the presence of something or someone around them almost begging them to help. Fearing for their safety, the original visitors quickly departed, several of them soon degenerating into incoherent babbling about "a defiant one" and "the clutch." Though many have looked for references to both of those since, in an area of space with renegades and recidivists, many feel this is truly a pointless search.

Very little is known about the Winnowing as it appears with very little warning and absolutely no mercy. In some cases, the amount of change is minimal and limited to a single location. Other times, there are multiple sites and large continents of landmass altered. As the landscape folds and turns, scraps of ruined structures and possible openings to the tunnels that apparently honeycomb the planet occasionally come to the surface. Each event lasts several days as the planet slowly alters form. Though visible to the eye, the shifts seem to have no major bearing on the overall planet's stability. A rare vid-feed captured from orbit from a Hollows pic-satellite gives the impression that unseen hands are manipulating the surface freely, rotating certain areas and folding others back into the main mass.

Since that time, several other groups have been present during the Winnowing. One of the other unique aspects of these events is that the mutant population seems to flock to the nearest site of transformation. At every occasion that has been documented, the Korvaskan mutants bow down to the motion of the planet, sending a few of their number forward into the destruction to meet their doom. To do this is apparently an honour as there is often ritual combat with the winner being allowed to go forward as a chosen sacrifice.

In every occurrence, more mutants manifest on the surface after all the motion stops, almost as if the planet itself is creating them. Whether or not that is true, the mutant population worships the upheaval whenever it happens, flocking to the closest instance of it like a compulsion. The oases are left unscathed and the towns are largely left alone and undamaged when these occur, but the Winnowing process often changes the physical landscape dramatically enough that the human populations have had to relocate, as their access to the closest oasis has become blocked. The high scryers in Velklir have supposed that the Winnowing is the result of some living force within the planet trying to manifest. Most of these scryers fully descended into madness shortly thereafter, so there is great speculation as to the veracity of their thought.

MUTANTS OF KORVASKA

Other than the dangerous flora and fauna in the oases, there are very few other predators on this planet. That role is filled by the tribes of mutants that skulk near the human settlements and the oases. Though the majority are not overtly large or muscular, they make up for a lack of brawn with speed and cunning. All of them have crude weaponry made from bone or stone, but many of the disparate tribes have taken to scavenging weaponry from the humans they have killed; some have also adapted to using metal weaponry and bows. Each tribe numbers about fifteen or fewer on the average, but particularly strong mutants have been known to lead much larger bands.

Though dangerous enough on their own, Korvaskan mutants show an increasing sensitivity to the warp. Some of the most dangerous mutants in recent history have been able to control flame, alter their bodies or coordinate larger groups over distance. No one is sure whether all of the mutants have low grade psychic abilities, but the ones that learn to control and develop their powers invariably rise to power. Tribes led by these psychically active creatures are among the most dangerous, as their tactics are often unpredictable and their members often more willing to stay in a protracted fight. Without a strong leader present, most mutant raiding parties will flee against steady and determined opposition.

Since there is no food source readily available to them as the oases bar their entry, the Tribes lie in wait for stragglers to leave the oases laden with fresh supplies. They will then attack en masse, trying their best to surprise and subdue their victims quickly. Should these attacks fail and they are fought off empty handed, these mutants are not above cannibalising their own members to keep the rest alive. Particularly strong exploration parties have been known to keep the mutant packs in check by doing enough damage to the mutants that they fall on each other instead of chasing them.



With all the harshness of the planet, the mutant population should die out fairly quickly, but somehow it persists. Through the Winothing, it appears that the balance of power is maintained as the planet provides new tribes from the upheaval. It is a time of great reverence and renewal for the mutants. They will march for the closest instance of geological upheaval and fall down in supplication before it—chanting, dancing, and occasionally throwing themselves in the midst of it, disappearing below the surface of the planet. Those lost are quickly replaced, as at the end of every Winothing, new tribes of mutants emerge from the wastes to find their way towards the oases and begin the cycle anew. Where the new creatures come from is a matter of great concern, as it appears that the planet is somehow creating them.

Protlayan Strain

As if the roving bands of mutants were not dangerous enough, Korvaska has a special breed of predator that even they avoid. Known as the Protlayan Strain, these mutants are solitary stealthy hunters that single out targets and observe them before killing, consuming, and then assuming the identity of their victim. In their natural form, they are roughly two meters tall with horrific, deformed faces. Their skins are leathery and tough with thick fur, and they have clawed hands capable of ripping through basic armour with ease. Seemingly intelligent, when possible they stalk, observe, and select their prey carefully before making a move to subdue it.

Blessed by Tzeentch with a natural ability to alter their form, these creatures look for stragglers to prey upon, stalking them in the deep shadows of Korvaska's ruins. Outside of the ruins and the adjoining subterranean tunnels, the Protleyans have seemingly never attacked. The deeper explorers have gone, however, the more commonplace disappearances have become with tales of ferocious, bloody combat. Many believe this is because they are extremely territorial and are hiding or guarding something, though no one has an idea of what that might be.

When a Protlayan kills a victim, it consumes its prey, and is then able to collect genetic memory from that creature. Within minutes, the Protlayan changes form into a copy of its victim, after which the creature uses the remaining clothing and gear. To the unaided eye there is no discernible difference between the Protlayan and its slain victim. The creatures' talents also extend into verbal and vocal ranges, making it able to adopt the exact sound of the victim to speak any languages it has heard before. This makes a Protlayan a terrifying foe, as it will actively sow discontent in the group in order to break them apart and make them easier to subdue. While originally thought to be a natural physical ability, a recent expedition from the Hollows discovered that it is, in fact, a psychic ability that can be disrupted by null fields and Untouchables. This has increased the number of excursions to the Dread Planet, in which explorers seek to capture the creature for study.

Korvaskan Mutant

The mutants on Korvaska are an abnormal breed, if such a term can be used to describe mutants. Far less bulky and plodding than most mutants of the Imperium, these degenerate souls are possessed of additional speed and intelligence that makes them in some ways far more dangerous. Though most are not psychically active, many of their leaders are so, exhibiting reasonable control of their abilities and exercising their control over the others in their tribe. Being unable to hunt in the oases themselves, Korvaskan mutants skulk and prey on the human population, raiding and killing them for their supplies if at all possible. Failure means that the tribe must cannibalise itself to survive.

Korvaskan Mutant (Troop)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
38	31	45	38	48	26	37	35	13	--

Movement: 8/16/24/48

Wounds: 14

Armour: Toughened Skin (All 3)

Total TB: 3

Skills: Acrobatics, Awareness +10, Dodge +10, Psyniscience, Stealth.

Talents: Ambidextrous, Frenzy, Hard Target, Swift Attack, Two-Weapon Wielder (Melee), Psy Rating 3 and 1 Random Psychic Power (Korvaskan Mutant Leaders only).

Traits: Unnatural Agility (4), Gift of Chaos (choose at random).

Weapons: Natural Weapons (claws/spines) (1d10+4 R; Pen 0; Primitive (8))

Gear: Native charms and tokens.



Proteyan Strain Mutant

The Proteyan Strain, unlike its pack-based counterparts, is a solitary creature, hunting by stealth and subterfuge. Psychically gifted with the ability to change form, these creatures seemingly patrol the ruins and the deep, dank labyrinth of tunnels underground. They are generally only aggressive as outsiders go deeper, but have exhibited territorial tendencies. Capable of tool and weapon use and able to imitate to a large degree the abilities of those they change into, it is no wonder that explorers from the Hollows bring psy-deadening technology with them on every excursion to the planet's surface.

Traits: Deadly Natural Weapons, From Beyond, Natural Armour (4), Psyker, Shapeshifter†, Unnatural Agility (2), Unnatural Strength (2), Unnatural Toughness (2).

†**Shapeshifter:** The creature is able to change its form into an exact replica of another humanoid roughly the same size. In order to complete this act, the Proteyan must consume the victim, a process which is more like absorption of the body mass rather than actual eating, and takes only a minute or two to complete. Once done, the body of the creature transforms almost unbidden into the form of its most recent victim, retaining some bits of memory and all the physical capabilities of that being. It can maintain this indefinitely unless brought under duress (loss of more than half of its wounds or being knocked out due to Fatigue). If that happens, the creature must make a **Very Hard (-30) Willpower Test** to maintain its stolen form, otherwise it drops back to its natural form. If the creature is subjected to a Null Field or any other anti-psychoic source, it will automatically shift back and take 1d10 Damage from being forced back into its natural state.

Weapons: Natural Weapons (claws/spines) (1d10+6 R; Pen 2), or weapons the victim used.

Gear: None.

Proteyan Strain Mutant (Elite)

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
33	32	45	32	41	46	55	56	38	--

Movement: 6/12/18/36

Armour: Natural Armour (All 4)

Skills: Acrobatics, Athletics, Awareness +10, Charm +10, Deceive +10, Dodge +10, Inquiry, Linguistics +20, Logic, Psyniscience +10, Sleight of Hand, Stealth +10, Survival, Tech-Use.

Talents: Ambidextrous, Cold Hearted, Hardy, Leap Up, Lightning Reflexes, Mimic, Paranoia, Polyglot, Quick Draw, Rapid Reaction, Step Aside, Swift Attack.

Wounds: 18

Total TB: 5



THE FLAMING TOMB

"You think me mad, and I do not dispute it. But there is something within that burning orb, and its unleashing will sound the death knell of a thousand thousand worlds."

—High Adept Lobile of Velklir, upon his return from the Flaming Tomb

A burned and blackened orb floating above the milky plane of the Lower Vortex, the Flaming Tomb at first appears to be just another volcanically volatile world, its surface a random pattern of light and darkness as fissures and cracks in its ever-shifting crust reveal the surging magma beneath. But from certain perspectives it is almost as if a pattern emerges from the seemingly random movement—if only one were to look from the right vantage—in the right frame of mind—and at the right moment.

The shifting patterns of the Flaming Tomb are both temporal and physical in nature. The planet is ever changing, with patterns maddeningly eluding analysis. Strange arrangements of shadow and light seem to writhe across the planet's surface, taking the shape of half-remembered glyphs or symbols before disappearing once again into the chaos. Even the shambling migrations of the planet's inhabitants call forth near-recognised pathways in the dark corners of an observer's mind.

The arrangement of these patterns, say those Heretics who swear by their existence, are almost fractal in nature. They spiral deeper and deeper in design and meaning, on the very edge of human perception and understanding, but ever evolving and changing, dancing tantalisingly out of the mind's grasp. Here darkness and light forever chase each other across the surface of the nearly dead planet.

Rational observers say there is no discernible pattern at first glance, but even many sceptics claim that the longer one looks down from orbit, the more frustrating patterns appear to emerge, promising a wealth of knowledge and power to the first adept capable of translating the planet's meaning. They swear that nine smaller patterns swirl within the larger, their shifting nature hinting at the direction of a focused intelligence. As beguiling as the theory is, however, none have yet deciphered the import, if there is one, and many have been driven insane in the attempt.

Among those whose minds tend towards idle speculation, or those who yearn for a quick and easy road to power within the Screaming Vortex, there are many theories regarding the phantom patterns of the Flaming Tomb; patterns that most people who have visited the planet deny even exist. Some unsettled scholars and broken men of the Q'sal city of Tarnor whisper that a powerful entity was trapped within the planet, entombed there by an enormous authority for some heinous crime or failure. Some posit that it is one of the regal Lords of Change trapped within by the displeased Sovereign of Deception. Others suspect that it may be a great daemon prince, some former champion of the Great Schemer whose failure has earned it eternal consignment to the fiery prison. The softest whispers tell of a great psychic champion of the Corpse-God, a servant of the faltering Imperium, condemned to this hellish tomb by a single moment of mortal weakness.



A few souls, shattered and bereft of their senses after too long scrutinising the Flaming Tomb, mutter through cracked lips of a geo-astrological puzzle lock, holding back the tides of the Lower Vortex itself. The massive mechanism needs only the right set of forces applied to break it open and unleash the raw stuff of Chaos trapped within upon an unsuspecting universe. These gibbering lunatics continue to mutter that some force, somewhere in the galaxy, is exerting its influence upon the planet, shifting the tides of magma beneath the surface, and the wandering tribes of refugees upon it, in a never-ending pattern whose ultimate purpose is the opening of a lock few even suspect exists. Who could be manipulating the device, or what may be unleashed upon its opening, even the most deranged refuse to speculate.

Despite the fixation of a fringe element of sorcerous diviners and the constantly shifting nature of the planet's crust, those who wish to can indeed conduct actual studies of its surface and relationship to other systems nearby. The geography of the planet, although always shifting and changing, revolves around nine proto-continent: massive archipelagos of basalt and charred rock gyrating around a central landmass larger than the rest. Each of these masses is rumoured to contain a structure of some kind. Whether these structures are tombs, prisons, or shrines cannot be known for certain. Many expeditions from Q'sal and the Hollows have attempted studies, but none can agree on (or wish to reveal) what these configurations were intended for, or who created them in strange aeons past. Every report of these dark and mysterious locales changes with each new visitation, an attractive feature to the mortal servants of the Changer of the Ways.



Scholars of Tzeentch agree though that there are nine Gates upon the surface of the Flaming Tomb. No matter where one lands on the planet, three are always to the west, three are always to the east, and three are always to the north. These Gates of Heaven are ever evolving, ever changing, and cannot be found by any instruments known to the residents of the Vortex. The Gates are said to lead a suppliant to areas of power scattered around the planet, or to the nine central tombs, or to the Gate of Destiny itself, a half-remembered dream entrance to the nether realm inhabited by the Four Sentinels who guard the Lower Vortex.

Among the many real dangers present upon the planet though are toxic cloud banks, vicious earthquakes, and enormous tidal waves of molten stone that constantly wrack the planet, prodding its few inhabitants into constant migration and continuous warfare over grievously limited resources. Half seen in the shifting haze, daemonic creatures stalk the surface, pursuing their own, indecipherable purposes.

As a desiccated and blasted world of charred rock and magma seas, the Flaming Tomb is not a planet that could support a native population in a rational universe. However, bands of bedraggled and wretched refugees scrape a bare existence from its barren, burnt surface. Living off of dust snails and slag worms, obtaining what water they can from burrowing desiccator slugs, these poor, lost souls know nothing but torment and despair every moment of their lives.

How they came to inhabit the Flaming Tomb no one knows. Despite what must be countless deaths every day to starvation, disease, exposure, brutal and savage warfare, and the predations

of the many fantastical creatures that shadow them across the blighted landscape, their number never appears to dwindle. Most dismiss this as just another mystery of the Inner Ring. Others, however, find a more pressing cause to speculate.

FLAMING TOMB REFUGEE

Most of the inhabitants have no recollection of how they arrived on the Flaming Tomb, and very little memory of their lives before their current, benighted existence. Those few with even partial memories rant and rave to the heavens, claiming to be powerful men and women who cannot even remember their own names. Their clothing, hanging in ragged shreds from their starved bodies, hints at hundreds of cultures and occupations. Within the babble of any given tribe one can hear the accents of Mamon, Hindrance, Q'sal, the Hollows, Furia, and a hundred other worlds of the Screaming Vortex, and countless more besides. Given the pathetic reality of the inhabitants of the Flaming Tomb, it was perhaps inevitable that legends of godly punishment should come to be attached to the planet.

Under the sharp interrogation of remorseless tech-auditors of Castir, the one common memory of all denizens of the Flaming Tomb seems to be one of betrayal. None can fully articulate their fears, and often archivists work for years to decipher the babbling of the worst subjects, but every one of them appears to believe that they are being punished for some lapse of faith, lack of vision, or journey down a false path to power. Just before breaking down into incoherent sobs, every subject seems to declare that they had been on the very edge of greatness previous to being cast into the terror of the Flaming Tomb. No subject brought to this level of recall has ever recovered even a modicum of sanity, however.

Flaming Tomb Refugee (Troop)

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
22	18	26	34	28	20	32	21	20	--

Movement: 2/4/6/12

Armour: None

Skills: Acrobatics (Ag) +10, Climb (S) +10, Dodge (Ag) +10, Intimidate (S) +10, Survival (Per) +20.

Talents: Double Team, Unremarkable.

Weapons: Primitive and/or improvised hand weapons (1d5+3 I; Pen 0; Scavenged). Some Refugees may be armed with an array of Average or Common Melee Weapons plus assorted Basic or Pistol Ranged Weapons, all of which will have the Scavenged Downgrade.

Gear: Tattered remnant clothing, makeshift totems, or good luck charms. Refugees may conceivably carry a dizzying array of battered and worn gear, ranging from a beat-up chrono to nearly-depleted, desperately coveted medi-kit. All of these items will be Poor quality due to wear and tear.

A Mind of Holes: Many Refugees bear within their tragedy-numbed minds a plethora of secrets and valuable information, although most cannot remember their own names. Under extreme stress, the influence of a powerful sorcerer, or the inducements of artfully applied pain (with associated **Arduous (-40) Tests**), the Refugee might remember a useful chunk of his past life.

FLAMING TOMB PYROMANCER

Among the sad and roving bands of Refugees that wander the blasted landscape of the Flaming Tomb, a vanishingly small number rise above the masses to positions of power and authority over the rest. Most of these chieftains and petty warlords strive only to better their own situation, while expanding their power and influence over as great a tribe as they can gather. An even smaller number of those, however, are truly special. Whether through the crushing pressures of their bleak lives or due to some special combination of traits or abilities, these few develop into powerful psykers known as Pyromancers.

Some of these sorcerers rise from the general population of the planet, their dormant ability awakening under the pressures of life on the Tomb. Others are psykers who purposefully subject themselves to the planet's dread embrace seeking to expand their power and knowledge. These aspirants tenaciously cling to the belief that something about the planet drags sorcerous ability from those willing to undergo its harsh ministrations. They journey to the Flaming Tomb specifically to study the flames, to scrutinise the symbology of its geography and the language of its burning, poisoned winds. Some find what they seek, their minds expanding under the constant barrage of Emyrean waves washing up from the Lower Vortex and the life of persistent hardship and relentless want. Most, however, are destroyed, either physically or emotionally consumed by the very powers they sought to master.

Some Pyromancers seek nothing more than to lead bands of their fellow Refugees, using them as private armies or legions of slaves. Some have massive strongholds built in the highlands, while others drive their followers across the planet in search of artefacts, the roots of legends, or the fabled Gates of Heaven. These adepts use their mastery of flame and the warp to protect their bands from other groups of Refugees. Some are powerful enough to drive off the Burning Men, or even the attentions of a wandering daemon of Tzeentch. In exchange for this protection, the members of their tribe extend to them every honour and gesture of respect. Within the scope of lives crushed down with hardship and pain, these men and women live like kings.

Some very few Pyromancers, often the most powerful, become creatures of seclusion and isolation. Often they will defeat a rival to claim the vanquished sorcerer's fortress as their own, to use as a base of operations to pursue their studies, or meditations, or searches alone. These are those mysterious figures of legend most often sought out for their secrets and advice by outsiders. Unfortunately for those who seek them, they are also the most capable of defending their isolation, and many is the off-worlder brought to ruin and death in a quest for a Master Pyromancer of the Flaming Tomb.



Flaming Tomb Pyromancer (Elite)

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
32	40	37	36	33	40	37	45	20	08

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 15

Armour: Hide robes (All 2).

Total TB: 3

Skills: Forbidden Lore (Daemonology, Heresy) (Int), Intimidate (S), Psyniscience (WP) +10, Command (Fel) +10, Scholastic Lore (Occult).

Talents: Psy Rating 4, Warp Sense, Resistance (Psychic Techniques), Strong Minded, Sacrifice, Bastion of Iron Will.

Weapons: Ritual Sword (1d10+3 R; Pen 0; Psy-Focus), Autopistol (Pistol; 30m; S/-/6; 1d10+2I; Pen 0; Clip 18; Reload Full).

Gear: Tattered Robes, Journals and Notebooks, 3 clips of ammunition.

Psychic Powers: The Pyromancy Powers Manifest Flames, One With The Fire, Fire Bolt, and Fire Barrage (see page 60).

THE BURNING MEN

The strangest inhabitants of the Flaming Tomb by far are the creatures of solid lava that rise up out of the magma seas at times of particular upheaval within the Vortex. These creatures are tall and lithe, moving with the slow and easy grace of liquid stone jetting from a volcano at the peak of its eruption. None have ever been able to ascertain where these creatures come from or why they stalk the Flaming Tomb, but they are the eternal bane of the Refugees who attempt to scrape a living from the blackened soil.

Some scholars of the arcane posit that the Burning Men are creatures who live deep within the magma seas of the convulsing planet. Strange alien creatures, they appear to want nothing from the humans but to be left alone. However, more popular theories state that the creatures are not actually independent entities at all, but rather the manifestation of a powerful will emanating from the Lower Vortex, or the warp, or from within the very planet itself. Some believe this consciousness, vast and incomprehensible to human minds, drives these golems of lava and fire, although to what end no one can truly say.

These beings never attempt to communicate when they appear. They silently pull themselves from the lava flows and relentlessly pursue the desperate humans across the wastelands, driving them like cattle with no fathomable purpose or motive. Sometimes, when they appear in sufficient numbers, they will totally annihilate an entire band, wiping their very memory from existence.

Those whisperers in the darkness who give credence to the wildest tales murmur that the Burning Men are the physical manifestation of the will of the being trapped within the planet, and the forced migrations and massive killings are nothing short of the turning of another tumbler in the lock, bringing the planet one step closer to its mysterious, unknown fate.



DAEMONS OF TZEENTCH

Due to the Flaming Tomb's close proximity to the Lower Vortex, daemons of every size and description find it easier to exist upon the enigmatic ball of char than on any planet of the Gloaming Worlds or within the Inner Ring. Often, daemons of Tzeentch cavort upon the blasted and poisoned surface, frolicking through convulsive detonations, dancing to the beat of music only they can hear. Those mortals wishing to seek out the daemons of the Monarch of Permutation but lacking confidence in their own powers, often turn to the Flaming Tomb, knowing that there the veil between the material realm and the mindscape is frighteningly thin.

The most difficult to find, even upon the shimmering surface of the Tomb, are the great Lords of Change. In fact, most scholars believe these most powerful of the Prince's minions are deeply loath to go there, as if afraid, or at the very least respectful, of some power or aura that permeates the blackened soil and the thick, choking air. These masters of mutation, it is thought, only make the effort to manifest upon the Flaming Tomb when forced by powers greater than themselves, and do not deign to visit its twisting lands and mysterious tombs of their own accord.

The gibbering Horrors of Tzeentch are probably the most commonly seen daemons to wander the blasted landscapes of the Flaming Tomb. Seemingly oblivious to whatever aura renders the planet anathema to their more powerful cousins, these cackling grotesques often appear on the planet's surface, apparently at random, to dance dizzying arcs across the barren deserts and magma beaches, capering along in their mindless, bandy-legged gait. They do not seem to follow any set purpose in their journeys across the planet. They appear equally likely to shadow a lack-witted Pyromancer, or congregate in chortling hordes upon the plains that hold the various lesser tombs across the planet. Indeed, they seem to hold nothing sacred, nor do they appear to fear anything. Although they do not know any emotions as humans define such things, they do seem to enjoy observing the torments of the humans trapped upon the planet, and often will add to their agonies for no other purpose than the sheer amusement it affords them.

Burning Man (Elite)

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
48	32	40	46	48	35	37	36	10	--

Movement: 4/8/12/24

Armour: None

Skills: Dodge.

Talents: Combat Master, Preternatural Speed.

Traits: Daemonic (2), Fear (3), From Beyond, Regeneration (2), Unnatural Strength (3), Unnatural Toughness (5).

Weapons: Burning Grasp (1d10+13 E; Pen 4; Flame), Magma Spray (Basic; 20m; S/-/-; 1d10+8E; Pen 6; Clip —; Reload —; Flame, Melta, Spray).

Body of Flame: Anyone attacking a Burning Man in melee must make a **Very Hard (-30) Agility Test** or suffer 1d10+6 points of Energy Damage as if hit with a weapon with the Flame Special Quality.

Blessings of a Dark Power: Some power within the warp favours the Burning Men. This Blessing has the same effect as a Force Field with a Strength of 20 that does not overload.

Wounds: 18

Total TB: 9





Flamers of Tzeentch

Unsurprisingly, the Flamers of Tzeentch are particularly at home among the fiery fjords and blighted islands of the magma seas. Even as the dancing flames and swirling, poisonous mist seem to call to some mortals, showing them patterns and meaning hidden from most other minds, the Flamers of Tzeentch are often seen, floating undisturbed through the violence and chaos of the abyssal holocaust. As is true of all daemons, the purposes of the Flamers of Tzeentch are beyond the understanding of mortal man, and their comings and goings, especially deeper within the Inner Ring and into the Lower Vortex itself, are nearly impossible to track.

The favoured weapons of the Flamers of Tzeentch, when roused to anger, are bolts of polychromatic æther, pouring from the gaping, gibbering mouths that form at the end of the daemons' sinuous, multifarious arms. This eldritch flame coalesces into coherent balls of warp energy that can spray a large area, pounding even the war plate of the Fallen Legions into submission. These same yawning maws, ringed with vicious, spittle-coated teeth, can be deadly in melee as well, chewing through armour, muscle, and bone with equal ease. When necessary, the Flamers are capable of altering their appendages into strong, graceful gripping appendages as well.

Flamers of Tzeentch do not bother to tread the blackened soil of the Flaming Tomb. Rather, they float gracefully upon a broad disc of undulating flesh, much like a massive jellyfish fused to the trunk of the daemon's body. In this way, Flamers glide along on a cushion of ætheric winds, the frills and folds of their lower bodies always in motion, subject to the currents of the Sea of Souls, no matter where they might wander.

There is conjecture that the Flamers of Tzeentch are the only beings truly able to communicate with the Burning Men and to understand their confounding purposes. If anyone has ever managed to force or tempt a Flamer to divulge this secret, however, none can say.

Flamer of Tzeentch (Elite)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
22	38	34	35	34	32	30	34	15	--

Movement: 4/8/12/24

Wounds: 20

Armour: None

Total TB: 9

Skills: Awareness (Per), Dodge (Ag), Psyniscience (Per), Speak Language (Any one).

Talents: Warp Sense, Strong Minded.

Traits: Daemonic (3), Fear (2), From Beyond, Deadly Natural Weapons, Hoverer (4), Strange Physiology, Unnatural Toughness (3), Warp Instability.

Weapons: Bolts of Tzeentch (Basic; 100m, --/6, 1d10+6 E, Pen 6, Flaming), Grasping Claws (1d10+6 E, Pen 6, Flaming).

Daemonic Presence: All enemies within 10 metres of a Flamer of Tzeentch suffer a -10 penalty to Willpower Tests.

Blessing of Tzeentch: Flamers of Tzeentch are blessed by their patron. This has the same effect as a Force Field with a Strength of 20 that does not overload.

Disc of Tzeentch

Screamers of Tzeentch are often seen skimming along the billowing storm fronts of burning gasses that erupt from the deep magma seas of the Flaming Tomb. Their graceful flight belies the violence and destructive power of the churning flames over which they soar or their own not inconsiderable dangers. Little is known about these Screamers, or why they often congregate in the lower atmosphere of this world. Great shoals of these beasts often appear during times of particularly strong warp tides, when the voices of the Screaming Vortex grate on the ears of even the mind-deaf.

Although the Screamers do not often prey upon the bedraggled denizens of the planet, there are times when, driven by urges or instincts foreign and unknowable to mortal man, they fall upon the human population, driving them from one desolate region to another. Countless refugees may die in these sudden attacks, savaged by the gaping maws, brutalised by the barbed tails, or driven mad by the shrieking hunting cry of the implacable creatures. Many others, driven by a fear that precludes any rational thought, run directly into the roiling magma flows, their bodies exploding into dark and greasy flames as the last of their remains swirls up into the air to join the noxious clouds.

One of the most common reasons for powerful Heretics to visit the Flaming Tomb is, in fact, these swarms of deadly, graceful creatures. Among the devotees of the Master of Magic, there are few possessions more prized than the daemonic mount crafted from a Screamer, known as a Disc of Tzeentch. An amalgam of daemonic flesh, flashing blades, and burnished metal, a powerful sorcerer mounted on a Disc is lethally fast and manoeuvrable, gaining an edge over almost any foe. Screamers are notoriously difficult to summon and break to the Disc, however. Rarely, the fickle God of Change may grant a particularly favoured disciple with a Disc, fully formed and willing to serve. However, for most adherents to the Changer of the Ways, a more difficult path is required.

A Disc of Tzeentch can be forged from the daemonflesh of a Screamer if the practitioner is powerful enough and masters the proper rites and ceremonies. Sorcerer's eager to obtain a Screamer for this purpose hunt the creatures down on the Flaming Tomb, there to perform the rituals and spells necessary to force the change and subservience upon them. It is a dangerous undertaking, and more fail than succeed. But for the prestige and tactical advantage of a Disc of Tzeentch, many and more are willing to assume the risks.

Disc of Tzeentch (Elite)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
35	02	45	45	50	15	43	40	05	--

Movement: 6/12/18/36

Armour: None

Skills: Awareness (Per) +20.

Traits: Bestial, Daemonic (4), Deadly Natural Weapons (Warp Blades), Fear 2, Flyer (6), From Beyond, Warp Instability.

Weapons: Warp Blades (1d10+5 R; Pen 12; Felling (3), Razor Sharp).

Blessing of Tzeentch: Screamers of Tzeentch are blessed by their patron. This has the same effect as a Force Field with a Strength of 20 that does not overload.

Obtaining a Disc of Tzeentch: Although sometimes a gift granted by the Lord of Lies himself, powerful sorcerers may attempt to summon a Screamer and twist it to their purposes through obscure and dangerous rituals. A Screamer is first summoned via the method described for the Ritual of Breaking (see page 61). However, as the Screamer must then be dominated by the sorcerer's will and its very physical structure transformed into that of a Disc, the Ritual will always be two steps more difficult than for a normal Mount.

Daemonic Mount: A Disc of Tzeentch, once summoned and reshaped, will maintain its Disc form for as long as the Sorcerer retains control over it. While riding on the Disc, the sorcerer may use the Disc's movement characteristics and direct the creature to use its attacks in melee. Any attacks directed at the sorcerer riding the Disc should be randomised between the rider and steed. The Heretic is protected by the Disc's Blessing of Tzeentch unless he is using a force field of his own. However, once every 1d5 days the sorcerer must perform an **Opposed Willpower Test** against the Disc to keep it subservient. In addition, any time the



Disc takes damage of any kind, a further **Opposed Willpower Test** must be taken. Should any of these tests be failed, the Disc immediately reverts to a Screamer and attacks the nearest mortal creature—probably the sorcerer himself.

Chariots of Tzeentch: The most powerful devotees of the Master of Misrule, dissatisfied with a single Disc, will often attempt a far more complicated and dangerous undertaking, the crafting of a Chariot of Tzeentch. A Chariot of Tzeentch requires first a massive iron and brass chariot of the finest craftsmanship be forged and brought to the place of the Ritual of Breaking. Then two Screamers of Tzeentch must be summoned and bound into Disc form and yoked to the chariot with chains of spellwoven gold. Each Ritual of Breaking will be three steps more difficult than for a normal Mount. Once the two Discs have been summoned and formed, they must be bound to the chariot through a Ritual of Binding. The two Discs and chariot now form a Chariot of Tzeentch, which possesses all of the rules and statistics of a single Disc except that the Flyer attribute is reduced from 6 to 5. In addition, any Heretic riding within the Chariot itself has his armour increased by +4.



PHOKULOZORTIS, DAEMON PRINCE OF TZEENTCH

The Screaming Vortex attracts many elite daemons of power. The daemon prince of Tzeentch known as Phokulozortis is, like most things associated with the Master of Metamorphosis, ever changing. Once a mere mortal, he is now eternal, sloughing off his skin for daemoniac flesh. Around the creature, ethereal as if through a fog, there are hints of great feathered pinions, multiple bird-like heads weaving back and forth on long, gangly necks, multiple waving arms with long, delicate hands. But as a true creature of Chaos, he can take any form he wishes. His favourite ruse is to assume the likeness of other daemoniac creatures and play their role throughout a botched summoning or bungled ritual entreaty. He acts out its part flawlessly, a seemingly dutiful and cowed infernal creature. Somehow, however, the endeavours of the Heretics who summoned Phokulozortis will always go awry, furthering the prince's schemes and designs, or those of his master, and bringing nothing but failure and suffering to those weak souls who initiated the summoning.

Phokulozortis is a master manipulator, with the ability to touch the threads of time and space to see what courses will bear fruit and what will not. His advice is always poisoned, for he knows exactly what to tell the object of its attentions to elicit the most violent and profound transformation. No matter the original purpose of those who summoned it, the dance will always follow the tune of the Father of Lies.



There are many tales of Phokulozortis whispered across the Vortex; tales of weak-minded conjurers calling forth beings far above their ability to control, who nevertheless heed the call. These tales follow the benighted sorcerers as their plots and machinations, fed and abetted by the daemon thing they summoned, seem to grow stronger in power and influence, only to have their hopes and dreams dashed upon the sharp rocks of cold reality. Most of the tales end with the mysterious disappearance of the deceived augurers, vanishing without a trace, never to be seen again.

Mortals who study the lore of the infinite and immortal believe that Phokulozortis roams throughout the Vortex in search of those whose overweening pride and faith in themselves make them the perfect objects of its attentions. Whether warlords, political leaders, or clan elders, no one of ambition and moral laxity is safe. There are whispers that the creature has even reached beyond the Vortex, perhaps going so far as to pull strings and claim souls on the very worlds of the Corpse-God himself.

Phokulozortis (Master)

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
45	52	48	39	44	58	48	56	50	23

Movement: 4/8/12/24

Wounds: 20

Armour: None.

Total TB: 11

Skills: Awareness (Per), Charm (Fel) +20, Command (Fel) +10, Commerce (Int), Common Lore (All) (Int) +10, Deceive (Fel) +30, Dodge (Ag), Forbidden Lore (All) (Int) +10, Inquiry (Fel) +10, Logic (Int) +10, Linguistics (WP) +30, Psyniscience (Per) +10, Scholastic Lore (All) (Int) +10, Scrutiny (Per) +10.

Talents: Psy Rating 6, Mimic, Radiant Presence, Resistance (Psychic Powers), Strong Minded, Sacrifice, Warp Sense, Warp Conduit, Bastion of Iron Will, Favoured by the Warp, Warp Lock.

Traits: Daemoniac (4), Deadly Natural Weapons, Fear (3), From Beyond, Unnatural Toughness (4), The Stuff of Nightmares.

Weapons: Shimmerblade (1d10+9 E; Pen 6; Balanced, Crippling, Force Weapon, Razor Sharp, Tearing).

Deft Manipulator: Peering down the threads of the future, Phokulozortis can quickly see the effects of its words and deeds. As a Full Action, Phokulozortis may bandy words with an unwary character, causing an **Opposed Willpower Test**, in which Phokulozortis receives a bonus equal to the difference in their Intelligence Bonuses x 10 (should the character have a higher INT Bonus, no bonus is awarded). Should the character fail this test, Phokulozortis gains a Twisted Fate token for every 10 points he wins by. Phokulozortis may use Twisted Fate Tokens to affect any test performed by that character later in that adventure whilst in his presence, to either add or subtract 10 to the result.

Master of Magics: Phokulozortis is a student of all the wonders of Tzeentch. He may attempt to use any Tzeentch, Unaligned, or Divination Power with the usual Focus Power Test.

Blessing of Tzeentch: Phokulozortis is blessed by its patron. This has the same effect as a Force Field with a Strength of 50 that does not overload.

Daemoniac Presence: Phokulozortis causes all enemies within 20 metres to suffer a -10 penalty to all Willpower Tests.

THE NECRONS

"Of all our arrogant inferiors, I find the slaves of the warp the most distasteful. Not content to merely fling themselves into that wretched sea, they insist on inviting its creatures into our galaxy. This, we cannot allow."

—Necron Overlord Kothorahn, Regent of Ghelleph

The Necrons are a race ancient beyond reckoning, and the god-beings that granted them immortality are as old as the stars themselves. The denizens of the Screaming Vortex know little about this ancient menace, though they know more than the ignorant, wilfully blind slaves of the Corpse-Emperor. Yet the histories and activities of these mysterious xenos remain hidden to even the most blessed of warp-seers and oracles. This fact frustrates the sorcerers of Tzeentch to no end. Ironically, it also gives the followers of Chaos the one insight into the nature of the Necrons that is beyond doubt: theirs is an entirely soulless race.

Long before the rise of man, at a time when Terra was little more than a carnosaur-infested death world, the Necrontyr discovered, or were perhaps discovered by, god-like beings known as the C'tan. The C'tan fed on the very stuff of stars, snuffing them out like candles. It is said, however, that the C'tan truly delighted in consuming the very life force of mortal beings. It is written in ancient prophecies and the journals of madmen that when the Necrontyr discovered the C'tan, they gave their allegiance to these god-beings. Using their impossibly advanced sciences, the Necrontyr fashioned bodies of living metal for the C'tan, beings of infinite energy, to inhabit and so move amongst their servants.

The Necrons were not always as they are now. Before the coming of the C'tan, the Necrontyr were a race of flesh, blood, and soul. The Necrontyr were a short-lived race, their home world burning under the glare of a cruel sun. The spectre of death obsessed the early Necrontyr, whose short lives were spent maintaining the massive tomb-complexes that housed their ancestors. Even once their technology allowed the Necrontyr to depart for the stars aboard slow burning torch-ships, they were a morbid people. The C'tan offered the Necrontyr what they craved most: immortality. The C'tan made biotransference possible for the Necrontyr, who gave up their weak, dying flesh for everlasting metal. Yet they also sacrificed their souls, on which the C'tan feasted. It is impossible to say if the Necrontyr realised the price they would pay for immortality. Yet many Necrons long for a return to the flesh, for to live a cold eternity as a machine is no life at all.

At the time of the C'tan's arrival, the Necrons were engaged in a long and terrible war against the mythical Old Ones. The Necrons had always envied the Old Ones' immortality, and this envy had long ago turned to a burning hatred. The Triarch, the ruling council of the Necrontyr civilisation, used this hatred to unite the disparate Necrontyr dynasties, and so the War in Heaven began. When the Necrons discovered the C'tan, the war was going against them, and victory for the Old Ones was near at hand. The Necrons' newly bestowed immortality did nothing to diminish their hatred of the Old

Ones, and in their durable new forms and with the power of their god-beings behind them, the Necrons assailed their enemies with renewed vigour. The ultimate outcome of this war is unclear. What is known, however, is that it was destructive beyond imagining.

Even more so than many xenos, the minds of the Necrons are unknowable, even to the servants of the Dark Gods. Many question if the commonly encountered Necron foot soldiers even possess sentience at all. It is beyond doubt, however, that the leaders of the Necrons, the so-called Lords and Overlords, possess minds that are cold and calculating beyond the ken of mortals. Yet for all their technology and the power of their star gods, the Necrons are not without fault. Some Necron rulers awake from their epochs-long slumber with defects in the engrams and neuro-circuits that house the remnants of their personalities. Perhaps this could be described as insanity, but it is far from the entropic madness of one touched by the Dark Gods. Like every other facet of the Necron race, it is ordered and exact, like a chronometer that stops at regular intervals, or a cogitator that outputs the same results regardless of the data fed to it.

The Necrons are anathema to the forces of Chaos, but especially so to the servants of Tzeentch. They have no souls to corrupt, their every action is ordered and logical to the point of impossibility, and their living metal bodies are entirely resistant to the mutating effects of the warp. While the Necrons wield powers that may appear as magic to the ignorant, they are in fact the result of technology more advanced than imaginable. They do not use psychic powers to navigate the warp, yet somehow travel across the stars with terrible speed. Some believe the Necrons may even possess the secrets of the fabled Eldar Webway. Even this possibility may tempt a sorcerer to seek out the accursed tombs of the Necrons, and it is whispered that the greatest sorcerer of the Thousand Sons Legion seeks the truth of this rumour.

To the tech-priests of the Adeptus Mechanicus, the advanced, theoretically impossible technology of the Necrons is fascinating yet heretical. The Necrons themselves are clearly an utter abomination—xenos machines that possess a malign, soulless sentience. The Dark Mechanicus, however, are not burdened by the ignorant superstitions of the fools on Mars. For them, the Necrons and their technology represent a great opportunity. Any rumours of Necron activity are sure to excite the interest of Heretekes and techno-sorcerers, and some would consider a "live" Necron specimen to be an acquisition worth sacrificing an army. This goal continues to prove elusive, though, as Necrons habitually teleport away, disappearing in shimmers of ghastly emerald light when disabled or faced with defeat. Where they go, only their own gods know for sure.



THE PILLARS OF ETERNITY

"For centuries, our tribe has held this sacred command: do not disturb the tombs. And what have you done, boy? Your greed may have doomed us all, and you have certainly doomed yourself. Save your words, I have no pity for those who defy the will of the gods."

—Jorlun, Shaman of the Jth'oru Tribe

At the furthest edge of the Screaming Vortex lies the frozen world known as the Pillars of Eternity, so named for the impossibly tall, ordered columns of ice that dot its surface. Some may assume that these cyclopean structures, clearly beyond the limits of any natural process to form, must be the result of the warping influence of the Vortex. This could not be further from the truth. For beneath the metres of ice, accumulated over countless millennia, barely glimpsed artificial structures exist. On occasion, these pillars give off a sickly green light that can be seen from kilometres away. The people of the Pillars of Eternity know this to be a bad omen, and huddle around their fires with weapons ready. For when the Pillars of Eternity awake, the dead walk.

THE PEOPLES OF ETERNITY

Despite its appearance as a dead world, small tribes dot the frozen surface of the Pillars of Eternity. While many of these humans are marked by their exposure to the warp, the incidence of mutation is lower than on many of the other Gloaming Worlds. Perhaps this helps to explain the high regard with which mutants are held amongst the tribes. Psykers in particular are seen as blessed by the gods, and often rise to positions of authority. No chieftain would ignore the counsel of a shaman, those wise men who guard and pass down the secrets of sorcery.

No one knows how many tribes inhabit this world, and the exact number is ever-changing as groups are wiped out through war, or subsumed into others through conquest or convoluted political manoeuvring. It is clear, however, that each tribe has its own peculiarities. Many of the tribes are nomadic, constantly travelling in search of food, for there is little to be had on this bleak planet. Other tribes lay claim to a spot of frozen ground, willing to lay down their lives to defend it. It is said that one such tribe died out completely from starvation, due to their belief that it was the will of the gods they never abandon their land, even for a moment.

When one tribe encounters another, they often come to blows. The tribes raid each other for food and supplies, and cannibalism is rife. However, in order to survive, the tribes must often band together in temporary alliances. These confederacies may last for hours or centuries, depending on the underlying reasons for the truce and the idiosyncrasies of the tribal leaders—and, of course, the will of the gods as revealed to their spiritual leaders. Within a tribe, chieftains, elder councils, shamans, seers, and a bewildering array of other positions unique to each tribe engage in a variety of duplicities, schemes, double-crosses, and plots. These are not only a means for one to secure or defend his power; conspiracy is viewed as a spiritual act by many tribes, and the literal tentacles sported by the most nefarious of plotters attest to the truth of this. While such obvious mutations are often seen as a sign of untrustworthiness and blessing in equal measure, any



plotter worthy of his gifts savours the additional challenge. This constant subterfuge and politicking is magnified in a tribal alliance, whether it consists of only a pair of tribes, or a dozen. These schemes are compounded by a dizzying array of alliances within alliances between tribes and individuals.

On the rare occasion that travellers from the other worlds come to the Pillars of Eternity, the natives gather in both hostility and eagerness, as they know such expeditions bring with them a bounty of supplies. Of course, in keeping with the duplicitous nature of many of the inhabitants, this hostility may be disguised behind warm greetings and invitations to great feasts and celebrations. Many a landing has never returned, as the armour and weaponry of a travelling warband are often of little defence against poisoned victuals and subtle sorceries. A tribe that is successful in their attack on a group of off-worlders instantly becomes the target of every other tribe in the area and finds itself hard-pressed to defend its plunder. At these times, a complex web of alliances and favours that may date back for generations comes into play.

The tribes all worship of Chaos, and particularly the Changer of the Ways, although with differing names and traditions. Some worship Tchar, the Lord of Magick, others T'chaizen, the Scheme-Father, or Zen'sch, the Great Raven. The J'rklu tribe worshipped Cho'ch in his aspect as the volcano—that is, until his avatar erupted and destroyed their village. Fire is seen as a gift from the gods by all the tribes, and so the J'rklu's neighbours the Llew'lep saw this as a great blessing, converting almost immediately. Differences in worship are often the cause for many conflicts.

None can say when the first humans settled the Pillars of Eternity, but because seniority is viewed as a determinant of status, the tribes constantly argue the point. This has led to ever more outrageous mythical narratives of the various tribes' origins. No fewer than seven tribes claim to have been placed on the surface of their world by Tzeentch himself at the dawn of time. Perhaps the one consistent detail in the teachings of the various shamans and sorcerer-chieftains is the prophecy of the Time of Thawing, or the Great Thaw. The tribes hold that they will be rewarded by the gods for their devotion with a melting of the ice and transformation of the land into a paradise of magic and change, where beneficent daemons walk and the loyal disciples of the God of Change are blessed. Recent events have been interpreted as the first signs of this prophesied time, including melting iceflows, shifting glaciers, quakes, and volcanic eruptions. Perhaps these are indeed signs of Tzeentch's favour, or perhaps something far from it.

A terrible secret is buried beneath the ice, for the Pillars of Eternity is a Necron Tomb World. The Tomb Worlds are the ancient domains of the Necrons, where they have slumbered since the end of the War in Heaven. Now, after lying dormant for millions of years beneath the frozen surface, the Necrons are stirring. As ancient machines resume their purpose, the energies unleashed have begun to cause great geologic upheavals. The first Necrons have already awoken, and are working to raise the rest of their legions. It is impossible to say when the Necrons of the Pillars of Eternity began to rise from their crypts, for time has little meaning within the Screaming Vortex, even this close to the edge.

In fact, the time dilating effects of the warp may be drawing out the Necrons' stirring. Carefully calibrated systems must operate in sync for the Tomb World's denizens to awake properly. The Screaming Vortex disrupts the flow of time and may even cause errors within the Necrons' strange technological systems. While the Necrons are resistant to the corruption of the immaterium, they are not beyond its damaging effects; for while their science may master the laws of physics, their power ends where the warp begins. It is for this reason that the Necrons often equip their Tomb Worlds with massive null-field matrices, strong enough to shield an entire planet from the baleful effects of the warp and the powers of the psyker. The tech-crypts deep beneath the surface of the Pillars of Eternity house just such null-field matrices, but aeons of time have resulted in damage to some systems that is beyond the abilities of the tomb's automated guardians to repair. With the first Necrons arisen, these devices have been repaired, but the energy required to push back the warp on such a massive scale is monumental, and to fully activate the null-fields would deplete the energy needed to revive the Necron legions. Nevertheless, the Necron Lords have seen fit to protect their most crucial facilities with localised null-fields.



THE THAW TEMPLE

From the newly-formed stone on the site of what had once been the village of the J'rklu tribe, the Llew'lep carved a great temple to the God of Change. The shamans and psyk-priests of the Llew'lep saw the eruption of Cho'zch Nokt, the "Mountain of Change," as the first act in the prophesied Great Thaw. To honour the gods and so ensure that the Great Thaw continued, the Llew'lep constructed this great temple from the igneous rock. Great pillars of uneven, porous stone, adorned with multicoloured pennants of imported cloth or human skin, rise many metres into the air. The dark rock is carved with blasphemous glyphs, while statues depict ancient priests and chieftains, as well as the Architect of Fate himself in a number of forms. The positions of these statues change frequently, moved either by the muscle of dozens of men or by sorcerous levitation, depending on the whim of the presiding shaman.

The Thaw Temple has become a pilgrimage sight for several additional tribes, and human sacrifices offered upon its grounds are thought to be especially well-received by the gods. Even off-worlders may be awed by this monument to the glory of Tzeentch. Several others tribes have become quite jealous of the status the temple has granted to the Llew'lep, and even now plot to replace its current stewards.

THE BLACK CATACOMBS

The tribes have many myths and legends surrounding the Black Catacombs that lie buried deep beneath the ice. Scattered fissures and caves lead to extensive tunnels of smooth stone and metal that descend deep into the planet's crust. How far these catacombs go is unknown, for few who descend ever return. Only the desperate, insane, or truly ambitious dare to brave the depths. While the myths speak of immense danger and fierce guardians, they also speak of great treasures and powerful artefacts. The shamans warn that the magicks encountered in the depths are not borne of the gods and are to be avoided. The labyrinthine tunnels are described as truly extensive and entrances have been reportedly found across the globe. The power of the subterranean sleepers is not confined to the depths, but extends up from their crypts and tomb complexes. The tribes shun these areas the shamans call "dead fields," areas where the gods are distant and where magick is weak and ineffectual. The tribes never settle in these areas, which are believed to be cursed ground, and nomads travel many days out of their way to avoid them.

While the tribes may war with and steal from one another, they are united in their praise of the Dark Gods and the fear and loathing they hold for the catacombs and their undead inhabitants. Yet this is not true of all of the human inhabitants. Seldom spoken of by the tribes, the depraved N'cric are a loathsome, troglodytic people who dwell only in the uppermost reaches of ancient, crumbling tunnels, all but forgotten by their builders. It is not clear how this came to be. Some say the N'cric were once a tribe like the others, forced to betray their gods or else face extermination at the hands of the planet's original inhabitants. Others believe that when this tribe first witnessed the awesome miracles of the metallic ones,

they forsook their gods and cast out their psykers. The N'cir worship the Necrons as gods, offering sacrifices and prayers for guidance. It is said that these traitors construct costumes of scavenged metals, so that their spiritual leaders might take on the guise of their steel gods during ceremonies. It is unclear if the Necrons view these humans as servants, vassals, or vermin, or if they are indeed aware of their presence at all.

Cursed Treasure

In ancient times, the human inhabitants mounted frequent expeditions into the depths in search of arcane wonders. Then, as now, treasure seekers from off-world arrived periodically for this express purpose, and it is possible that some newer tribes are descended from such voidfarers who became stranded. These subterranean expeditions rarely return successful, or at all. The Necrons' guardians have always protected the Black Catacombs, even whilst the Necrons themselves slumbered. These days, the tribes believe that to enter the Black Catacombs is to be cursed, and only death awaits those foolish enough to do so. The tribes have inherited many stories of these terrifying guardians: swarms of metallic insects, blade-handed ghosts that emerge from the very walls, gargantuan metal spiders, and massive serpents that tunnel through ice and rock with equal ease. The stories also tell of such marvels as impossibly large chambers filled with hundreds of thousands of steel skeletons, vast caverns where green lightning arcs between massive banks of arcane devices and crystals, and of shimmering doorways from which none return.

Many of these stories tell of the horrible fates that await those foolish enough to venture down through the caves and crags, into the depths of Eternity's underworld. One such legend speaks of a covetous sorcerer who, against the advice of his fellows, descended into the steel caverns with a small coterie of able warriors. Between the sorcerer's powerful magicks and the warriors' prowess, the party fought their way past the deathly spectres that barred their entrance into the crypts. The tomb robbers eventually located a great chamber filled with urns, chests, and strange sarcophagi. The stone shelves lining the chamber were piled with beautiful treasures—fantastical hololiths, golden jewellery, dazzling green gems, and mysterious cubes of silver. Careful not to disturb the sarcophagi lest they wake the dead, the men plundered the crypt, filling leather sacks to bursting with treasures.

On leaving the chamber, the men became lost, as the corridors seemingly had changed orientations. As the band searched more and more desperately for the way out, the sorcerer's powers of foresight seemingly useless, they heard a sound like an avalanche of steel. Suddenly, wave upon wave of tiny, chittering metal creatures were upon every surface. The warriors had their armour stripped away and the flesh scoured from their bones, but they bought time for the sorcerer to escape with just a handful of the choicest trinkets. In the icy cave that would take him back to the surface, the sorcerer paused to catch his breath. Bursting forth from the ice, a huge many-limbed monstrosity hovered before the sorcerer. Finding his god-granted magicks seemingly gone, the sorcerer was quite literally powerless to stop the monster as it tore into him with its great pincers and whirring blades. As the sorcerer lay near death on the cold cavern floor, his lifeblood freezing as it pooled around him, he watched the monster slowly and methodically pick up each of the treasures in its great claws before disappearing back beneath the ice.

THE ETERNAL LEGIONS

"Their number is legion, their name is death."

—Eldrad Ulthran, Farseer of Craftworld Ulthwé

While the Disciples of Chaos have many enemies, including the Imperium, the Eldar, and myriad other xenos races, these adversaries also represent potential allies to be corrupted, or at the very least, souls to be sacrificed. Not so the Necrons. These soulless automatons offer little satisfaction to the servants of Chaos. They cannot be corrupted, nor mutated, nor even truly killed. Their hollow metal frames offer no sustenance for daemons, for they feel no fear, no emotion, and their souls were already devoured long ago. While a Heretic who understands the Necrons' nature is likely to fear and loathe them in equal measure, he has little to gain by indulging that hatred. Necrons teleport away when disabled in combat, leaving no skulls for Khorne. Their living metal bodies are utterly immune to disease, much to the chagrin of Nurgle's servants. Even Slaanesh's greatest champions could never tempt a Necron, for they possess no base desires, only cold logic. Of all the Chaos Gods, though, it is perhaps Tzeentch, the Changer of Ways, to whom the Necrons prove the greatest foil. When the Necrons gave up their souls in exchange for immortality, they severed the strings of fate. The Necrons have remained in their unchanging state for millions of years, and will remain so for millions more. The Necrons, and all their works, are immune to the warping effects of Chaos, to mutation and corruption. Their nature makes them highly resistant to the powers of the wyrd and sorcerer, while their advanced null-field technology is powerful enough to banish daemons and render the strongest psykers impotent. The intrigues that take place within the courts of Necron royalty are an affront to the Changer of Ways, such "plots" are practically scripted, so lavishly devoted are the Necrons to their ancient codes of conduct.

The Necrons do not truly hate Chaos, as it is doubtful that even the most eccentric Necron Lord is capable of an authentic emotional response. However, their nature compels them to oppose the warp in all its forms, and for all intents and purposes, this adversarial posture may as well be considered an utter loathing. Chaos is the greatest peril for the Imperium, yet mankind paradoxically relies on the warp for interstellar travel, communication, and much more. The Necrons, however, receive no benefit from the warp. They have no psykers to draw upon the Immaterium, while their advanced technology gives them power over the material universe that rivals the abilities of the strongest psykers. Without psykers though, the Necrons are unable to bend the warp to their will; at most they can reinforce the veil and block the effects of the warp. With no other defence against the warp, the Necrons have committed great resources to these advanced null-matrices, gloom prisms, and dusk shields as bulwarks against the Sea of Souls.

Necron attacks often occur with little or no warning. As Necron ships do not travel through the warp, their arrival is not presaged by the immaterial disturbances that announce the coming of Imperial vessels. Often, the first sign of a Necron attack comes with the appearance of a teleported Monolith floating silently in the air. The living metal hulls of these immense pyramidal structures are nearly impenetrable, and advanced self-repair systems are able to recover in moments from damage that would



cripple a battle tank. The devastating weaponry mounted on the Monolith can decimate entire formations of enemy troops. Gauss flux Arcs disintegrate all creatures in the vicinity, while the huge crystal atop the Monolith is in fact the focussing emitter for a devastating Particle Whip. Worse, though, is the Eternity Gate, a green, shining portal in the front of the Monolith. Through the Eternity Gate step Necron forces from an orbiting Tomb Ship, or even a distant Tomb World. The Monolith's durability makes this method of invasion incredibly difficult to counter.

The following pages detail the statistics and game rules for the Necrons and their miraculous technologies. For rules on Necron Warriors, Immortals, Scarabs, and Tomb Stalkers, see pages 368–371 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook.

Canoptek Spyder

Canoptek Spyders are enormous devices, with rounded bodies and numerous claws giving a frightening arachnoid appearance. They are the guardians and custodians of the Necron tombs, hovering through the corridors and maintaining the ancient systems that sustain the Necrons in their deathless slumber. These constructs direct the efforts of subservient mechanisms, including Canoptek Wraiths and Canoptek Scarabs.

When an intrusion into a dormant Necron tomb is detected, Canoptek Spyders both coordinate the defence and attack directly. The fabricator claws which allow the Spyders to make such efficient repairs are more than capable of ripping through armour, flesh, and bone, and they sometimes sport additional ranged weaponry. Once a Tomb World has awoken, Spyders may

accompany their masters on raids and campaigns of conquest. Not only are they deadly combatants, but their Fabricator Arrays make the already resilient Necrons all but indestructible.

Canoptek Spyder (Elite)

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
35	25	65	65	25	25	35	45	--	--

Movement: 4/8/12/24 (Hoverer)

Wounds: 65

Armour: Machine Trait (8 All)

Total TB: 12

Skills: Tech-Use (Int) +20.

Talents: Furious Assault.

Traits: Auto-Stabilised, Fear (1), From Beyond, Hoverer (4), Machine (8), Size (6), Undying, Unnatural Strength (6), Unnatural Toughness (6).

Weapons: Fabricator Claws (2d10+12 R; Pen 4; Tearing). Some Spyders may also wield a Twin-linked Particle Beamer (Heavy; 70m; S/-/-; 3d10+8 X; Pen 5; Clip —; Reload —; Blast (4), Concussive (3), Reliable, Twin-linked).

Gear: A Spyder may be outfitted with a Fabricator Array† and a Gloom Prism††.

†**Fabricator Array:** A Fabricator Array grants a +20 bonus to all Tech-Use tests. As a Half Action, a Canoptek Spyder may attempt a **Challenging (+0) Tech-Use Test**. For each Degree of Success, one Necron within 5m automatically passes its next Regeneration Test and removes twice the normal amount of damage.

††**Gloom Prism:** This green crystal, laced with arcane circuitry, creates an anti-psyhic field that severs the connection of daemons and psykers to the warp. Focus Power Tests and Warp Instability Tests within 50m of a Gloom Prism suffer a –30 penalty.

Scarab Hive: Canoptek Spyders contain internal systems which continuously construct Canoptek Scarabs to assist the Spyder in its tasks. As a Free Action, a Canoptek Spyder can release these Scarabs to bolster a depleted Scarab swarm (see page 368 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook) within 20m, removing all Damage it has suffered. Alternatively, the Canoptek Spyder may create a new Scarab Swarm, which counts as having already suffered 20 Damage (this damage may be removed with subsequent uses of this ability). After using this ability, the Spyder must attempt a **Difficult (–10) Toughness Test**. On a Failure, the Spyder has expended a dangerous amount of energy, and suffers 2d10 E Damage with no reduction for Armour or Toughness. It takes time for the Canoptek Spyder's internal facilities to construct new Scarabs in this manner, and so this ability can only be used once every 1d10 rounds.

Processor Link: When Canoptek Spyders operate together, their computerised minds combine to form an aggregate much more powerful than the sum of its parts, allowing them to coordinate their efforts and the efforts of their subservient creatures with startling efficiency. For each additional Canoptek Spyder within 50m, all Canoptek Spyders, Canoptek Wraiths, and Scarabs in that range gain Unnatural Intelligence (1). In addition, all Canoptek Spyders linked in this manner gain the Combat Formation talent, the benefits of which can be utilised by any affected Canoptek Wraiths and Scarabs.

Canoptek Wraith

The inhabitants of the Pillars of Eternity have many tales of the horrific spectres that haunt the subterranean crypts and tunnels. These apparitions are said to emerge silently from the very walls to slay or drag off those who trespass amongst the ancient graves. Canoptek Wraiths guard and maintain Necron tombs, under the direction of the Canoptek Spyderys.

Wraiths are frightening constructs, with long, segmented bodies sporting numerous bladed arms and metal tendrils. They glide through the air with disconcerting movements that are somehow both fluid and stilted. Perhaps the most notable feature of a Canoptek Wraith is its hard-wired phase shifter. This highly advanced dimensional destabilisation matrix allows Wraiths to selectively phase parts of their body, and to do so almost instantaneously. This makes Wraiths terrifying foes in battle, as they are able to phase their claws through armour to rend organs and slice bone, or to phase their bodies so that an enemy's blows pass through harmlessly. Despite their size, the Wraiths' abilities allow them to approach foes in silence, or even to emerge from the very walls of a tomb in ambush.

Canoptek Wraith (Elite)

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
45	35	55 ¹²	55 ¹⁰	40 ⁵	20	45	45	--	--

Movement: 6/12/18/36 (Hoverer)

Wounds: 30

Armour: Machine Trait (7 All)

Total TB: 10

Skills: Dodge (Ag) +10, Intimidate (S) +10, Stealth (Ag) +10, Tech-Use (Int) +20.

Talents: Ambidextrous, Crippling Strike, Swift Attack, Two-Weapon Wielder (Melee).

Traits: Deadly Natural Weapons (Claws), Fear (2), From Beyond, Hoverer (6), Machine (7), Multiple Arms (6), Phase, Size (5), Undying, Unnatural Agility (1), Unnatural Strength (7), Unnatural Toughness (5).

Weapons: Claws (1d10+12 R; Pen 3) and Whip Coils (1d10+10 I; Pen 0; Flexible, Primitive (8), Snare (2)).

Gear: Phase Shifter†.

†**Phase Shifter:** This mechanism grants the Wraith the Phase trait, and acts as a Force Field with a protection rating of 45 that never overloads. Additionally, if a Canoptek Wraith scores three or more Degrees of Success when rolling to hit with a melee attack, the attack cannot be parried, and Damage from the attack is not reduced by the target's armour.

Wraithflight: Canoptek Wraiths may activate their Phase trait as part of a Movement Action, effectively allowing them to pass through solid barriers without slowing their speed.



Deathmark

The tribes of the Pillars tell of a brave chieftain who set forth with his most trusted warriors to find food for his starving people. The warriors discovered a cleft in the ice and, as they delved deep into a cave of shining metal, an eerie green light appeared around the head of one and then another, as glimmering skeletal figures emerged from the very shadows. Only a single warrior survived the ensuing massacre, running blindly across the ice fields, never looking back. Eventually the green glow vanished, yet he found no solace, for his fellow tribesmen shunned him. The people of the Pillars believe that, though the light may fade, those touched by death are forever marked. To this day, one who has been marked for death by the inexorable ones is considered cursed and cast out from his tribe lest he bring ruin upon them all.

Deathmarks are the chillingly perfect assassins of the Necrons. Similar in appearance to an Immortal, Deathmarks are identifiable by the single, sophisticated optic sensor in the centre of their head and the arcane orbs projecting from their spine and shoulder blades. They hunt and kill with the single-mindedness that is only possible for a machine; with no need to eat, drink, or sleep, they can lie in wait for an eternity if need be. What makes Deathmarks the ultimate assassins, however, is their ability to step into a pocket dimension to wait and watch. This is no warcraft, but a technology completely unknown to the younger races. It is doubtful a mortal would survive for long in such a pocket dimension even were he able to gain ingress.

Deathmarks are so named for the shimmering green light with which they mark their chosen targets. Armed with Synaptic Disintegrators, deadly weapons that fry neural tissue with focussed beams of subatomic particles, once they have marked their target few survive for long. The arcane technology that creates this mark is unknown, but it is a powerful beacon that the Deathmarks can view through the thickest stone, the heaviest metal, and even the walls of dimensions. The mark is formed of a mysterious energy known to overload and destroy auspices directed at it. None yet have discovered a way to remove the mark, but a lucky few have survived long enough to thank the gods that it fades and dissipates after a time. At least, so they hope.

Deathmark (Elite)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
30	50	45	45	35	40	30	40	15	--

Movement: 4/8/12/24

Armour: Machine Trait (7 All)

Skills: Intimidate (S) +10, Logic (Int) +20, Navigate (Surface) (Int), Stealth (Ag) +10, Tech-Use (Int) +20.

Talents: Crack Shot, Deadeye Shot, Heightened Senses (Sight).

Traits: From Beyond, Machine (7), Size (5), Regeneration (5), Undying, Unnatural Strength (5), Unnatural Toughness (5).

Wounds: 25

Total TB: 9



Weapons: Synaptic Disintegrator (Basic; 120m; S/2/-; 1d10+6 E; Pen 4; Clip —; Reload —; Accurate, Shocking, Special†).

Marked for Death: With a gesture of its skeletal hand, a Deathmark can cast its namesake upon a chosen target. This requires a Half Action and affects one target within 50m, who may attempt a **Hard (-20) Dodge Test** to avoid the mark. Deathmarks suffer no penalties to hit a marked target due to range, darkness, fog, or even complete concealment such as a solid wall (though cover provides AP as usual). In addition, the time required to Aim is halved, rounding down. Therefore, a Half Action taken to Aim provides a +20 bonus To Hit, while a Free Action taken to aim provides a +10 bonus. A Deathmark can only have one marked target at a time. A mark lasts for about one hour, unless dismissed by the caster.

Dimensional Oubliette: As a Half Action, a Deathmark can open a portal to a pocket dimension, which appears within 10m. It can be closed with a Free Action. Any creature can pass through an open portal, but the dimension beyond is not intended to support life, and creatures that enter are subject to the effects of suffocation and vacuum as well as a -30 penalty to all tests that rely on sensory perception of their surroundings. While the veil between a Necron pocket dimension and the warp is particularly strong, it still has the same vulnerabilities as the material universe.

†*Psykers who take damage from a Synaptic Disintegrator suffer a -30 to all Focus Power Tests for one round. In addition, any target that takes Damage to the Head location from a Synaptic Disintegrator must pass a **Hard (-20) Toughness Test** or suffer 1d10 permanent Intelligence Damage.*

Destroyer

The tribes of the Pillars have no stories of the Necrons known as Destroyers, for if a Destroyer Cult were truly active on that world, no life would still blight its frozen surface. Most Necron Lords are motivated by a desire for power, authority, or conquest, while Warriors and Immortals live only to serve their masters. Destroyers, however, hold the all-encompassing motivation to eradicate life wherever they may find it. Many Necron nobles long to return to flesh and blood once again. Destroyers have quite the opposite response to their situation, seeking to deny to all others the life that was denied them.

Whether due to a fault in the stasis process, outside intervention, or some inherent defect in their personality engrams, Destroyers are obsessed with a single, overriding goal: the extermination of all life in the galaxy. To this end, Destroyers regularly engage in modifications to their bodies that other Necrons would consider self-mutilation. This most commonly takes the form of replacing arms with weapons, legs with grav platforms, and modifying heads and neural circuitry with advanced targeting systems. The result is a single-minded killing machine able to track its quarry across any terrain and under any conditions, that quarry being any biological creature unfortunate enough to draw the Destroyer's attention.

The insane Destroyers are shunned and feared even by their fellow Necrons. These outcasts gather on the fringes of Tomb Worlds to form Destroyer Cults of the Red Harvest, said to be led by Necron Lords afflicted with the same madness. These so-called Destroyer Lords combine the intellect, cunning, and nigh-invulnerability of a Necron

noble with the deadly purpose and enhanced systems of a Destroyer. If a Destroyer Cult does slumber beneath the ice of the Pillars of Eternity, then woe to the tribes, indeed to the inhabitants of all the gloaming worlds, should it awake.

Destroyer (Elite)

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
35	45	55 ¹⁰	55 ¹¹	35	40	35 ⁵	40	10	--

Movement: 6/12/18/36 (Hoverer) **Wounds:** 35

Armour: Machine Trait (8 All) **Total TB:** 11

Skills: Awareness (Per), Intimidate (S) +10, Logic (Int) +20, Tech-Use (Int) +20.

Talents: Crack Shot, Hatred (All), Heightened Senses (Hearing, Sight).

Traits: Auto-stabilised, From Beyond, Hoverer (6), Machine (8), Regeneration (5), Size (5), Undying, Unnatural Perception (2), Unnatural Strength (5), Unnatural Toughness (6).

Weapons: Gauss Cannon (Heavy; 100m; S/4/6; 1d10+12 E; Pen 5; Clip —; Reload —; Gauss†), or Heavy Gauss Cannon (Heavy; 200m; S/-/-; 4d10+10 E; Pen 10; Clip —; Reload —; Gauss†, Proven (4)).

†See page 369 of the **BLACK CRUSADE Core Rulebook** for the Gauss Weapon Quality.

Necron Lord

While the bulk of the Necron soldiery exhibit a distinct lack of personality and independent thought, this is far from the case with the Necron Lords that rule over Tomb Worlds, or the Nemesors that lead the Necron armies. The Necron royalty retained their personalities and minds through the process of biotransference, although due to errors in that original process or damage caused by faulty stasis systems, many Necron Lords exhibit strange eccentricities and what could perhaps be considered the Necron equivalent of madness.

Each Necron Lord is a wilful individual with its own personality and goals. Many Lords desire to elevate their status within the Necron hierarchy, perhaps to one day rise to the position of Phaeron and rule over an entire dynasty. Others desire to expand the boundaries of their dynasty's domain through conquest. While some such Lords and Nemesors may exterminate the inhabitants of the worlds they conquer, others are perfectly willing to accept oaths of allegiance and servitude from the lesser races. Still others desire to undo the curse of biotransference, or perhaps to eliminate their age-old enemies, the Eldar. Some Lords are consumed by strange obsessions, such as collecting objects of historical significance or cataloguing every life form in the galaxy.

In battle, Necron Lords are deadly adversaries. Their living metal frames are extraordinarily durable, and feature highly sophisticated self-repair protocols. This raw power is fortified by prodigious skill and unyielding determination. While Necron Lords possess unfettered access to the Tomb World armouries, they almost invariably prefer to wield weapons that highlight their noble status, most commonly the Staff of Light or Warscythe.

Necron Lords are easily marked out through the elaborate decorations with which they are adorned. In some cases these take the form of ancient, mouldering robes, possibly dating from before biotransference. Others are clad in tabards and cloaks of shining, segmented metal. Perhaps this choice of attire gives some insight into the minds of these immortal rulers, differentiating those who long for a return to flesh from those who embrace their undying form.

Necron Lord (Master)

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
55	50	55 ¹¹	55 ¹¹	35	50	35	60	35	--

Movement: 4/8/12/24

Wounds: 60

Armour: Machine Trait (10 All)

Total TB: 11

Skills: Awareness (Per), Charm (Fel) +10, Command (Fel) +10, Deceive (Fel) +10, Intimidate (S) +10, Logic (Int) +20, Parry (WS) +10, Tech-Use (Int) +20.

Talents: Combat Master, Counter Attack, Crack Shot, Crippling Strike, Lightning Attack, Swift Attack.

Traits: From Beyond, Machine (10), Regeneration (7), Size (5), Undying, Unnatural Strength (6), Unnatural Toughness (6).

Weapons: A Lord carries one of the following weapons: Staff of Light (Ranged: Basic; 25m; S/3/-; 1d10+8 E; Pen 7; Clip —; Reload —) and (Melee: 1d10+12 I; Pen 1; Balanced, Shocking), Warscythe (2d10+28 E; Pen 9; Felling (3), Power Field, Unbalanced), Hyperphase Sword (1d10+28 E; Pen 6; Balanced, Power Field), Voidblade (1d10+22 R; Pen 5; Crippling (5), Felling (2)), or Gauntlet of Fire (Ranged: Pistol; 15m; S/-/-; 1d10+9 E; Pen 5; Clip —; Reload —; Flame, Spray) and (Melee: 1d10+17 E; Pen 5; Flame, Tearing).

Gear: A Necron Lord may carry any number of devices from the **Artefacts of the Tomb** section on page 119.

Destroyer Lord

To create a Destroyer Lord, adapt the Necron Lord profile by removing the Movement values and adding the following:

Talents: Furious Assault, Hatred (All), Heightened Senses (Hearing, Sight).

Traits: Hoverer (6), Unnatural Perception (2), Unnatural Toughness (7).



Lychguard

Some of the tribes' legends are told only rarely, for to speak of certain things is to invite the attention of terrible entities. One such story tells of a metal warrior who came amongst the people of a large village. The creature identified itself only as "an Emissary of the Watcher," and gave the village chieftain two choices: fealty to the Watcher, or destruction. The chieftain, who had hardly achieved his position by bearing his throat to every terrifying monster that threatened his people, refused the offer. The creature proceeded to dispatch the tribe's greatest warriors and resist the psychic assaults of the tribal shaman with not a scratch to show for it. His faith broken, the chieftain collapsed to his knees and swore his tribe to their new master.

Lychguards are tall and broad, larger even than Immortals; as befits their status, Lychguards are marked out with tall crests or headdresses and often wear segmented metal tabards or capes. They serve as both bodyguards and emissaries for Necron nobility and, to better perform these duties, they were permitted to retain the bulk of their intellect and personality. In addition, these peerless warriors were gifted with the highest quality of mechanical bodies, those otherwise reserved for Lords. This nigh-invincible frame combines with the matchless combat skills these dedicated warriors possessed in life, resulting in a warrior with very few equals. Lychguards are well aware of the requirements of their Lords and see it as a duty to deliver only perfect killing strokes; many are willing to weather the blows of their enemies until an opening presents itself, at which time they end the fight with a single swing.



Lychguard (Elite)

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
50	45	55	55	35	45	35	50	25	--

Movement: 4/8/12/24

Wounds: 35

Armour: Machine Trait (9 All)

Total TB: 11

Skills: Intimidate (S) +10, Logic (Int) +20, Parry (WS), Tech-Use (Int) +20.

Talents: Blademaster, Combat Master, Crippling Strike, Crushing Blow, Furious Assault, Sure Strike.

Traits: From Beyond, Machine (9), Regeneration (6), Size (5), Undying, Unnatural Strength (6), Unnatural Toughness (6).

Weapons: Warscythe (2d10+28 E; Pen 9; Felling (3), Power Field, Unbalanced), or Hyperphase Sword (1d10+28 E; Pen 6; Balanced, Power Field) and Dispersion Shield (1d10+25 I; Pen 0; Defensive, Special†)

†A Dispersion Shield generates a Force Field with a Protection Rating of 65 and an Overload Roll of 01–05. When a Dispersion Shield successfully stops a Ranged Attack, the Lychguard may immediately redirect the shot at an enemy within 25m. This is treated as a Ranged Standard Attack made with a starting base difficulty of **Hard** (–20).

GM GUIDANCE: KILLING THE UNDEAD

Some GMs may feel that the Regeneration Trait does not adequately represent the terrifying resilience of the Necrons. To reflect the unmatched self-repair abilities of the Necrons, GMs may wish to also use the following optional rule.

OPTIONAL RULE: REANIMATION PROTOCOLS

At the end of every Turn, the GM rolls a **Challenging (+0) Toughness Test** for each incapacitated or "dead" Necron. This test benefits from any rules that grant a bonus to Regeneration Tests, such as a Resurrection Orb or Canoptek Spyder's Fabricator Array. If the Test is passed, the Necron immediately rises to its feet with a number of Wounds remaining equal to the value of its Regeneration Trait. A Necron that fails the test will roll again the following Turn, unless it fails by three or more Degrees of Failure, in which case the Necron's self-repair protocols have been overcome by damage and it teleports away in a blaze of green light. At the GM's discretion, a Necron that is destroyed in a spectacular or thorough fashion, such as being liquefied by a melta gun at point blank range or reduced to scrap by a plasma grenade, may not be able to self-repair during the battle.

Tomb Blade

Tomb Blades are sleek, crescent-shaped attack craft crewed by a single Necron Warrior. Originally developed for void combat, as their exposed pilots have no need for air and do not feel the cold of space, Tomb Blades are also perfectly capable of atmospheric flight. With hyper advanced anti-gravity engines, Tomb Blades are beyond manoeuvrable, defying gravity and inertia as mere suggestions to their movement. Tomb Blades are programmed to evade enemy fire with complex, seemingly random movements, which are, in fact, determined by potent attack-algorithms. While Tomb Blades are crewed by Necron Warriors, in truth they can only be considered pilots in a very limited sense. Necron Warriors lack the independent thought or reflexes to make even poor combat pilots, and rely in large part on the pre-programmed courses and attack patterns of the Tomb Blade. This distinction matters little, though, as the two are hard-linked to operate as a single entity.

Tomb Blade (Elite)

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
30	45	45	45	35	25	30	40	15	--

Movement: 12/24/36/72 (Flyer)

Wounds: 30

Armour: Machine Trait (9 All)

Total TB: 10

Skills: Intimidate (S) +10, Logic (Int) +20, Operate (Aeronautica) (Ag), Tech-Use (Int) +20.

Talents: Crack Shot, Hard Target, Hip Shooting.

Traits: Auto-stabilised, From Beyond, Flyer (12), Machine (9), Regeneration (5), Size (6), Undying, Unnatural Strength (4), Unnatural Toughness (6).

Weapons: Twin-linked Tesla Carbine (Basic; 75m; S/-/-; 2d10+3 E; Pen 3; Clip —; Reload —; Shocking, Special, Twin-linked), Twin-Linked Gauss Blaster (Basic; 100m; S/4/-; 2d10 E; Pen 5; Clip —; Reload —; Gauss, Twin-linked), or Particle Beamer (Heavy; 70m; S/-/-; 3d10+8 X; Pen 5; Clip —; Reload —; Blast (4), Concussive (3), Reliable).

Gear: Tomb Blades may be equipped with a Nebulascope† and a Shadowloom††.

Nebuloscope: Some Tomb Blades are equipped with this advanced multi-dimensional targeter. A Nebuloscope reduces the difficulty of any Ballistic Skill Test by two degrees.

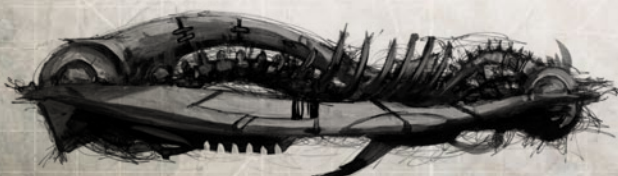
†**Shadowloom:** This small unit absorbs and dissipates photons, creating an unnatural area of darkness for 3m around the Tomb Blade (see page 245 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook for the effects of Darkness in combat). This area of darkness does not cause any penalties for the Tomb Blade. In addition, las weapons inflict half damage against a Tomb Blade with an active Shadowloom.



Triarch Praetorian

While most of the tribes' stories are myth and legend, there are those that have occurred within living memory. The elders of the Gh'on tribe speak of the day only a few scant decades ago when shining skeletons descended from the sky on invisible wings. The visitors entered the village and asked a number of questions about the tribe's customs and myths. With their questions answered, the towering figures conferred silently and departed towards a nearby fissure that would take them into the underworld.

The Triarch Praetorians are the enforcers of the ancient Necrontyr Triarch and custodians of the ancient ways. Unlike other Necrons, Triarch Praetorians are not vassals of a particular Necron Lord or Overlord. As in ancient times, they possess the right to censure nobles who act against the interests or dictates of the Triarch and the Necrontyr codes of honour. Fitted with the same high-quality bodies as Necron royalty, Praetorians are differentiated by their tails and the rib-like Gravity Displacement Packs mounted to their spines. Triarch Praetorians usually carry Rods of Covenant, symbols of the dominion that the ancient Triarch holds over the Necron Dynasties and the galaxy. Much more than symbols, Rods of Covenant are powerful and versatile weapons whose crackling energies may be expended in devastating short-ranged blasts, or released with staggering force upon striking an enemy in melee. Triarch Praetorians are sometimes instead armed with Void Blades and Particle Casters. Void Blades inflict horrendous damage in each strike as the weapon phases between different dimensional states, severing molecular



bonds and causing a chain reaction of atomic disintegration. Like all Necron particle weapons, Particle Casters fire nearly invisible bursts of anti-matter granules that react explosively on contact with matter, utterly annihilating both.

Triarch Praetorian (Elite)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
50	50	55	55	35	45	40	50	25	--

Movement: 4/8/12/24

Wounds: 40

Armour: Machine Trait (10 All)

Total TB: 11

Skills: Charm (Fel), Deceive (Fel) +10, Dodge (Ag), Intimidate (S) +10, Logic (Int) +20, Operate (Aeronautica) (Ag) +10, Parry (WS), Tech-Use (Int) +20.

Talents: Ambidextrous, Crack Shot, Hip Shooting, Swift Attack, Two-Weapon Wielder (Melee, Ranged).

Traits: From Beyond, Machine (10), Regeneration (6), Size (5), Undying, Unnatural Strength (6), Unnatural Toughness (6).

Weapons: Rod of Covenant (Ranged: Basic; 15m; S/-/-; 1d10+12 E; Pen 10; Clip —, Reload —; Proven (5), Reliable) and (Melee: 1d10+28 E; Pen 8; Concussive (1), Power Field), or Void Blade (1d10+22 R; Pen 5; Crippling (5), Felling (2)) and Particle Caster (Pistol; 30m; S/3/-; 2d10+5 X; Pen 4; Clip —; Reload —; Concussive (1), Reliable).

Gear: Gravity Displacement Pack (acts as a Jump Pack but can sustain the Flyer Trait indefinitely).



AETEHK THE WATCHER

As well as the varied scholars of the Vortex can determine, the being known as Aetehk the Watcher is responsible for all of the Necron activity witnessed therein. His undead mechanical legions descend with little or no warning, and thus far the only predictions of Aetehk's attacks have come from the Choir on the Mount on Q'Sal. Why the Choir should be the only seers thus far capable of predicting Aetehk's movements is unknown, but perhaps there is some connection between the Necron and that sorcerous world.

The goal of Aetehk's raids likewise eludes all, however. It is said that Aetehk has shown a willingness to cooperate on occasion with the Disciples of Chaos, behaviour that is quite puzzling to those seers and warp-scholars with knowledge of the Necron race. Aetehk's attacks so far evince no recognisable pattern and Aetehk has shown no interest in conquering territory. While this may be due to the fact that worlds of the Screaming Vortex are too saturated by the warp to be coveted by a Necron ruler, Aetehk must have another goal in mind. Some believe that Aetehk is methodically searching for something, following some precise and logical pattern that so far defies interpretation. Another possibility is that Aetehk is merely gathering supplies in preparation for some future event, perhaps even building his own power base in hopes of overthrowing some higher Necron royal who has yet to make his appearance. Perhaps the most worrisome possibility is that Aetehk is testing the defences of the worlds of the Vortex in preparation for a full scale invasion once his forces asleep under the Pillars of Eternity have fully waked. However, no one has yet identified where Aetehk makes his fastness. Ironically, those who know the most of the Necrons are likely to write off the idea that Aetehk's forces could be based anywhere in the Vortex, knowing as they do that Necrons despise the warp.

Aetehk the Watcher (Master)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
55	55	55	55	40	55	45	65	35	57

Movement: 5/10/15/30

Wounds: 70

Armour: Machine Trait (13 All)

Total TB: 11

Skills: Awareness (Per), Charm (Fel) +10, Command (Fel) +10, Deceive (Fel) +10, Dodge (Ag), Intimidate (S) +10, Logic (Int) +20, Parry (WS) +10, Tech-Use (Int) +20.

Talents: Ambidextrous, Combat Master, Counter Attack, Crack Shot, Crippling Strike, Lightning Attack, Swift Attack, Two-Weapon Wielder (Melee).

Traits: From Beyond, Machine (13) Regeneration (7), Size (5), Sturdy, Undying, Unnatural Strength (6), Unnatural Toughness (6).

Weapons: Rod of Night (Basic; 50m; S/3/- E; Pen 0; Clip —; Reload —; Haywire (1), Special), Hyperphase Sword (1d10+28 E; Pen 6; Balanced, Power Field), and Gauntlet of Fire (Ranged: Pistol; 15m; S/-/-; 1d10+9 E; Pen 5; Clip —; Reload —; Flame, Spray) and (Melee: 1d10+17 E; Pen 5; Flame, Tearing).

Gear: Mindshackle Scarabs, Phylactery, Resurrection Orb, Sempiternal Weave (effects included above).

RAUNEK KA, THE HOLDER OF KEYS

Crypteks are the caste responsible for maintaining the Necrons' ancient technologies. While all are masters of science and technology, each Cryptek specialises in a particular realm of techno-sorcery, be it geomancy, chronomancy, or some other esoteric discipline. The one known as Raunek Ka, like many of his order, is fascinated by the prospect of the reversal of biotransference and a return to the time of flesh. Whether this is due to a genuine desire to live again as flesh and blood, or mere scientific curiosity, none can say. While his brethren on distant worlds such as Zantragora obsess over the structure of nerves, tissue, and bone, Raunek Ka instead focuses on what he sees as the defining characteristic of the Necrons' current state: the soul, or rather, lack thereof. Ka believes that it was the loss of their souls, and not the loss of their frail, fleshy bodies, that was the true tragedy of biotransference. And while other Crypteks may be loathe to touch on the matter, Raunek Ka realises full well the intrinsic connection between souls and the warp.

Upon awakening from the Great Sleep, Raunek Ka quickly realised that his Tomb World was now situated in the perfect spot to pursue his research: the border between the warp and real space. However, this satisfaction soon turned to great disappointment as Ka realised that it was utterly infested with warp-spawned horrors.

Raunek Ka has bent all of his resources and advanced technologies to studying the flow of the immaterium, the currents of the Screaming Vortex, and the connection between physical body and transcendent soul. However, his own nature as a soulless machine and member of a race without psykers throws up numerous barriers in this research. Raunek Ka seems to be aware of this and is willing to concede that the inferior races may be able to offer him insights that he can never gain through cold study. He has struck bargains with the denizens of the Vortex for tomes of forbidden lore or first-hand insights into the nature of the warp and the soul. Of course, he is also sure to take captive as many psykers as possible when he goes to raid with his liege, Aetehk the Watcher. As an advisor to Aetehk, Raunek Ka is almost always present during raids and attacks, though his primary focus is on his research. Whether or not Aetehk shares the Cryptek's thoughts on the warp and apotheosis is unclear even to the lesser nobles that make up Aetehk's court. What is clear is that Aetehk listens to the counsel of Raunek Ka in all matters, so long as it does not conflict with his own mysterious goals. It is possible that the continued existence of human life on the Pillars of Eternity is due only to Raunek Ka's wishes, so that he might have a steady supply of test subjects.

In his research, Raunek Ka has gained great insight into the function of the warp and has applied this knowledge to make improvements and subtle alterations to established null-field technology and other anti-psyker equipment. Among his inventions is the Voidstave, a weapon utilising a focussed null-field to disrupt the minds of psykers, and the Aetherscope, a sophisticated scanner designed to detect warp activity.

Like other Crypteks, Raunek Ka stands out from his fellow Necrons due to his long, segmented tail and single, large eye. Whether or not these physical distinctions reflect differences in the physiology of the original Necrontyr race is unknown to even the wisest seers and most learned of xenophiles.

Raunek Ka, The Holder of Keys (Elite)

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
45	45	45 ⁸	55 ¹⁰	30	65	45	55	25	27

Movement: 4/8/12/24

Wounds: 55

Armour: Machine Trait (10 All)

Total TB: 10

Skills: Awareness (Per), Deceive (Fel), Forbidden Lore (Psykers, The Warp), Intimidate (S) +10, Logic (Int) +20, Parry (WS), Tech-Use (Int) +30.

Talents: Luminen Blast, Luminen Shock, Mimic, Resistance (Psychic Powers), Swift Attack.

Traits: From Beyond, Machine (10), Regeneration (7), Size (5), Undying, Unnatural Strength (4), Unnatural Toughness (5).

Weapons: Voidstave (1d10+18 E; Pen 5; Balanced, Power Field, Special†).

Gear: Aetherscope (grants him the Psyniscience Skill, although all tests are one degree more difficult than for a psyker), Canoptek Locusts, Shadow Ankh.

†All psykers within 15m of a Voidstave reduce their effective psy rating by one. Against psykers, the Voidstave gains the Hallucinogenic (2) Trait. Respirators do not confer the usual bonus on the Test to resist.

Raunek Ka's Canoptek Locusts

An example of Raunek Ka's unique handiwork, these small creatures are similar to Canoptek Scarabs, though even smaller. Each Locust contains an arcane energy generator capable of disrupting warp activity in the immediate vicinity, causing psykers to lose control of the power they channel. Raunek Ka is typically accompanied by at least one swarm, which may be concealed somewhere about his person until needed.

Canoptek Locust (Troop)

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
25	05	10	20	35	05	20	20	--	--

Movement: 5/10/15/30 (Flyer)

Wounds: 30

Armour: Machine Trait (4 All)

Total TB: 2

Skills: Tech-Use (Int) +30.

Talents: Swift Attack.

Traits: Deadly Natural Weapons, From Beyond, Flyer (5), Machine (4), Size (2), Swarm, Undying.

Weapons: Tiny Claws and Pincers (1d10+1 R; Pen 1d5).

Psychic Plague: Raunek Ka's Canoptek Locusts are little more than psy-disruptors with wings, and their programming leads them to always engage psykers over any other enemies. Psychic powers used within 10m of a Canoptek Locust are treated as one level higher but only for purposes of causing Psychic Phenomena. Fettered powers cause Psychic Phenomena on a roll of doubles, and Unfettered powers automatically cause a roll. Powers used at the Push level cause two rolls on the Psychic Phenomena table, with the normal modifiers.

ARTEFACTS OF THE TOMB

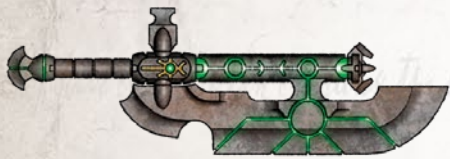
The Necrons have created many wondrous technologies that may seem impossible or supernatural to younger, inferior races. While Necron weapons almost invariably teleport away or self-destruct along with their defeated wielder, it is whispered that this may not be the case with Necron artefacts recovered from the depths of Tomb Worlds. Only the insanely strong or strongly insane would dare plumb the depths of a Necron Tomb in search of mythical treasure, but, then again, in the Screaming Vortex strength and insanity are often one and the same.

Gauntlet of Fire

This fitted gauntlet, wreathed in green flame, is a deadly weapon sometimes used by Necron royalty. A Gauntlet of Fire anchors itself into the Necron wielder's living metal frame, becoming a true extension of his body, and can be activated with a thought. The weapon emits great goutts of emerald flame to immolate targets at a distance. In melee, the flames flare and crackle as the wielder rips into the armour and flesh of his opponents. Due to the complete control the bearer has over this weapon, all WS tests made with a Gauntlet of Fire have their difficulty reduced by one step.

Hyperphase Sword

A potent energy blade, this weapon vibrates between dimensional states and can cut apart armour plating or flesh with equal ease.



Mindshackle Scarabs

Often concealed under the robes and cloaks of Necron Lords, these miniscule automatons can control the minds of mortals by attaching to their brain. Once in position, Mindshackle Scarabs may wait for months or years without revealing their presence, until orders are received from their controller. These interstitial broadcasts may be transmitted from even a distant star system, travelling along the cracks between dimensions.

Mindshackle Scarabs use the profile of Canoptek Locusts (see page 118), except that they lack the Psychic Plague rule and only have 10 Wounds. When a Mindshackle Scarab swarm Damages a character, the target must attempt a **Difficult (-10) Toughness Test**. On a failure, a small number of the Scarabs leave the swarm to burrow into the target's flesh, reaching its brain in 1d5 Rounds. Their Necron controller may activate these embedded creatures in one of two ways—subtly or overtly. Subtle activation may be used to insert an idea or set a course of action that is not completely out of keeping with the character's normal behaviour. This may be resisted with a **Hard (-20) Willpower Test** (the difficulty may be modified based on how "natural" the idea would be for the character). The character only becomes aware of the attempt if he achieves three or more Degrees of Success on this test.

Overt activation forces the victim to obey the spoken or subvocal commands of the controlling Necron without hesitation. Unless resisted with a successful **Challenging (+0) Willpower Test**, the character falls completely under the control of the Necron Lord or Cryptek responsible, and may be forced to attack comrades, surrender important items or information, or even fall on his own weapon. Overt use is extremely taxing on the Scarabs, which "burn out" and become inactive after 1d10 minutes. This frees the victim, but also inflicts 1d10 levels of Fatigue.

Particle Weapons

Another sign of the mastery the Necrons have over the material world, these weapons project incredibly small grains of anti-matter at their targets which, being made of ordinary matter, explode with impressive results. Particle Beamers and Particle Casters are perhaps the most widely known of these weapons, but undoubtedly there are more awaiting emergence from the tombs.

Phylactery

This small cylinder, often worn by Necron nobility, contains a swarm of sophisticated nanoscarabs. The bearer of a phylactery may use it with a Ready Action, releasing the nanoscarabs to swarm over its body, knitting tears in the living metal and bolstering the Necron's own self-repair abilities. For 1d10+5 rounds, the Necron increases its Unnatural Toughness Trait by +4 and automatically passes Toughness Tests for Regeneration. If a Phylactery is ever activated by a non-Necron, that character immediately suffers 2d10 R Damage that is not reduced by armour or Toughness. If the character possesses the Machine (3) Trait or higher, he instead removes 1d10 Damage and 1d10 Corruption Points. A Phylactery is a one-use item.

Resurrection Orb

Mysterious Necron artefacts sometimes seen in the hands of Lords and Overlords, Resurrection Orbs are glowing, green spheres of unknown material that focus energy into the living metal bodies of nearby Necrons, enhancing their self-repair protocols. All Necrons within 100m of a Resurrection Orb (including the bearer) reroll all failed Toughness Tests and treat Toughness Tests for purposes of the Regeneration Trait as **Easy (+20)**.

Rod of Covenant

These signature weapons of the Praetorians can be used to emit powerful blasts at their ranged foes as well as strike with powerful blows in melee combat.



PLAYERS AND NECRON EQUIPMENT

Generally, Necron weapons and gear phase out along with their owners when defeated in battle. Whether due to a malfunction, outside intervention, or some other factor, on very rare occasions something may be left behind. More likely, the Heretics may descend into a Necron Tomb for the very goal of acquiring miraculous items of Necron technology. To find Necron devices available for trade is almost unheard of, but some merchants and traders who deal with the hyper esoteric may be quite unaware of the nature of the peculiar metal cube that has come into their possession. It is recommended that Necron artefacts are obtained through play, and their acquisition may be the very goal of an adventure or Compact. If a GM does wish to make Necron gear available for purchase, however, all Necron items have an Availability of Unique and count as Best Craftsmanship for purposes of Acquisition Tests.

USING NECRON ITEMS

Obtaining a Necron artefact is difficult enough, but using it is something else altogether. Utterly alien minds created these devices, and even the most basic Necron weapon is far beyond the understanding of all but the most blasphemously ingenious Arch-Heretek. Many Necron weapons lack basic components that humans would expect, such as triggers or ammunition. Modifying a Necron weapon for Heretic usage requires a Crafting Test (see page 94 of the **BLACK CRUSADE CORE Rulebook**) with a recommended Difficulty of **Arduous (-40)**, taking 1d5 days and requiring 8 Extended Test Successes. Should the character fail a Crafting Test by four or more Degrees, the weapon explodes, dealing 3d10 E damage to all characters within 5m.

The method by which Necron weapons generate the power for their devices is ill-understood. Gauss Blasters and Tesla Carbines draw their power from the very body of the Necron wielding the weapon, so others must use a backpack power supply good for 3d10 shots. The weapon gains the **Overheats Quality** due to the poorer quality energy, and as it is the ammo supply that overheats and not the weapon itself, damage is applied to the character's Body location. All other weapons (except for Tachyon Arrows) contain an internal power source. Should one of these weapons ever Jam, the internal power supply fails permanently. Necron weapons share a mysterious connection to their masters, though, and should the weapon ever be in the presence of Necrons or a Necron Tomb, the power source could resume its proper functioning while gaining the attention of its rightful owners.

At the GM's discretion, Necron equipment obtained through an Acquisition Test may already be modified for non-Necrons to use.



Rod of Night

A Rod of Night takes the form of a rod of black metal about one metre long, its surface inlaid with silver and gold hieroglyphs, and often topped with an emblem of the Necron dynasties. Much more than a status symbol, a Rod of Night is able to siphon energy from technological devices, pulling it through the air along invisible pathways and storing it to be expended at the desire of the Necron noble wielding the weapon. If an attack from a Rod of Night hits an opponent, the next round the wielder may attempt a **Challenging (+0) Tech-Use Test** to use the Rod in one of the following three ways, rather than attacking normally: As a Tesla Carbine with a 50m range and a Semi-Auto value equal to the Degrees of Success on the Tech-Use Test; to instantly remove Damage equal to the wielder's Toughness Bonus, +1 additional Damage for each Degree of Success; or to replicate the effects of a Canoptek Spyder's Fabricator Array.

Due to its powerful nature, add +2 when rolling for the effect of a Rod of Night's Haywire Quality. When a Prolonged Dead Zone result occurs, the effects are permanent until repaired with a successful **Hard (-30) Tech-Use Test** or use of Luminen Capacitors.



TABLE 3-4: NECRON WEAPONS

Ranged Weapons

Name	Class	Range	RoF	Dam	Pen	Clip	Rld	Special	Wt.	Availability
Gauntlet of Fire (Ranged)	Pistol	15m	S/-/-	1d10+9 E	5	—	—	Flame, Spray	3kg	Unique
Gauss Cannon	Heavy	100m	S/4/6	1d10+12 E	5	—	—	Gauss†	35kg	Near Unique
Heavy Gauss Cannon	Heavy	200m	S/-/-	4d10+10 E	10	—	—	Gauss†, Proven (4)	50kg	Near Unique
Particle Beamer	Heavy	70m	S/-/-	3d10+8 X	5	—	—	Blast (4), Concussive (3), Reliable	25kg	Unique
Particle Caster	Pistol	30m	S/3/-	2d10+5 X	4	—	—	Concussive (1), Reliable	4kg	Unique
Rod of Covenant (Ranged)	Basic	15m	S/-/-	1d10+12 E	10	—	—	Proven (5), Reliable	6kg	Unique
Rod of Night	Basic	50m	S/3/-	—	0	—	—	Haywire (1), Special	7kg	Unique
Staff of Light (Ranged)	Basic	25m	S/4/-	1d10+8 E	7	—	—	—	10kg	Unique
Tachyon Arrow	Basic	300m	S/-/-	10d10 I	20	1	N/A	Concussive (6), Proven (3)	5kg	Unique
Tesla Carbine	Basic	75m	S/-/-	2d10+3 E	3	—	—	Shocking, Special††	20kg	Unique

Melee Weapons

Name	Class	Range	Dam	Pen	Special	Wt	Availability
Dispersion Shield	Melee	—	1d10+25 I	0	Defensive, Special†††	20kg	Unique
Gauntlet of Fire (Melee)	Melee	—	1d10+6 E	5	Flame, Tearing	3kg	Unique
Hyperphase Sword	Melee	—	1d10+17 E	6	Balanced, Power Field	10kg	Unique
Rod of Covenant (Melee)	Melee	—	1d10+17 E	8	Concussive (1), Power Field	6kg	Unique
Staff of Light (Melee)	Melee	—	1d10+2 I	1	Balanced, Shocking	10kg	Unique
Void Blade	Melee	—	1d10+11 R	5	Crippling (5), Felling (2)	15kg	Unique
Warscythe	Melee	—	2d10+17 E	9	Felling (3), Power Field, Unbalanced	12kg	Unique

† See page 369 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook for the Gauss Weapon Quality.

†† When a Tesla Carbine rolls a 9 or 10 for damage, or incapacitates a target, an additional hit is automatically applied to a random target within 15m of the first.

††† A Dispersion Shield generates a Force Field with a Protection Rating of 65 and an Overload Roll of 01–05. When a Dispersion Shield successfully stops a Ranged Attack, the Lychguard may immediately redirect the shot at an enemy within 25m. This is treated as a Ranged Standard Attack made with a starting base difficulty of Hard (-20).

Sempiternal Weave

The Lord's body is threaded with phase-hardened Adamantium as well as other, rarer, metals. This has the effect of increasing his Machine Trait by +1 and granting the Sturdy Trait.

Shadow Ankh

Occasionally seen hanging from the necks of Necron Lords, this heavy amulet, emblazoned with the Ankh of the Triarch, is much more than a sign of status. Shadow Ankhs contain a small, powerful null-field generator, far more sophisticated than those fashioned by the Adeptus Mechanicus. They have two primary effects. First, all Focus Power Tests and Warp Instability Tests made within 30m suffer a -20 penalty. Second, the bearer of the Shadow Ankh is protected by a Force Field with a Field Rating of 50 and Overload value of 01–05, which only protects against psychic powers, attacks from creatures with the Daemonic or Warp Instability traits, and attacks with the Warp Weapon Quality.

Staff of Light

Often wielded by Necron Lords and Crypteks as a symbol of status, these long staves are in fact sophisticated weapons. The haft of a Staff of Light houses a powerful energy generator, and the decorative headpiece acts as a focussing emitter, launching devastating bolts of blinding energy.





Tachyon Arrow

Even by the standards of Necron weaponry, the Tachyon Arrow is astoundingly powerful. Small enough to be mounted on a Necron Lord's wrist, a Tachyon Arrow transmutes a small sliver of inert metal into an energetically unstable projectile capable of collapsing a fortress. The only disadvantage to this astounding item is that its strange ammo supply is exhausted with a single shot, and is far too complex to be reloaded in the midst of combat. Although a weapon, Necron Lords may carry this item in addition to their normal weapon complement.

Tesla Carbine

Sometimes wielded by Necron Immortals, these bulky, intimidating weapons fire arcs of living lightning capable of melting plasteel and charring flesh. The bolts of lightning fired from a Tesla Carbine arc from target to target, almost as if possessed of a mind of their own, and can decimate whole groups of enemies with a single shot.

When a Tesla Carbine rolls a 9 or 10 for damage, or kills or otherwise incapacitates a target, a bolt of electricity arcs to a random target within 15m of the first, scoring an additional hit against that target. This extra hit has the potential to score further hits in the same manner. No roll to hit is needed for these additional attacks, which are applied to the target's Body location.

Tesseract Labyrinth

The appearance of these small cubes of metal belies their incredible effectiveness. Utilising the Necrons' mastery of hyper-geometry and phase technology, Tesseract Labyrinths briefly open a portal to a pocket dimension through which nearby creatures are pulled. As a Full Action, a Tesseract Labyrinth can be used against a target within 2m, who must pass a **Hard (-20) Dodge or Strength Test** or be pulled into an extra-dimensional prison. To ensure stability for all dimensions involved, a Tesseract Labyrinth requires 10 rounds to recharge between uses.

Using a Tesseract Labyrinth requires no test for a Necron trained in its use. Any other character who wishes to use a Tesseract Labyrinth, determine its function, or release its prisoners, must pass a **Very Hard (-30) Logic Test**. If a character also possesses the Tech-Use skill, the test is **Difficult (-10)**. If the test is failed by four or more Degrees of Failure, the character is affected by the Labyrinth as if he were the intended target.

Veil of Darkness

For the Imperium, the Disciples of Chaos, and even the Eldar, teleportation means short ranged travel through the warp. This method would be unthinkable for the Necrons. However, their mastery of dimensional physics, artificial wormholes, and hyper-geometry have given rise to such devices as the Veil of Darkness. Typically used by Harbingers of Despair, the sect of Crypteks that maintains and constructs these arcane devices, Veils are sometimes also gifted to Necron royalty. When activated, the user of a Veil of Darkness vanishes amidst a rippling shroud of energy, only to reappear momentarily in a nearby location.

As a Full Action, A Veil of Darkness can be used to teleport the user and any number of Necrons within 10m of him to another spot within 200m. The Necron using the Veil of Darkness makes an **Ordinary (+10) Tech-Use Test**. On a failure, the teleported Necrons arrive 1d10m away from the intended destination, in a random direction.





TOPPLED SPIRES

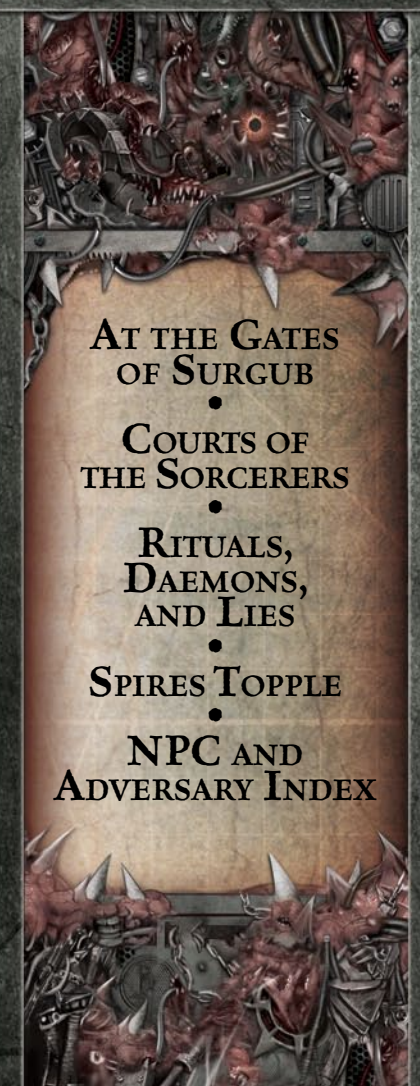
AT THE GATES
OF SURGUB

COURTS OF
THE SORCERERS

RITUALS,
DAEMONS,
AND LIES

SPIRES TOPPLE

NPC AND
ADVERSARY INDEX



CHAPTER IV: TOPPLED SPIRES

THE GM'S BRIEF

This section of **Toppled Spires** provides the Game Master with a summary of the story so far and an overview of the adventure's plot. Using this information, the GM can provide as much or as little detail as he feels the players need to get started, and plunge them straight into the intrigue and insanity.

Before reading this section it is recommended that the Game Master familiarises himself with the setting of Q'Sal. This planet of sorcerers is introduced in the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook, and further details of its history, cities, and characters are provided on pages 75-83 of this book. **Toppled Spires** takes place in the city of Surgub, where competing sorcerers seek to prove their favour in the eyes of the Changer of the Ways by constructing ever taller and more impossible towers so that the entire city has come to resemble a rearing crown of jagged thorns skewering the clouds themselves.

THE STORY THUS FAR

As described in Chapter III, the cities of Q'Sal maintain a binding peace with one another, knowing that should they fail to contain their powers and intrigues then they must surely destroy one another in a planetwide maelstrom of warp-spawned mutually assured destruction. This pact has held since time immemorial (not that such a frame of temporal reference has much meaning within the Screaming Vortex, nor specifically upon a world entirely in the sway of the most powerful servants of Tzeentch). It is thanks to this pact that the world of Q'Sal has prospered in the way it has, making it host to some of the most powerful masters of sorcery and fate in the entire galaxy. Undistracted by outright internecine warfare, the sorcerer-technocrats of Q'Sal are able to focus their arcane attentions on creating the most wondrous of daemon engines, weapons, relics, and all manner of other warp-infused devices, making them and their world a true power within the ebb and flow of war and favour of the Screaming Vortex.

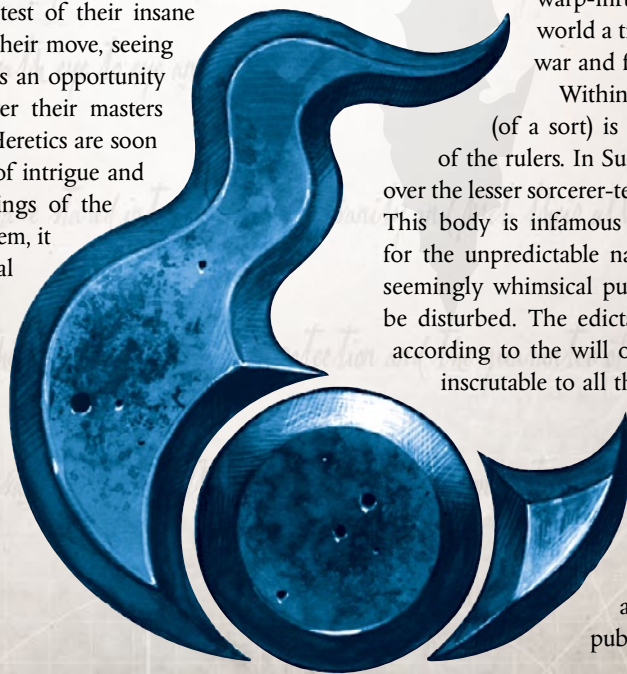
Within each of the three cities of Q'Sal, order (of a sort) is maintained according to the decrees of the rulers. In Surgub, the Fourteen Factors hold sway over the lesser sorcerer-technocrats and the population at large. This body is infamous across the entire Screaming Vortex for the unpredictable nature of their rulings, as well as the seemingly whimsical punishments should their deliberations be disturbed. The edicts of the Fourteen Factors are issued according to the will of the Changer of the Ways, and are inscrutable to all those not steeped in Tzeentch's arcane power. One day, the Fourteen Factors might decree that all transactions must be conducted using the solidified tears of dying Eldar as currency, for example, or pronouncing that the wearing of a particular colour is punishable by public corporal punishment the next. At

"A band of ill-starred travellers shall come and, though none may yet discern it, in their wake shall turmoil most pleasing to the Architect of Fate be sown."

—Ghangor Jinn, Precog-Tomesmith of Surgub

Toppled Spires is a **BLACK CRUSADE** adventure that plunges the Heretics into the whirling, deadly maelstrom of intrigue and bloodshed, as they are caught up in a war between three rival sorcerers of the city of Surgub on Q'Sal. For countless ages, the balance of power on Q'Sal has been maintained by way of the binding pact each of the world's sorcerers has entered into, a pact that requires them to never turn their world-shattering powers upon one another for fear of destroying their entire realm. Within each city, however, relations between sorcerers are subject to the capricious whims of their rulers. In Surgub, these relations are determined by the edicts of the Fourteen Factors, a group so unpredictable and unknowable that murder might rule one day, while the next, total and utter silence is demanded on pain of death.

With the Fourteen Factors ensconced in council, scrying the will of Tzeentch, the entire city of Surgub holds its breath. None can predict what fickle law the fourteen will pronounce when they emerge from council, the air itself thick with anticipation. It is during this period that lower-ranked sorcerer-technocrats, eager to carve their own fate, might take advantage of the power vacuum and act against their masters, or one another. Even as the power of Tzeentch converges and the Fourteen Factors gather to pronounce the latest of their insane laws, the three rivals make their move, seeing in the arrival of the Heretics an opportunity to gain ultimate power over their masters and their hated peers. The Heretics are soon drawn into a deadly game of intrigue and deception, but if the blessings of the Ruinous Powers are upon them, it is they and not the three rival sorcerers who will earn the true rewards of Chaos.





times, the reading of particular strands of arcane lore might be entirely forbidden, only for it to be made compulsory soon after (complete with spot-examinations to ensure the population is well versed). Once, the Fourteen Factors demanded the entire population re-enact a famous battle against the legions of the hated God-Emperor, with every aspect of uniform and armament recreated in exacting detail—at battle's end all those playing the part of the Emperor's lapdogs were executed using live rounds, and it was pronounced that no word of what had transpired must ever be uttered.

Needless to say, the population exists in a perpetual state of fear as to what law the Fourteen Factors may next pronounce. Normally, the sorcerer-technocrats are immune from the worst excesses of the Factors' caprice, but of late a small group have become resentful and plot to take control themselves. Perhaps inevitably for the servants of Tzeentch, these three sorcerers have determined not to work together, but to challenge one another for power so that whosoever emerges victorious might earn the blessings of the Changer of the Ways and be granted the power to challenge the Fourteen Factors.

Toppled Spires begins with the Heretics arriving at Surgub whilst the Fourteen Factors are in closed session. It is near the end of the session, which is determined by the movements of the trio of moons that surround Q'Sal. The populace is waiting in tense expectation for whatever capricious laws are soon to be passed, fearful of the rulings to come, but also of

disturbing the deliberations of the Fourteen; knowing that either could end their threads. The triumvirate of plotting sorcerer-technocrats soon learn of their arrival, and see in it a means of engineering the downfall of their peers without ever revealing their hand to those more powerful than themselves. Should these outsiders disturb the deliberations, or invite the wrath of the Factors, their own hands would remain clean.

What the Heretics may not be aware of, if and when they ally themselves with one or more of the rival sorcerers, is that, sooner or later, the Fourteen Factors are to emerge from their convocation and pronounce the will of Tzeentch. What terrible new laws they might impress upon the city cannot be predicted and this event serves as a finite point by which time the warband must have completed whatever Compacts it has agreed to. To be caught in the midst of sedition and plot at the moment the Fourteen Factors announce their edicts might prove fatal for all but the most blessed aspiring champions of Chaos!

ADVENTURE PLOT

Toppled Spires is a deliberately open adventure in which the Heretics are presented with three powerful individuals, each of whom might prove to be a patron, an ally, or an enemy. The Game Master is provided with setting details and a means of introducing the player characters to each of the rival sorcerers. The antagonists have their own agendas to pursue and the Heretics might choose to become involved in some or all of these, or to work against them to their own ends. The adventure proceeds in a freeform manner according to the players' actions, before concluding in the emergence of the Fourteen Factors and the pronouncement of a new set of utterly insane laws. The three sorcerers each represent a different strand of the themes presented in this book, allowing the players to make full use of the skills and overall composition of their warband. If, for example, the party features Heretics with an interest in the arcane powers of the warp, they might allow themselves to become embroiled in the insane scheme of Selukus the Stylite. If the party is more warlike in its approach, preferring to attain its objectives by violence or martial means, the players might find themselves serving or allied with the daemonologist and master artificer Kharulan the Artificer. Lastly, if guile and intrigue is their favourite style of play, an encounter with Lady Nepythys might appear to be the most fruitful path, though many have made such an error of judgement before! Of course, truly imaginative Heretics are likely to become embroiled with the plots of all three sorcerers.

The primary objective of this adventure is to survive the war between the three rival sorcerers and, if possible, to do so in such a way that the Heretics prove themselves the equal of the most complex and sanity-shattering plots the servants of Tzeentch can devise. The rival sorcerers regard the Heretics as pawns to be deployed and expended in their ceaseless war, yet Tzeentch favours he that takes his fate in his own hands and shapes it according to the strength of his will.

BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE

As with any adventure, there are a number of ways a warband can be introduced to the story. Usually, the adventure forms part of an ongoing campaign and so the Game Master must integrate it with other encounters, possibly carrying over some of the narrative themes already established. Not every adventure has to be seamlessly interwoven into the ongoing storyline, however, and it is perfectly acceptable to take a break from the established flow of events to get the Heretics involved in an adventure that might at first appear little more than a distraction. In time, the events of this adventure can be threaded back into the ongoing narrative, creating a new strand that can be picked up as the GM and players feel it appropriate.

The adventure begins with the Heretics arriving as a group at the gates of the great city of Surgub. How this comes about depends greatly on the group's circumstances. Perhaps they have already agreed on a Compact (see page 269 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook)—probably one of the 'Operation' scale, but potentially as an objective in an Enterprise. If one or more of the Heretics are of Q'Sal themselves (possibly making use of the new Archetype described in Chapter II or the Q'Sal background information from Chapter III) then they may have other business in the city. The very nature of Chaos and the warbands that tread the Path to Glory means that in many cases no detailed explanation is needed—a Sorcerer or Psyker might feel the inexorable pull of Fate leading him towards the city, while an Apostate might have received word of untold opportunities unfolding there, or even experienced a vision commanding him to attend the three courts of the rival sorcerers. More warlike characters might be seeking power, a patron, wealth, or other resources, and have learned of the chance to gain them in Surgub. If one of the Heretics is a Magister Immaterial (see page 34), especially one from Surgub, then he represents a unique opportunity to draw the entire warband into the plot—perhaps he has been ordered by another, more powerful sorcerer, perhaps even one of the Fourteen Factors, to become involved with the three rivals' schemes and to undermine them from within.

One last point to address is how to introduce a brand new group of Heretics to the adventure. **Toppled Spires** could very well be played as the first adventure of a campaign, in which case the Heretics may not be familiar with one another and may have all come to Surgub (indeed to Q'Sal) for a very different reason. It is probable the players themselves can provide the best explanation of how and why their characters are there, as they have the best knowledge of their Heretics' motivations and back stories. If they cannot, then the Game Master might consider inserting an additional encounter into the chain of events, one in which the individuals meet and are united by a common enemy. Perhaps they are attacked by a more established warband that recognises their potential as future warlords of the Screaming Vortex and that wishes to arrest their climb to power before it has even begun. Having resolved this encounter, play can continue as presented in the adventure.

GM GUIDANCE:

THE BIGGER PICTURE

Toppled Spires forms the first part of an over-arching series of adventures, each of which will appear in a future supplement dedicated to a specific Chaos God. Each will pitch the Heretics headlong into the wars, objectives and themes of a specific Ruinous Power, allowing them to experience the full glory of Chaos and to gain something of the blessings of each as they progress along the Path to Glory. At this stage, the Game Master need not worry about how these adventures all link together and the players need not even know that they do. Instead, GMs can weave the adventures into their campaign, only tying them all together once they have all been completed.

THE QUESTION OF CHAOS

Game Masters will see immediately that the tightly focused setting of Q'Sal, a world entirely in the sway of the servants of Tzeentch, presents a number of pitfalls to games involving Heretics devoted to powers other than the Changer of the Ways. However, this should be seen as an opportunity for some highly engaging roleplaying opportunities, and well illustrates the sort of challenges that true aspiring champions must overcome. While many Heretics ultimately devote themselves to but a single power, others, often the most powerful, seek the blessings of each in turn and in equal measure. Only the greatest succeed in this perilous endeavour, for the Gods of Chaos are as fickle as they are uncaring. Keep in mind that while this adventure focuses on the schemes of the servants of Tzeentch and those dedicated to other powers may have a harder time of things, future adventures may turn this on its head and pit, for example, the schemers and sycrers of the Changer of the Ways into the war torn battlefields and blood-drenched soul-forges of Khorne.

If the Game Master wishes, he can use the following secondary objectives to provide those dedicated to a power other than Tzeentch with some specific secondary missions and motivations. This is particularly relevant to the followers of the Blood God—while not all are blood-maddened Berserkers, all share a distaste for sorcery ranging from extreme irritation all the way to unreasoning anger and, as such, they must have a pretty good reason to enter the realms of the most powerful of Tzeentch's servants.

Because a Heretic dedicated to another power might find himself at a disadvantage at various points in the adventure, it is only fair he should have some means of righting the balance. The following provides a number of optional, personal goals player characters might like to pursue, along with the rewards of attaining them. Note that attaining his Personal Goal means the Player does not suffer the usual Penalty for failing the Compact. Players and Game Masters are of course encouraged to invent further goals and motivations as befits the player characters and the ongoing campaign narrative.

AT THE GATES OF SURGUB

CHARACTERS DEDICATED TO KHORNE

To the Blood God, guile and deception are the lowest of deeds, especially when turned to the pursuit of war. Sorcery is the ultimate expression of this, for it removes from the deed of killing the hand of the killer. Entering the realm of the servants of Tzeentch is a mighty challenge to one dedicated to the Blood God, but there are certain rewards that might be gained if he can endure the torment.

Personal Goal: Each of the three Compacts presented later provides the Heretic with an opportunity to serve the Blood God by proving that steel is stronger than sorcery and blood more nourishing to the warp than guile. If he can prove (to the Game Master's satisfaction at least) that his martial deeds have contributed more to the accomplishment of each Compact than any use of sorcery or deceit, he should be awarded an additional 100 Experience Points and one Infamy Point per Compact.

CHARACTERS DEDICATED TO SLAANESH

Those dedicated to the Prince of Chaos may not be overtly opposed to the followers of Tzeentch, but they are often frustrated by their fascination with intrigue and deception to no discernible end. To the champion of Slaanesh, such denial of immediate experience is anathema, and can cause tensions when the servants of the two gods find themselves allied to a common cause.

Personal Goal: Each of the Compacts presented here offers the Heretic with an opportunity to prove that the path of excess is far more pleasing to the Ruinous Powers than the convoluted schemes of the Changer of the Ways. The Heretic must use the blessings of Slaanesh to bring each Compact to a conclusion as directly and quickly as possible, forestalling the needlessly convoluted schemes of the servants of Tzeentch in favour of immediate and gratuitous sensation. If he can do this to the Game Master's satisfaction, he receives an additional 100 Experience Points and one Infamy Point per Compact.

CHARACTERS DEDICATED TO NURGLE

Nurgle and Tzeentch are in many ways diametrically opposed, for at the heart of the matter Tzeentch seeks to build ever more complex and improbable webs of power, while Nurgle embodies continuous growth, destruction, and renewal. The war between the two powers is ceaseless and played out across countless realities. That which Tzeentch creates and evolves to undreamed of heights of complexity and insane perfection, Nurgle's servants gnaw away at, seeking to bring the entire edifice toppling down so that new growth can emerge from the fecund grave. A follower of Nurgle in the house of Tzeentch is assailed by the cold, harsh (sur)reality of his surroundings and overcome with the desire to tear them down and rebuild anew according to Nurgle's bountiful design.

Personal Goal: To those dedicated to Nurgle, each Compact presents an opportunity to sow the seeds of decay and rebirth amongst the deluded servants of Tzeentch. The Heretic must actively and secretly work to ensure that the warband fails to complete the Compacts. For each Compact the Heretics fail to complete, the Heretic gains 200 Experience Points and 1d5 Infamy Points.

Whatever the circumstances of the Heretics' arrival in the city of Surgub, they are immediately struck by a palpable tension in the air. The streets are unusually empty and the air seems somehow still. Those few people that do travel abroad walk furtively with their heads down, eager to avoid eye contact with the strangers. The only time they are not staring fixedly at the ground before them is when they cast wide-eyed glances upwards, towards the distant aerie of the Fourteen Factors. They know what the Heretics may not yet be aware of—that the rulers of Surgub are ensconced in closed session, communing, so men claim, with the most highly placed servants of Tzeentch. When the Factors emerge from such councils, they invariably pronounce new laws and edicts so extreme as to dominate, and sometimes end, the lives of the populace. Such a pronouncement must surely be due, and none can think of anything else.

The Heretics should be encouraged to explore the largely deserted thoroughfares of Surgub, the Game Master drawing on the setting information presented in Chapter III of this book. If they attempt to speak to any of the already frightened population, the wretches scuttle away. If cornered or otherwise forced to address the Heretics, the lowly citizenry have little of any worth to say, only gibbering in fear and casting petrified glances upwards towards the towers of the Fourteen Factors.

At some point during this phase, the GM should read aloud or paraphrase the following:

The City of Surgub rears overhead, uncountable towers, each the work of an individual insane sorcerer-technocrat stretching for the riven skies as if in competition with one another. As you pass into the winding thoroughfares, it is clear that all is not as it should be in the city of the Fourteen Factors. The very air scratches at the skin and coils of actinic orgone slither about the winding towers. The few visible subjects of the city walk with a furtive gait, casting wary glances all about. The rumours were true then—the Fourteen Factors are presently in closed session, communing with the Changer of the Ways. When they emerge, they shall pronounce his will, and none can tell whether they shall live another day.



THE COMPACTS

This section of *Topples Spires* presents three schemes the Heretics can get themselves involved in. Each of these counts as a Compact as described in the Game Master chapter of the **BLACK CRUSADE CORE** Rulebook. The scale of each Compact is set at that of Undertaking, and each must be dedicated to Tzeentch. In most cases, Complications are covered by the plot presented here, but Game Masters looking to expand the story further should feel free to include appropriate Complications from the rulebook as well as the additional ones presented in the **BLACK CRUSADE GAME MASTER'S KIT** if a copy is available. The Primary Objectives are presented in the body of each entry and represent the main reason for the sorcerer-technocrats seeking the Heretics' aid. Secondary Objectives depend on how much weight the Game Master wishes to place on each Compact, and in most cases follow on from the Primary Objectives.

If the GM wishes, he can expand this section of the adventure by introducing a number of minor encounters with the locals. The following are several suggested plot hooks that could be introduced:

- As the Heretics pass the gaping mouth of a dark and sinister side alley, a stooped, hooded figure rushes out, changing direction in an obvious attempt to intercept them. If they allow this, the figure falls at their feet and begs them to protect him from the Fourteen Factors, the wretch's mind evidently broken by the ominous shadow of the pronouncement the city's rulers are soon to make. The man is quite mad, but could make a useful (and expendable) Minion if the Heretics decide to take him on. If needed, use the profile for the citizens of Surgub provided in the NPC Appendix.
- The Heretics are intercepted by a group of the Fourteen Factors' city guard (use the profiles for the guards of the sorcerer-technocrats given in the NPC Appendix). The guards demand to know the Heretics' business in Surgub at this time and, depending on how the encounter progresses, might decide to even attack or eject them from the gates.
- A prisoner of one of the sorcerer-technocrats has managed to take advantage of the disquiet that has settled upon the city and has slipped the leash and means to make a bid for freedom. The prisoner was to be sacrificed to the glory of Chaos and bears the mark of a Chaos God other than Tzeentch (preferably one served by at least one of the Heretics). The prisoner throws himself upon the Heretics' mercy and begs their protection from the sorcerers of Surgub. Needless to say, should the Heretics agree to such a plea, they run the risk of encountering the prisoner's original captor and must face the consequences accordingly.
- The Heretics are challenged by a Magister Immaterial engaged upon an errand for the Fourteen Factors. The players may note the importance of this individual based on how his feet never quite touch the ground due to minor sorceries in keeping with one of the city's many eccentric but possibly correct beliefs. Depending on how they react, this powerful individual might prove a useful ally or a potent enemy.



THE PLOT THICKENS

Despite, or perhaps because of, the emptiness of the thoroughfares and the tension of the population, word of the Heretics' arrival soon spreads throughout Surgub. While the Fourteen Factors are too busy in council to pay such petty things any attention, there are others amongst the sorcerer-technocrats who most certainly do notice. The three rival sorcerers Selukus the Stylite, Kharulan the Artifex and Lady Nepythys all recognise in the Heretics' presence an opportunity to advance their own schemes. As the Heretics explore the empty thoroughfares, the agents of the three rivals close in, each delivering the missive of their master (or mistress).

The envoys of the three sorcerer-technocrats are all courtiers (see the NPC Appendix) and, while they share most characteristics, they also have something of their own master's nature about them. The next section describes the three rivals in detail, and their envoys can be flavoured appropriately if needed.

It is, of course, entirely possible that the players are so untrusting of the sorcerers' envoys, or perhaps so awkward, that they decide not to attend the courts at all. In such cases the Game Master must simply improvise, perhaps having the rivals engage other warbands, but to no effect. Events can unfold largely as described throughout the following section but with the Heretics as bystanders until such time as they agree to attend to at least one of the rivals or the Game Master decides that the Fourteen Factors have reached the end of their council and are ready to come before the people of Surgub. Needless to say, the Heretics should be able to involve themselves in all manner of action even if they decide not to become directly involved in one or more of the rivals' plots, but this will require a lot more work on the part of the GM, much of it on the fly. A suitable complication in this case is to have at least one of the three rivals turn upon the Heretics after repeated rejections, as this might well compel them to attend one of the others, if only to find out what is going on and gain some aid against their new and bitter enemy.

COURTS OF THE SORCERERS

The three rival sorcerers are all very different in temperament and nature, and the means by which each hopes to attain his (or her) goals are equally diverse. One focuses on the manipulation of the raw power of the Warp, while another is a master daemonologist and weaponsmith. The third seeks power through lies and manipulation, and she is perhaps the most deadly of all. The Heretics might decide to ally themselves with one, two, or indeed all of the rival sorcerers, perhaps hoping to play them off against one another in a game of their own devising. Or they might decide to do the bidding of just one patron, selling their services as assassins or infiltrators for a high reward indeed. It is equally possible that the Heretics decide to work against all three of the rivals in a manner the Game Master can scarcely imagine or entirely prepare for, but this is nonetheless in line with the theme of the adventure and the Chaos God it focuses on.

The following section presents a broad overview of each of the three rival sorcerers, as well as a description of each of their court and courtiers.

SELUKUS THE STYLITE

The first of the warring sorcerers of Surgub is a fiercely eccentric individual known as Selukus the Stylite. Selukus's tower takes a unique form, being crafted as a single, twisted pillar rearing hundreds of metres into the air from the flank of the city. At the base of the pillar clusters Selukus's numerous courtiers and attendants, each vying to catch and to record something of his words as they drift down from on high. At the apex of the pillar is a round platform only just large enough to accommodate Selukus's ornate throne, a seat hewn from scintillating marble on which he has sat for as long as any of his servants or his rival sorcerers can remember.

Selukus the Stylite is in essence an ascetic and a hermit, and many of his beliefs regarding the best way to serve the Changer of the Ways are too divergent even for his peers. Selukus holds that only he who divests himself entirely of mortal trappings can truly know the will of Tzeentch. He sits upon his lonely tower in a vain attempt to tune out the constant thought-echoes of the other denizens of Q'Sal and to attain a state of being that allows him to converse directly with his patron. Only when he has achieved such a state can this sorcerer-technocrat create the wonders for which he is known across the entire Screaming Vortex—miniature warp charms fuelled by the souls of Tzeentch's enemies highly sought after by those seeking to avoid some foretold doom or rewrite some long ascribed future history. Selukus appears to create these tiny marvels using nothing more than the souls brought before him, no ingredients or components other than the solidified soul-stuff going into their making. This means that those that desire such objects be made for them must pay a surfeit of souls, one going into the manufacture of the item, and ten, a hundred, or a thousand more serving as Selukus's payment, depending on the charm's desired potency.



The irony is that as Selukus has gained more and more insight and power, multitudes of followers have been drawn to the base of his pillar in an attempt to share something of his unholy wisdom. Every utterance they hear is recorded in painstaking accuracy, before its every syllable is deconstructed and debated for days, even years on end. That many of the Stylite's communications are no more than curt demands for silence from below seems to escape his disciples.

In appearance, Selukus the Stylite is a gangly and gaunt man, his limbs elongated and angular like those of a Horror of Tzeentch, and his head sunken into his shoulders in a similar manner. Unlike many of his peers, he eschews displays of finery, limiting his dress to a simple loincloth of silk. His skin changes hue with his mood, shifting from deep purple when he is meditating in relative calm, to livid pink when he is angered by the deeds of his rivals or his clamorous followers at the base of his pillar.

Most of the time, Selukus is to be found in deep meditation, his mind cast far into the depths of the Screaming Vortex as he seeks the wisdom of Tzeentch upon the endless wailing of the damned. At other times, he can be seen and heard standing erect upon his throne yelling obscenities into the aether. It is said that when the tides of the warp are correctly aligned and the towers of Surgub seethe with the vortex's power, Selukus can perceive the thoughts of his rival sorcerers. Hearing their wayward dogmas and heretical beliefs, he spends long days shouting his condemnation of such foolish and errant modes of thought.

THE SOUL MEAT

The warp charms for which Selukus the Stylite is famed throughout the Screaming Vortex are used in the performance of Rites and Rituals (see page 228 of the **BLACK CRUSADE CORE Rulebook**). Because each is created from the distilled essence of a single soul, the souls can be used as offerings during any of the Rituals described in the core rulebook or any of the new ones presented in this or other supplements. Dubbed Soul Meats, each may be used to reroll any Daemonic Mastery Test taken during a Ritual, sacrificing the distilled soul to the daemon in return for another chance at earning its acquiesce in whatever favour the Heretics are seeking. Each charm may be used but once, dissolving into a shrieking effluvium as the daemon consumes the gift.

The more potent examples of Soul Meats are made from the distilled spiritual essences of not one, but many souls. These may be used over and over again, but the bearer is never made aware of how many uses he may get from the charm, unless he is prepared to pay Selukus richly or is able to discern this information himself (by way of a **Hellish (-60) Forbidden Lore: Daemonology Test.**)

Should a Heretic with the requisite skills or background decide to study the charms which Selukus provides the warband (as described in the Ritual Assassination section), there is a chance that he might discover something of the treachery the sorcerer intends to set in action upon the completion of the Compact. Upon passing a **Very Hard (-30) Psynisicence Test** (or similarly relevant Skill) the Heretic receives a brief glimpse of trapped Furies, screaming in silence as they struggle in vain to escape some otherworldly prison. While not a solid warning of the Stylite's treachery, this brief insight should certainly serve as a warning that all is not as it seems.

Of late, Selukus has come to believe that Tzeentch wishes him to challenge the rule of the Fourteen Factors, but that he cannot do so until his rivals are silenced for all time. His occasional rants into the aether have escalated into prolonged tirades against his foes and his disciples have become ever more vexed in their efforts to follow them. In the depths of his madness, Selukus has come to fixate upon the notion that the servants of Nurgle are somehow working against him or threatening to undo all that the Agents of Fate have achieved on Q'Sal, though in truth none who hear such words can make any sense of them. Anyone seeking an audience with the Stylite must suffer the ebb and flow of rants and trance-like quietude, but in his rare moments of relative lucidity and engagement he is able to converse as a being of awesome power and dark wisdom. Those who agree to act upon his hatred of his fellow sorcerers might find themselves with a potent, if highly unpredictable, ally and patron able to unlock sorcerous secrets of incredible value.

THE COURT OF THE CROOKED PILLAR

The Court of Selukus the Stylite consists of a wide-open plain of marble, nearly 150 metres wide, jutting from the side of the towering city, from the very centre of which soars the twisted Pillar of Selukus. About the base of the pillar is a crowded throng of robed attendants, many clinging to streams of parchment trailing far behind them. At times the crowd is engrossed in silence as they ponder one of their master's periodic utterances, while at others it is a riot of shouting and occasional violence as arguments erupt over the interpretation of a particular message. No one attendant holds sway over the others and most visitors to the court are ignored unless they have something to contribute to the ongoing quest of recording and interpreting Selukus's words. One sure way of gaining the attention of the throng is to loudly announce a new interpretation of a particular shred of wisdom, though the result is as likely to be hours of silent pondering as it is a sudden eruption of scholarly outrage.

GM GUIDANCE: AN AUDIENCE WITH SELUKUS THE STYLITE

Selukus fluctuates wildly between extremes of emotional states. One moment he is so fixated upon the invisible ebb and flow of arcane power that suffuses his throne that he is barely aware of the Heretics, the next he is squatted upon its back, ranting and raving into the aether. Interactions between the warband and Selukus should play this up, and there are two primary ways to do so:

The first way is for the Game Master to simply have fun with the conversation, switching moods as he sees fit. The conversation should be allowed to meander in all directions, with the merest provocation causing the sorcerer to switch to the opposite extreme. If what the Heretics say is of little interest to him, his eyes glaze over and he starts chanting or having conversations with unseen and unheard denizens of the warp. If they say something that catches his attention he might snap out of his previous state and become highly animated. If they speak about the other sorcerers of Surgub, in particular his rivals, he is likely to become angry, perhaps even accusing the player characters of being their agents if the conversation is going awry.

The second way to run the conversation is by using the rules for Interaction (see page 276 of the **BLACK CRUSADE CORE Rulebook**). The Stylite's Disposition should shift dramatically at times, though. One way to achieve this is by rolling the dice each time the Disposition should change a step. On an even number it shifts as per the normal rules, while on an odd number it goes in the opposite direction. Of course, the players should not be made aware what is happening, but should have a chance of working it out.

Particularly creative Game Masters might like to combine the two approaches given and, in addition, award bonuses to the players if they engage in the interaction in the right spirit. Selukus is a mystic, an ascetic and an insane sorcerer, and if roleplayed as such should provide plenty of entertainment for the group.

Should a Heretic wish to gain an audience, he must find a way of going before the pillar-top throne. In effect, this limits visitors to those with the ability to levitate to the pillar's top or perhaps to one gifted with a Disc of Tzeentch or Jump Pack. Once one is there, if needed Selekus raises the others himself.

KHARULAN THE ARTIFEX

The sorcerer known as Kharulan is the master of the Silver Forge, a vast, sprawling demesne within Surgub where some of the most hideously glorious constructs are wrought and where many of the most potent weapons to be found in the entire Screaming Vortex have come into being. Kharulan is a master daemonologist and artificer, the two disciplines conjoining through a dark ingenuity that can only be the result of the blessings of Tzeentch. No mortal untouched by the mark of the Changer of the Ways could ever conceive of but a portion of the constructs the Artifex has created, while countless more stir into being in the depths of his blasted mind. Most potent of all the Artifex's creations are his daemon weapons, and it is said entire worlds have burned as jealous belligerents battle one another for possession of the greatest of these devices.

In appearance, Kharulan the Artifex is something of a mystery. He covers his form in a long robe and low hood, even his face obscured. It is said that none have ever seen what lies beneath that hood, or, if they have, they have not lived to speak of what they have witnessed. Needless to say, the more garrulous of Surgub's denizens spin all manner of yarns as to Kharulan's true nature and identity. Some insist the Artifex is himself a being of metal and machinery, others that he is not a man at all, but a daemon masquerading as such. Some have even claimed he is an interloper of some sort, from a servant of the Father of Decay working secretly to undo all of Tzeentch's schemes, to an agent of the hated Imperium of Man bidding his time in an effort to gain ascendancy over the realms within the Screaming Vortex. Needless to say, the perpetrators of such tales are invariably silenced in the most gruesome and inventive ways only a true servant of Tzeentch could conceive.

However, all is not well in the Silver Forge of Kharulan the Artifex. His craft relies upon the binding of the denizens of the warp in a myriad of highly complex and extremely dangerous rituals, and lately these have become decreasingly stable. This is in part due to the ever louder ranting of Selukus the Stylite, whose lunatic condemnations of his peers resound through the city with such force that the Artifex dares not undertake the more delicate and perilous of the binding rituals. So many ritual bindings have been undone that he has come to the conclusion that Selukus must be silenced. Now, Kharulan the Artifex is actively seeking ways and means of removing not only Selukus, but others of his peers from power, reasoning that if he is to attain power over one, he would be a fool not to seek dominance over all.

Any who seek an audience with the Artifex find themselves in the presence of a being that radiates the powers of the warp, and who is able to concentrate and bind such unearthly puissance into the most creative of weapons of war. Should they seek his favour, they may find themselves offered rewards of incredible potency in return for confronting beings counted amongst the most dangerous on all of Q'Sal. Needless to say, the path to glory is rarely trod by those unwilling to confront such challenges.

THE SILVER FORGE OF THE ARTIFEX

The Silver Forge serves as both the court of Kharulan the Artifex and the outer precinct of his extensive smithy. Perched impossibly high in his tower-fortress, its interior appears as a vast chamber, though its dimensions are so imbued with the effluvium of the warp as to be impossible to comprehend with sane mind or mortal eyes. Any estimation of its size based on glimpses from the ground cannot reconcile with the seeming reality once inside. About Kharulan's throne creep numerous creatures, their exact nature unknowable. Many are of the lower order of daemons, kept as pets by the Artifex, albeit ones that are wont to prey upon any of his servants who show but a moment's weakness. Others still are undoubtedly xenos in origin, captured from worlds both within and beyond the Screaming Vortex. A small number represent their master's creative diversions, being wrought by his hand from the flesh of man, mutant, beast, and daemon hybridised and cross-bred with blasphemous mechanical constructs in a way only possible within such a place as the Screaming Vortex.

The bulk of Kharulan's mortal servants are represented by an army of servitors, each of which is soul-bound to its master and has been created to fulfil a very specific role within his weapons smithy. Some are intended to assist in the casting of intricate metal components such as nine-cogged wheels no larger than an insect's eye, yet when combined in the proper configuration acting as the most powerful of cogitation nodes. Others have had their eyes sewn shut and their hands replaced with jagged warp-siphons that enable them to handle a supine daemon in its intermediate state before it is grafted into whatever host-weapon the Artifex has in store for it. It is said that of all the sorcerers of Surgub, Kharulan has the greatest number of servants, and the greatest need to replace those blasted and mutated in his service.

GM GUIDANCE: AN AUDIENCE WITH KHARULAN THE ARTIFEX

The ruler of the Silver Forge is, by the standards of his peers, relatively sane. Sane, that is, for an individual more used to communing with the enslaved denizens of the warp as he binds them within his potent engines of destruction. Most of Kharulan's servants are soul-blasted servitors, and so he is unused to conversing with normal mortals. Though his hood covers his face, Kharulan gives the impression when listening that he is weighing up the speaker's form as a potential vessel into which he can bind a captive daemon, and this is especially true when a mighty Chaos Space Marine or similar warrior comes before him.

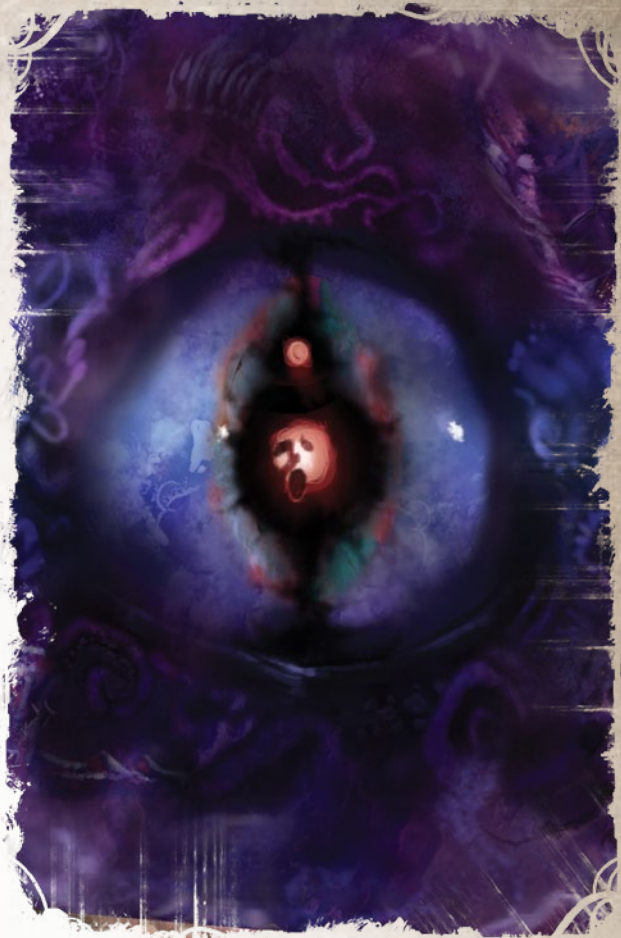
Despite the fact that it was he that called the Heretics to attend his court, Kharulan is visibly distrustful of them. Should the Game Master wish to use the Interaction system from page 276 of the **BLACK CRUSADE CORE Rulebook**, Interactions begin at the **Hard (-20)** level of Difficulty. Only when he reaches the **Ordinary (+10)** level does he trust the Heretics sufficiently to make them the offer described in the section headed **Daemon in the Machine** on page 134.

LADY NEPYTHYS

The third of the triumvirate of scheming rivals is the sorceress Lady Nepythys, a consummate adept in the art of lies and beguilement. The lady's powers are not manifested in blasts of arcane warp power or the scrying of a million possible futures, but in the art of deception. While not as spectacular in their immediate effect, the Lady's powers are every bit as destructive, if not more so, than those of her peers, and they stem from exactly the same wellspring—the ever changing and inscrutable will of Tzeentch.

As a sorcerer-technocrat of Q'Sal, Lady Nepythys is every bit as creative and productive as her peers. Her work is never seen however, for her greatest skill is in the disguising of one thing as another. It is said that Lady Nepythys can make any object appear as any other, so that even the most gifted of seers may not perceive what lies before them. Those seeking power and those seeking to hang on to power come to the court of Lady Nepythys, and those able to offer her price leave with some of the most wondrous creations made on Q'Sal, though they appear no more than mundane objects.

Lady Nepythys maintains the outward appearance of a dissolute noble, one more given to the pursuit of apathetic leisure than the manipulation of countless interwoven schemes of impossible complexity. Like everything about her, the Lady's outward appearance is a lie. She is far from indolent, spending every instant of every day plotting the downfall of her numerous enemies, and she is every bit as ascetic as Selukus the Stylite. Lady Nepythys is entirely devoted to the pursuit of manipulation and deceit, arts that she has elevated to the most exquisite pinnacles



GM GUIDANCE: AN AUDIENCE WITH LADY NEPYTHYS

Lady Nepythys should provide the Game Master with an opportunity to really mess with the players' heads. For much of the time, everything she says should carry multiple possible meanings, while at others she says exactly the opposite of what she means or the Heretics expect. The players should soon get the impression that if they want to get anywhere with the Lady, they too must engage in this seemingly random double-speak. Game Masters should reward imaginative roleplaying by having the Lady take a shine to the Heretic that converses in the most duplicitous manner, treating this individual as the warband's leader, even (or especially!) if he is not.

If the Game Master decides to use the Interaction rules given on page 276 of the **BLACK CRUSADE CORE** Rulebook, more fun still can be had. Lady Nepythys should begin the conversation at the level of **Easy (+30)** (and display all of these qualities), but she does not trust the Heretics sufficiently to make the offer described later on until she has become **Disgusted/Mutinous/Disbelieving/Foolhardy**. Canny players will hopefully realise this is the case (and the GM should provide a few hints to help them along), and should find that insulting the Lady and thereby making her less well disposed towards them actually makes her more likely to think highly enough of the Heretics to make her offer.

of achievement. She has little or no interest in anything other than seeing her enemies fall, the very instant of their realisation of their impending doom providing her with such fulfilment as no follower of any other power could imagine. To Lady Nepythys, the moment of an enemy's downfall is as all consuming as when a champion of the Blood God slays an enemy lord, or when a servant of Slaanesh achieves the most extreme of sensations. And like those champions, each time she achieves such an end she gains power in the realm of Tzeentch, edging ever closer to the ultimate expression of the favour of the Changer of the Ways.

Any who come before Lady Nepythys must contend with a web of lies that extends to every single word she speaks and, if they cannot, they are judged unworthy of her attention and forcibly expelled. She speaks not just in riddles, but frequently uses the antonym of key words and phrases, the better to confuse and ensnare the weak and dull-witted. To make such a counsel still more arduous for the unwise or unprepared, the Lady's appearance and manner, as well as the environment she resides within all combine to project the uttermost deception. Many are the fools that have fallen to their knees before the pale, languid form upon the glittering throne, enamoured of a being whose bewitching presence would drive even the most sense-glutted follower of Slaanesh to new heights of passion. Others believe every word she utters, becoming ever more entrapped in her spider's web of lies until the instant they realise their doom. Such small victories are petty morsels however, for the true objects of the Lady's ire are her rival sorcerers. Her numerous agents have perceived that Selukus the Stylite and Kharulan the Artifex are plotting to upset the long-held order in Surgub, and she has determined that she, not them, should profit from the coming shift in power.

THE WORKS OF LADY NEPYTHYS

The creations of the Lady Nepythys are much sought after in the Screaming Vortex. By a combination of warp-infused glamours and cunning artifice she is able to disguise one thing as another so well that only the most practised of eyes can tell the difference. There are numerous legends of how such devices have been used by assassins and betrayers throughout the recent history of the Screaming Vortex, and it is even said that strangers have come from the Domains of Mankind to pay her court and gain such items.

The exact form any such creation takes is up to the Game Master. All he need do is decide what the device is, and what it appears to be. The more disparate the two things are in size and form the less likely it is to fool an onlooker, but the Lady is an accomplished artificer and with time and sufficient motivation she can undertake the most unlikely combinations. Most of her creations take the form of weapons disguised as rings or other trinkets of jewellery, but in reality there are few genuine restrictions. In order to spot an item before it has been used in such a way as to make its function obvious, a character must make a **Scrutiny Test**. In most cases, the difficulty is **Very Hard (-30)**, but the finest examples of the lady's work (such as those she wears about her own person—see her entry in the NPC Appendix for details) require a **Hellish (-60) Scrutiny Test** to detect before they have been used. In most cases, once such an item has been used, no Scrutiny Test is required, but in some cases the Game Master might decide this is not the case and simply reduce the difficulty.

THE HOUSE OF TRUTH

The court of Lady Nepythys is known as the House of Truth, a title that should offer a clue as to what passes beneath its glittering arches. The court is located at the top of the lady's tower and is only accessible by way of a spiralling flight of stairs lining the inside walls. Careful Heretics who might attempt to count the steps or measure the angles of their passage would notice that their destination does not match up, such as their steps taking them far short of the altitude they reach or the twisting stairways turning with angles that continually shrink. Visitors stepping from the stairs into the chamber find themselves within a vast hall hewn from marble of a million scintillating hues. Piers the size of Titans tower overhead, supporting the arches of a barrel vaulted ceiling of impossible proportion and perspective. One who looks upwards too long is likely to suffer such paralysing vertigo that he is unable to continue, and such weaklings are often pitched back down the spiral stairs by the lady's attendants. From the rearing archways hang flowing silken banners surmounted with the ever-shifting devices of the Changer of the Ways; again, the weak are likely to be ensnared by the spectacle if they look upon it overlong, proving themselves unworthy to approach the dais upon which sits the throne of the Lady Nepythys.

The throne of Nepythys takes the form of a mass of sumptuous cushions and piled furs made from the hides of the rarest of creatures. The lady herself lounges with affected indolence in the midst of this seeming luxury, and all about her scrape and fawn dozens of enraptured attendants and sentinels. Even these are not what they might seem, however, for those that appear to be no more than wizened scribes might prove the most deadly of warrior-assassins, while the hulking guard watching over his mistress's safety might in fact be a valued counsellor. Whatever their appearance, the majority of those that attend the dais are in fact spies or agents, reporting to their lady or hurrying off to enact the latest of her convoluted schemes for the downfall of her rivals.

Every word spoken in the House of Truth is likely to be a lie, or at the very least laden with insinuation and allusion. Those who approach the Lady Nepythys in the hope of gaining a patron or an ally must contend with an assault of deception likely to cause them to question not just their surroundings but their own perceptions. The strongest soon realise they are but another pawn in the lady's labyrinthine scheming, and count themselves fortunate indeed to survive an encounter with her.

RITUAL ASSASSINATION

Selukus the Stylite desires nothing so much as the quietude he believes allows him to better discern the true will of Tzeentch. He has long foreseen the coming of the Heretics and recognises in them an opportunity to silence his two rivals for all time, yet the future beyond his meeting the warband is indistinct and branches off in many different directions. Selukus has pondered this matter long and hard, and has determined that the path most pleasing to Tzeentch is that which ends in the destruction of his two rivals and of the Heretics themselves. He has decided that when they come before him he is to promise them much, and to set them a task that, though they do not know it, must surely end in their own doom.

The task Selukus sets before the Heretics is to enact two rituals, each utilising one of his celebrated warp charms as a vital ingredient. The effect of the rituals is to draw forth the daemonic servants of the Changer of the Ways and to destroy each of his rivals. Of course, it is also his intention that the Heretics themselves should be destroyed, but only after Nepythys and Kharulan are silenced forever. There is a chance that the Heretics might detect their patron's treachery and turn it upon him or avoid it in some other way, as explained in the details of the ritual. Such actions might disrupt the Fourteen's council, but that would not be his concern as he is insulated from the Heretics' actions.

In return for the performance of the ritual and the slaughter of his two rivals, Selukus offers the Heretics a charm of his creation, one wrought from the souls of a thousand deluded servants of the Corpse-God and able, so he claims, to aid the bearer in imposing his will over the twisting paths of unknowable fate. While Selukus does not intend that the Heretics should ever collect their reward, he is canny enough to know that should they survive the mission they will expect recompense, so while he may not wish to part with it, such a charm does in fact exist.



THE PACT OF SELUKUS THE STYLITE

Selukus wants his rivals slaughtered by ritual means, ripped apart by the hands, claws, or talons, or seared by the arcane fire of the daemonic servants of Tzeentch. The Heretics must enact two rituals (as detailed in the **Psychic Powers** chapter of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook and expanded upon in Chapter II of this book), one for each rival. The exact choice of which rituals to utilise is left up to the Heretics, but the end result must be the death of both rivals. They might summon a daemon (or daemons) to do the act for them, or they might bind such a creature into a weapon in order to wield it against the rival. He provides them with a powerful warp charm (see **The Soul Meat** on page 130) as a means of enhancing the ritual (so he claims at least) and promises they may keep the charm once the deed is done. Only by slaying the other two rival sorcerer-technocrats in such a manner shall the greater body understand that he is the greatest wielder of the blessings of the Changer of the Ways. With his rivals dead, Selukus intends to challenge the Fourteen Factors themselves, but that is an endeavour for another day.

THE TREACHERY OF SELUKUS

As mentioned previously, it is the intention of Selukus the Stylite that once his enemies are slain, the Heretics themselves join his rivals in oblivion. To this end, the warp charm he provides the warband with is impregnated with a secret curse.

If and when the second of Selukus's rivals is slain, or, in the event that they pass out of the gates of the city, the curse makes its presence known. Should either of these two events occur or the GM determines that the curse should manifest for some other reason (such as the Heretics discovering its existence), read aloud or paraphrase the following:

The warp charm of Selukus the Stylite grows first hot, then searing to the touch, a crazed light erupting from it. A second later it leaps from the grip high into the air, to come smashing to the ground with violent eruption of vivid, purple light. A gash appears in the fabric of reality, a mass of jagged claws forcing it ever wider until a tide of screeching, winged daemons bursts forth, hungry for the blood of mortals!

From out of the seething maelstrom of warp energy leaps a multitude of withered Furies, starved by their long imprisonment within the charm and desperate for the sustenance that only a mortal soul can provide. The Furies take the form of a Nether Swarm (as presented in the **Adversaries** chapter of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook, page 251) and appear within 25 metres of the Heretic carrying the charm. That character is the swarm's first target, but any others that intervene soon draw their attentions too.

DAEMON IN THE MACHINE

Kharulan the Artifex desires the slaughter of his rivals every bit as much as Selukus, but his methods are very different. The Master of the Silver Forge wishes that his rivals should be laid low by the mighty creations wrought by his hand in the inner sanctum of his foundry, so that all might look upon his works and tremble. When the Heretics come before Kharulan, he demands this service of them—take up the weapons of the Silver Forge and, bearing them, enter the courts of his foes. Strike down his enemies and in return those weapons they bear will serve the Heretics for a thousand days and a day. Fail in this mission, and they shall turn upon their bearer. What he does not tell them is that, once the two rivals are slain, the weapons will turn on the Heretics regardless, unless of course, they can master them. The exact nature of this treachery depends upon the weapons the Heretics are wielding. In the case of daemon weapons, the Game Master should enforce **Daemonic Mastery Tests** according to **The Beast Within** rule (see page 194 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook) until the daemon gains mastery and attacks the wielder.



WEAPONS OF THE SILVER FORGE

Exactly what weapons are available to the Heretics is largely up to the Game Master, but they should be offered a range of choices from those in the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook, this book, or any other source the GM deems appropriate. The final choice of which options to present the Heretics is left open because warbands can vary tremendously, in composition, experience and many other factors. If the Heretics are particularly martially minded, one or more daemon weapons would be appropriate, allowing them to wield such weapons in combat against the rival sorcerer-technocrats and their guards. If the Heretics are less combatant, they might prefer to let others do the fighting for them, under their direction, in which case allowing them to command one of the daemon engines described in Chapter III of this book would be highly appropriate. Needless to say, the weapons should be appropriate to the nature of their creator Kharulan the Artifex, so should be the product of Tzeentch's powers or of no specific Chaos God.

THE TREACHERY OF KHARULAN THE ARTIFEX

Just like his peers, Kharulan has no intention of allowing the Heretics to leave Surgub, for if he is to garner such power as to challenge the Fourteen Factors he cannot afford to leave such 'loose ends' about the place. Whatever weapon he presents to the Heretics turns against them right after the moment of their victory over the second rival sorcerer-technocrat, or else as they attempt to leave the city if they have not already completed their mission when they do so. Similarly, should they attempt to trade or give the weapon away, it will attack its owner. The exact manner of this treachery depends very much upon the nature of the weapon. If it is a daemon engine, for example, it simply turns upon the Heretics with all of the terrible destructiveness that implies. In the case of a daemon weapon, the wielder must take Daemonic Mastery Tests (see the Daemon Weapons section on page 194 of the Armoury chapter of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook) every hour from the point it turns upon the Heretics, with the daemon benefiting from a cumulative +10 modifier to the roll each time until it finally wins out or the weapon is finally discarded.

LIES WITHIN LIES

Lady Nepythys seeks to cast down her rivals by deception, believing that in slaying her enemies by way of the most convoluted and involved means she must surely gain the highest blessings of Tzeentch. Yet, it is not simply the downfall of her rivals that Nepythys works towards, but the destruction of their very legacy. To this end, she means to discover and lay wide open their deepest, darkest secrets while still they live, so that, as they die, they might understand how total her victory truly is. Lady Nepythys is, of course, far too subtle and manipulative a schemer to undertake the laying bare of her enemies' secrets herself—rather, she intends the Heretics to do that for her. Should they be uncovered in the process then no blame may be attached to her, and should they succeed she means to take all of the credit, potentially over their dead bodies.

A TANGLED WEB

The task that Lady Nepythys sets the Heretics makes full use of the Investigation system presented on pages 69-73 of this book. It requires the warband to investigate what she believes to be an attempt on her life by one of her rival sorcerer-technocrats, reporting back all that they discover so that she might reveal the crime to the wider society on Q'Sal (and cast down her rivals in the process). Depending on how the adventure has thus far progressed, the perpetrators could actually be the Heretics themselves, but in the event that they are not guilty (of this particular crime at least) they must track down and expose an agent that has tried, and so far failed, to insinuate the inner circle of the Lady's court.

This passage of the adventure can be as open and involved or as brief and cursory as the GM desires, depending on how much time everyone wants to dedicate to this aspect of game play.

The Investigation is presented in a fairly open manner, so that the Game Master can flesh out the details according to the drives and composition of the warband. If desired, the Investigation can be resolved in a fairly abstract manner, but some groups might prefer to get lost in the labyrinthine corridors of Tzeentch's web of deceit. Each of the sub sections that follow address one of the key stages of the Investigation as explained in Chapter III. With reference to the rules presented in that system, the Game Master can run the Investigation to its conclusion, before moving on to the conclusion of the adventure.

The Introduction

This stage of the Investigation is covered by the Heretics' audience with Lady Nepythys. Having set out her proposal, one of her numerous lackies presses forward and proffers them a seemingly innocuous object.

While the gift appears no more than a simple runic charm, it is, in fact, a potent example of the Lady's creative art. When confronted with a statement of fact, the bearer is able to perceive every possible meaning at once, his senses flooded with insinuation and subtle innuendo with every word he hears and every sight he sees. Words are layered one over another as if a mighty chorus was voicing the statement, every possible meaning stated at once. Images are layered with numerous potential underlying truths, so that even the most proficiently disguised agent is unmasked. While the gift is potentially amongst the most valuable of assets, its use comes with a cost most pleasing to the patron god of its creator, as explained in the **Using the Gift of Lady Nepythys** sidebar on page 136. The Lady does not explain exactly how the gift works, merely insinuating that it will prove most useful in uncovering the darkest truths of her enemies. The players should be left to discover its function as the adventure progresses.

The other element of the Introduction phase is the Antagonist, or in this case the potential Antagonists. These are the other two rival sorcerer-technocrats, and if the Heretics have not met or encountered them already, the Lady provides a less-than flattering description of them both.

USING THE GIFT OF LADY NEPYTHYS

The gift is utilised whenever a character is seeking to use a Skill or Talent to communicate or interact with any other character, or when he is seeking to perceive the underlying truth of anything he is seeing, hearing, or otherwise sensing. Typical uses include Awareness, Investigation, Tactics, and Interaction Skill Tests. The exact circumstances are up to the player and the Game Master, and whether or not it can be used in any given situation is always the GM's final call. When used, the Gift grants a bonus to the Skill roll being attempted equal to the character's Infamy score. If it is failed, however, the character must immediately roll on **Table: 8-5: Followers of Tzeentch Disorders** in the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook, even if he is not Devoted to Tzeentch. The Disorder continues for as long as the gift is in the character's possession (though he should not be made aware of this fact until it is no longer in his care).

The Mystery

In this particular case, the mystery is a dead courtier, slain by the hand of an unknown assassin within the domains of Lady Nepythys. The sorceress is convinced that she was the would-be assassin's intended target, and that the unfortunate courtier simply happened upon the intrusion and was slain as the enemy fled. The Lady appears to care very little for the deceased and, once the audience is over, the Heretics may, if they request it, visit the body as it lays on a decorative slab in one of the numerous shrines to Tzeentch within the court.

The Setting

The setting for the Investigation is the city of Surgub itself, as described in Chapter III of this book. How far and wide the Investigation takes the Heretics is up to the Game Master—the action could be limited to the House of Truth, to the courts of the three rival sorcerer-technocrats, or it could expand outwards and see the Heretics visiting numerous locations. If the GM intends to resolve this passage of the adventure relatively quickly, then the setting should be limited to the House of Truth and focus on the Investigation rolls themselves, but if he wants to explore the setting in more detail, the Investigation rolls can be made at different locations around the city and other encounters can be explored.

The dead courtier was a powerful Magister Immaterium, though this is not apparent from his appearance. The corpse is dressed in rags so its former position may not be immediately apparent to the Heretics. However, they should by now have learned that all is not as it seems in the House of Truth.

Following Leads

The Investigation Event has a complexity of **Arduous**, meaning its Difficulty is **Difficult**. Its Base Time is therefore **14 Days**. This is assuming the characters are following the most logical means of Investigation, using such Skills as Inquiry, Interrogation and the like to uncover relatively mundane clues as to the identity of the attacker, his employer, and so forth. However, **Toppled Spires** takes place on a planet of mighty sorcerers dedicated to the Changer of the Ways, and so there are far more means at the Heretics' disposal. For example, one simple and direct means of uncovering the truth is to ask the dead courtier himself. To do this, the Heretics must perform a post-mortem interrogation, conversing directly with the murdered courtier's spirit. Anywhere other than within the raging warp storm of the Screaming Vortex such a thing might be impossible. In order to undertake the interrogation, a Heretic must use the Mind Probe Psychic Power (see **Chapter VI: Psychic Powers** of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook), modified as follows. The dead courtier has a nominal Willpower of 50, and Psychic Phenomena are possible every round, not just the first. Each time the Heretics win the Opposed Test, the Investigation Event's Base Time is reduced by a number of hours equal to the amount it was won by. When and if the result equals "Broken Mind," the Investigation Event is complete, regardless of how much Base Time remains. Needless to say, this method represents a significant shortcut in the Investigation, but pursuing it presents its own risks should things go awry.

Complications, Breaks, and Plot Points

The Game Master is free to add whatever Complications, Breaks, and Plot Points suggested by the Investigation and appropriate to the level of detail he wants to introduce. See Chapter III of this book for more details.

The Truth (or is it?)

What the Investigation ultimately reveals, however it is completed, is that the courtier was not in fact employed by any of the three rival sorcerer-technocrats, but had discovered their independent intentions to challenge the power of the Fourteen Factors. The assassin was actually Lady Nepythys herself, though because the man never saw her (and as she is a master of deception, even if he had seen her, he may not have recognised her) this piece of information is most unlikely to be revealed to the Heretics. Only if the players decide to plough on with their investigation past the Base Time of fourteen days and investigate for a further three does this detail emerge, and then only if their patron does not suspect they have learned her secret and take steps to draw matters to a close.

IT WAS THEM ALL ALONG!

Should the Game Master be feeling especially bold, he could have the Heretics themselves responsible for the attempted assassination they are investigating, if they have previously become involved with one of the other rival sorcerer-technocrats. In this case, the warband must maintain the façade of seeking the perpetrator, all the while ensuring that the blame is not levelled at them. Of course, the best way to do this is to frame some other party. This variation on the adventure should really only be undertaken by experienced Game Masters, as events may soon become hard to track, for the GM and players both. Nonetheless, if this approach is taken, the result could be one of the most memorable adventures in an entire campaign, and one with numerous potential implications for the ongoing story.

Whether or not the courtier was acting alone, or at the behest of the Fourteen Factors, or a still higher power, cannot be ascertained, though the Heretics might certainly become aware that large parts of the story do not entirely add up. This is the real reason Lady Nepythys employed the Heretics to undertake the investigation—she needed someone else to take the heat if things went awry and more powerful individuals than herself turned out to be involved. It is very possible the courtier was actually under the employ of the Fourteen or some other power in the city (or beyond), a prospect that causes her some degree of distress. Far better the Heretics uncover such mysteries and draw the attention of what might be puissant hostile agencies than her, and as she knows who the real assassin, is she can judge how well the Heretics perform their task when they make their report.

The remainder of the Investigation depends on how they choose to use this information—will they inform the Lady Nepythys, or seek to expose all three of the rivals themselves? The Fourteen Factors might reward them handsomely, or might blast them to oblivion, all depending on if this disturbed their deliberations or violated one of the myriad current laws governing the city.

The Resolution

The Investigation ends with the Heretics either unable to ascertain the corpse's identity and the circumstances of his death, or with them uncovering the fact that he was working for neither of the two rivals but was intent upon assassinating all three. It is possible that the Heretics learn that it was Lady Nepythys that killed him, in which case they must decide how best to make use of this information (if at all).



SPIRES TOPPLE

Depending on which (if any) of the rival sorcerer-technocrats the Heretics engaged with, there are numerous potential endings to the adventure. However, the GM should not forget that the Fourteen Factors have been in closed session for some time and the city is very tense, waiting with bated breath to hear what edicts they will pass when they finally emerge. Therefore, the climax of **Toppled Spires** is framed by the appearance of the Fourteen Factors and their direct intervention in the events that have gripped the city in their absence.

The following section presents what might happen in the event of the death of each of the rival sorcerer-technocrats. Depending on how these events actually play out, the guidance given here may not be entirely needed, but Game Masters might find it useful as inspiration for further complications. Having determined the ramifications of each death the Heretics have caused, the adventure reaches a climax with the arrival of the Fourteen Factors, who are now ready to pronounce the laws they have devised in closed council.

THE DEATH OF SELUKUS THE STYLITE

The Stylite is ever to be found seated upon his throne at the apex of his twisted pillar, and if he is slain it soon becomes apparent that he chose this location to meditate upon the will of Tzeentch because it is a powerful locus of arcane warp energy. Upon his death, this energy is unleashed in spectacular fashion and the throne begins to crumble to glittering dust, the cascade soon reducing the pillar to a rain of solidifying warp energy. Any that breathe in this ensorcelled soot expose themselves to the risk of spontaneous mutation and insanity, as made clear by the spectacle of the Stylite's erstwhile courtiers as they succumb en masse to the unfettered power of the warp.

Should the Heretics slay Selukus, or be present at his death if they did not strike the killing blow themselves, each character must take an immediate **Challenging (+0) Toughness Test**. Any character that fails risks spontaneously mutating under the influence of the raw warp stuff cascading about. Each character must take the Toughness Test each turn until he is out of the Stylite's court, a distance of roughly 60 metres. If and when the number of tests failed equals a character's Toughness Bonus, that character immediately acquires a randomly determined Gift of the Gods, as described in **Table 9-1: Gifts of the Gods** on page 291 of the **BLACK CRUSADE Core Rulebook**. The transformation takes d10 rounds and the character may do nothing more than writhe in agony upon the ground as his body is gripped by the warp-fuelled spasm. This event is so potentially traumatic that the character must also take a **Terrifying (-30) Fear Test** as soon as the transformation is complete.

It is not just the Heretics who are at risk of succumbing to the power of the warp unleashed, for the lowly courtiers clustered about the base of the Stylite's pillar are all but buried in the precipitating energies. Not only are the courtiers enraged by the murder of their master and determined to exact revenge

THE WAGES OF SIN

Slaying Selukus the Stylite according to the terms of the Compact the Heretics have entered into with one or both of his rival sorcerer-technocrats earns them the rewards described on page 269 of the **BLACK CRUSADE Core Rulebook**, but Game Masters might decide the players have played the encounter especially well or otherwise deserve to gain some additional benefit from this part of the adventure. One way of doing so is to allow them to recover one or more of the Stylite's celebrated warp charms as they depart his court. Have them each make a **Hard (-20) Awareness Test** as they fight their way clear, reducing this to **Challenging (+0)** if they have been exposed to the cascading warp stuff described in The Death of Selukus the Stylite above. For each Degree of Success the test is passed by, the Heretic locates a warp charm in the midst of the destruction and anarchy. Each takes a single Action to recover, which might slow the Heretics down and expose them more fully to the wave of mutation that ensues when the Stylite is slain.

upon the Heretics, but as they do so they are subjected to a plague of rampant mutation. The profile of this Mutating Tide is presented in the NPC Appendix and it continues to attack the Heretics until it or they are destroyed or fled.

To further complicate matters, should the Heretics escape the Court of the Twisted Pillar, the enraged mob follows them out, even as the Stylite's court crumbles to dust in their wake. In no time at all, the crowd is transformed into a tidal wave of boiling mutation and it quickly spreads beyond its former master's domain. Within hours, the mob is spreading anarchy throughout the city, the population succumbing to its madness as if it was contagious.

THE DEATH OF KHARULAN THE ARTIFEX

The Silver Forge of Kharulan the Artifex is more than the crucible of some of the most potent weapons of destruction to be found on all Q'Sal—it is also the prison of the more uncontrollable examples of their creator's arts. Without his will to bind and placate them, many of the Artifex's most extreme creations are likely to break their ancient bonds and run amok, not just throughout the Silver Forge, but potentially throughout the entire city of Surgub. The extent of the destruction that might be unleashed when the most powerful of Kharulan's daemon engines break their bonds

THE WAGES OF SIN

Should the Heretics slay Kharulan the Artifex according to the Compact they made with one or both of the other rival sorcerer-technocrats, they should be afforded some chance to gain an immediate reward or benefit on top of those normally gained for successfully completing a Compact (see page 269 of the **BLACK CRUSADE Core Rulebook**). The exact nature of such additional rewards is left largely up to the Game Master to determine as best befits the composition of the warband and the ongoing narrative of the campaign. However, it is not unlikely that the players decide to have a scout around the Silver Forge even as anarchy descends upon it, and though there should only be a brief window of opportunity to do so, they should be allowed a quick look around. Searching should require one or more Skill Tests, varying from Awareness or Scrutiny to Forbidden Lore or Security, depending on where and how the Heretics are searching. They should only be given a handful of chances to make the roll, and the Difficulty should be at least **Hard (-20)**, depending on how desirable the object the Game Master has in mind actually is. If he decides, for example, that the Artifex had secreted within the fabric of his throne a potent daemon weapon and the GM feels the Heretics deserve such a reward, he might demand an **Arduous (-40) Awareness Test** to spot how the weapon is cunningly wrought into the throne and how it is withdrawn (possibly running the risk of setting off some sort of trap).

can only be imagined and, needless to say, the Heretics had better make sure that when that happens, they are as far away from the Silver Forge as possible.

The Heretics notice no immediate change when the Artifex is slain, for even once they are freed of his binding will the daemon engines must break free of their physical bonds and escape the confines of their prisons. This means that the Heretics have sufficient time to take their leave of the Silver Forge, or to search its outer areas for loot should they wish. Initially, Kharulan's guards seek to defend their erstwhile master's realm and exact vengeance upon his slayers, but within a short span of time, grinding machine roars sound from deeper within the forge and the guards are gripped with tangible fear. Eventually, the guards flee the Silver Forge, even fighting through the Heretics if needed. It should soon become apparent that the guards and other servants of the dead Artifex are slaying the daemon engines that even now are breaking free of their bonds and smashing their way out of their prison. If they do not flee too, the Heretics must face the daemon engines as well, a fight that they are unlikely to win.

If the Game Master wishes to run the combat between the daemon engines and the Heretics, he should do so by introducing one enemy at a time until the Heretics realise they are ultimately badly outmatched and leave. Chapter III of this book contains many suitable adversaries and the GM is free to use them as befits the composition and abilities of the warband.

In addition to the inevitable release of the daemon engines, numerous other fell constructs are released upon Kharulan's death. All manner of other beasts from this and other **BLACK CRUSADE** books appear, as can any number of other minions, limited only by how much attention the GM wants to spend on this part of the adventure.

Just like the death of Selukus the Stylite, when Kharulan the Artifex is slain and his court falls, the effects spread far beyond his own realm. The daemon engines and other constructs of the Silver-Forge run riot throughout the city, and within hours the destruction wrought by the daemonic constructs as they break out is enough to make the tower crumble to ruin.

DEATH AND THE LADY NEPYTHYS

Being the Mistress of deception and deceit that she is, the death of Lady Nepythys is not as it seems at all. However the lady is slain, whether by the hand of a heretic wielding one of Kharulan's mighty daemon weapons or by an assassin from the warp summoned by way of a ritual, she only appears to have died, though the player characters have no way of knowing this for sure (though they might suspect it at the time or come to realise it later). Lady Nepythys has prepared for such an event, having faced attempts by rivals to strike her down. Accordingly, she has taken appropriate measures to ensure that in her case, death need not prove fatal.

THE WAGES OF SIN

Because the Lady Nepythys is not actually slain at the moment of the Heretics' victory, her treasures are not so easily plundered as those of the other two sorcerer-technocrats. Despite this, Game Masters that want to reward their players over and above the usual awards for completing a Compact can do so by allowing them to recover valuable examples of the Lady's art carried by many of her more favoured courtiers. The GM should allow the Heretics a chance of noticing something odd about any courtiers they face during the events described above, such as calling for a **Hard (-20) Awareness Test** whilst fighting one of her courtiers. Success indicates that the Heretic notices that the adversary is wearing or carrying one of the items the Lady is famed for constructing. Further Awareness Tests should turn up as many of the items as the Game Master deems appropriate, and they can be recovered by defeating the bearers. This is a great opportunity to take the players unawares of course, as they have no idea what the items actually are and might well find some entirely useless (in the heat of battle at least), if nonetheless valuable to those in need of their unique qualities.

The instant Lady Nepythys is struck down or otherwise slain, her body vanishes. This should be communicated in such a way that the players cannot be entirely sure if it has been spirited away by the powers of the warp, dragged off by a loyal servant, or if she somehow survived the final blow to escape unseen. The best way to handle this is for the body to disappear when the Heretics' attentions are elsewhere. To achieve this, the lady's numerous courtiers assault the Heretics with wails of grief and bitterness upon their frothing lips and the light of insanity shining fiercely from their glaring eyes. The courtiers swarm together into a great mass of assailants, counted as a Horde of Cult Zealots with a total Magnitude of 60, as described on page 360 of **Chapter XI: Adversaries** of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook. In addition to these, at least one Cursed Oracle (described in the same chapter) should make an appearance, though he should appear at first as a lowly menial and no threat to the Heretics until he unleashes a Doombolt upon them (any attempt to Dodge this attack should be penalised by at least -20 in the first round of combat). If the Heretics tarry overlong in the insanity-shrouded court of Lady Nepythys, more hordes of Cult Zealots and more Cursed Oracles appear, intent upon driving them away.

Unlike the death of the other two rival sorcerer-technocrats, that of the Lady Nepythys does not result in mass destruction or the ruination of her realm. Despite this, her death appears real enough to the population at large that soon a wave of rampant paranoia and insanity begins sweeping the city. So numerous were the lady's plots and schemes that those entrapped within her web of lies now believe themselves compromised, seeing their doom approaching them from all directions. Canny players might deduce that she is not dead at all, yet so well prepared was the lady for her apparent downfall that no opportunity should present itself to investigate the matter further.

THE FOURTEEN FACTORS

If one or more of the rival sorcerer-technocrats have been slain by the Heretics or as a result of their deeds, the city of Surgub is likely to be in considerable upheaval. Crazy followers of one rival or another charge up and down the thoroughfares bewailing their master's doom and, very possibly, calling for the perpetrators to be punished. The once well-ordered city is transforming into a realm of utter discord and anarchy is descending all around the Heretics. Yet, before they can think of cutting their losses or intervening in some way, a great peal rings out across the city, resounding painfully through towers on the brink of toppling, and every single mortal stops what he was doing and drops to his knees in abject obeisance (the more higher ranking sorcerer-technocrats still hovering slightly above the ground). Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

The Fourteen Factors are come! The air grows as thick as congealed blood and the ambient light flickers so rapidly mere mortals double up and vomit their innards across the ground. A great wail goes up from the assembled multitudes as the denizens of Surgub, in a single, disturbingly unified action, lower themselves in abject supplication to their masters. Then, fourteen voices speak as one with an atonal cacophony that defies all sanity as it worms its way through the brain's organic senses directly into the soul's most fragile core. "The Architect of Fate has spoken!" the voices pronounce, drawing a quivering wave of fear to press the masses ever harder to the ground. "Our towers reach towards the skies, but they fall short of His Gaze! Each must grow taller, and so our entire city must be raised, lest it fall from his favour! Our decree is that all give themselves to raise Surgub itself exactly one armspan taller, brick by brick, road by road, tower by tower. None shall leave until our work is complete! Praise Tzeentch and ready your souls for the Hundred Year Binding!"

Having communed with the powers of the warp, the Fourteen Factors have decreed the city itself be increased in height, so that all towers reach farther into the air and no tower is slighted. To ensure the effort is completed soon (not more than a hundred years or so), all denizens must join in this effort as soulbound slaves via a grand ritual. The city's most powerful sorcerers will lead the ritual, undoubtedly to include the three the Heretics have encountered earlier.

Even as the words of the Fourteen Factors echo away to silence, the population begins its ritual of mass adoration for the decree. The air fills with a million and more thundering voices, each praising Tzeentch for this revelation. Soon, the voices merge into a mighty, atonal cacophony, each worshipper speaking in unintelligible tongues.

While the city's residents appear ready to join the great work to come, however, the Heretics might feel differently, especially those devoted to a power other than the Changer of the Ways. For such as these, openly worshipping and Tzeentch is bound to invoke the displeasure of his own patron, with potentially soul-consuming results. Furthermore, the length of this effort as well as the unknown specifics of the soulbinding ritual should cause serious concerns.

If the Heretics do not join the masses of worshippers, they stand out to such a degree that soon angry voices from all around demand they also make due praises to Tzeentch. If they still refuse to do so, the nearest of the citizens grow first angry, then overtly aggressive. Even should they do so, some of the more powerful

citizens may still call them out for not extolling the Lord of Lies and readying their souls in the proper manner. It should be quite apparent that if the Heretics are not to correctly participate, now is most definitely the moment to depart.

Whether or not the Heretics participate in the adoration of the Changer of the Ways, the Fourteen Factors have by now become aware of the conflict that has arisen in their absence, and very soon determine that the unwelcome chaos and anarchy that has befallen their city is the work of some external faction. Their powers also reveal the deaths of at least one of their valued sorcerers, of whom they intended to lead the Great Work. At this stage, they may not be specifically aware of the presence or deeds of the Heretics, but they are certain that the unwelcome disorder can only be the work of outsiders. The great peal rings out once more, and the Fourteen Factors demand that the faithful populace render up any strangers in their midst to the Factors. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

The air grows still once more, the thunderous voices cutting out in an instant. The attentions of beings of unutterable power turn upon you with a gaze more baleful than the glare of a greater daemon. You stand rapt and unable to move an inch, your souls exposed to the awful scrutiny of the Fourteen Factors of Surgub. "Intruders..." the hideous, melodious voices of the Factors declaim as one. "Outsiders in the House of Surgub. They interfere with Tzeentch's Plan! Rise, our children, and bring them before your Masters!"

Needless to say, the Heretics are unlikely to want to surrender themselves to the tender mercies of the Fourteen Factors, for to do so is to be slain and the soul rendered down into sustenance for the numerous daemon engines for which Q'Sal is famed. They have no choice but to flee for their lives, leaving behind them a city gripped in the destruction they themselves have wrought, its entire population determined to capture them and offer them up to the Fourteen Factors.

How the Game Master chooses to run this final part of the adventure depends greatly on the nature and composition of the warband, as well as other circumstances that might have come into play throughout the unfolding events. Here are a few suggestions to aid in this portion of the adventure:



- The Heretics must fight their way through the crazed populace. Use the Frenzied Mob profile on page 143 of the NPC Appendix, with the warband having to defeat several of these to reach the city limits, as appropriate to their strengths.
- The Heretics could find themselves in a position to use an Æther Ray (see page 81) to escape, either through prior negotiations or outright theft, though to do so they must first bind the daemon within to their will.
- If the warband has any allies or minions on hand, they might affect a rescue in some manner of transport, ideally one for which Q'Sal is famous.
- If the Heretics interacted with any of the rival sorcerer-technocrats in such a way that they could be considered allies, they might intervene or be open to another pact, though in this case the terms are heavily weighted against the player characters.

Whatever happens in this last scene of the adventure, the Heretics either make it clear of the city or fall to the frenzied worshippers. Those that do not make it clear and cannot evade the crowd are doomed to be torn to pieces, their souls rendered into the raw stuff of the warp and turned into an offering to Tzeentch. Those that escape should consider themselves fortunate not to share such a fate. Especially canny Heretics should have come away from their ordeal with some reward in the form of the weapons or objects given to them by the rival sorcerer-technocrats. Of course, they might still have to deal with the treachery of their benefactors, or they might be able to reverse the ill effects and curses placed on the items and turn them to their advantage. If Fate was especially benevolent to them, they may even have made valuable allies in the city which they may call upon in later times to aid them in the Long War.

CONSEQUENCES

Having concluded the adventure and afforded the appropriate rewards, the Game Master and players might like to consider what happens next. What fate has befallen the three rival sorcerer-technocrats? If one or more survived their brief internecine war, they might decide to continue their rivalry at some future point and the Heretics might be drawn in once more. Perhaps a surviving sorcerer decides to exact revenge upon the Heretics, despatching assassins to track them across the Screaming Vortex and strike them down when they least expect it. The city itself is consumed with its insane construction plans for the next hundred years, which should make for an interesting setting should they visit again.

Game Masters should also consider future adventures that focus on a single Chaos God. Such adventures will be published in future supplements, and once all four have been played through they can all be tied together in a suitably climactic manner. But that is for another day and another battlefield—for now, the Heretics have experienced a measure of the insane plots of the Changer of the Ways and earned some insight into how the blessings of Tzeentch affect the lives and the souls of mortals. Perhaps some time in the distant future such knowledge might prove a boon, but for now, the Heretics must continue upon the Path to Glory, facing whatever challenges and rivals fate and the whims of the Ruinous Powers might place before them.

NPC APPENDIX

The following is an Appendix of notable NPCs and Adversaries featured in **Toppled Spires**. GM's are encouraged to add other NPCs depending on the desired length of the adventure in their own games.

SELUKUS THE STYLITE

A full description of Selukus the Stylite can be found on page 129.

Selukus the Stylite (Master)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
51	40	35	40	40	55	55	65	45	71

Movement: 4/8/12/24

Wounds: 15

Armour: None

Total TB: 4

Skills: Acrobatics (Ag), Athletics (S), Awareness (Per) +20, Charm (Fel), Command (Fel), Commerce (Int), Common Lore: Adeptus Astra Telepathica (Int) +10, Common Lore (Screaming Vortex) (Int) +20, Deceive (Fel), Dodge (Ag), Forbidden Lore (Psykers) (Int) +20, Forbidden Lore (The Warp) (Int) +20, Inquiry (Int), Linguistics (Int), Parry (WS), Psyniscence (Per) +20, Scholastic Lore (Astromancy) (Int) +20, Scholastic Lore (Numerology) (Int) +20, Scholastic Lore (Occult) (Int) +20, Scrutiny (Per), Trade (Soothsayer) (Int) +20.

Talents: Catfall, Disarm, Jaded, Leap Up, Lightning Reflexes, Meditation, Unarmed Warrior, Child of the Warp, Combat Master, Foresight, Inspire Wrath, Killing Strike, Precise Blow, Sacrifice, Unarmed Master, Warp Conduit, Assassin Strike, Favoured by the Warp, Fearless, Psy-Rating (4).

Traits and Gifts: Face of Tzeentch, Mark of Tzeentch, Psyker, Warpsmith.

Psychic Powers: Selukus is a potent psyker and knows all of the Tzeentch Powers presented on pages 218-220 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook, as well as the additional ones to be found in Chapter II of this book. In addition, as a prodigious warp seer, he knows all of the Divination Powers presented on pages 226-228 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook.

Weapons: Selukus fights unarmed.

Gear: Loincloth of sumptuous silk.



MUTATING TIDE

The Mutating Tide represents the seething tide of corruption and mutation unleashed when the Pillar of Selukus collapses and the raw stuff of the warp spills forth. The horde is made up of the numerous courtiers and attendants of the Stylite, their bodies undergoing drastic warp spasms even as they surge forth to exact their revenge upon the Heretics for slaying their beloved master.

Mutating Tide (Horde)										
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf	
36	22	42	34	21	18	23	22	13	--	

Movement: 2/4/6/12

Magnitude: 30

Armour: None

Total TB: 5

Skills: Intimidate (S), Parry (WS).

Talents: Frenzy.

Traits and Gifts: Natural Weapons, Unnatural Toughness (2)

Weapons: Seeping Pseudopodia (1d10+6 I; Pen 0; Primitive (9) Toxic).

KHARULAN THE ARTIFEX

A full description of Kharulan the Artifex can be found on page 131.

Kharulan the Artifex (Master)										
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf	
45	40	45	40	38	55	36	64	39	76	

Movement: 4/8/12/24

Wounds: 22

Armour: Mechanical Form (6 All)

Total TB: 4

Skills: Awareness (Per) +20, Command (Fel) +20, Commerce (Int), Common Lore: Adeptus Mechanicus (Int) +20, Common Lore: Screaming Vortex (Int) +20, Common Lore (Tech) (Int), Forbidden Lore (Adeptus Mechanicus) (Int), Forbidden Lore (Archeotech) (Int), Forbidden Lore: Daemonology (Int) +20, Forbidden Lore (The Warp) (Int), Linguistics (Int), Logic (Int) +20, Parry (WS), Psynisicence (Per), Scholastic Lore: Beasts (Int), Scrutiny (Per), Tech-Use (Int) +20, Trade: Armourer (Int) +20.

Talents: Die Hard, Bastion of Iron Will, Enemy (Adeptus Mechanicus), Fearless, Ferric Summons, Foresight, Luminen Shock, Luminen Blast, Master Engineer, Orthoproxy, Maglev Transcendence, Mehadendrite Training (Utility), Swift Attack, Strong Minded, Technical Knock, Total Recall, Weapon-Tech, Psy-Rating (4).

Traits and Gifts: Machine (6), Psyker, Mark of Tzeentch, Massive Intellect, Touched by the Fates (2).

Psychic Powers: Kharulan has access to all of the Tzeentch Powers presented on pages 218 to 220 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook, as well as the additional ones presented in this book.

Weapons: Staff of Change, Ballistic Mehadendrite with plasma pistol (Pistol; 40m; S/2/-; 1d10+7 E; Pen 8; Clip 10; Rld 3 Full; Maximal, Overheats), Best Quality Servo Arm.

Gear: Auspex, combi-tool, dataslate, Mechanicus Assimilation (3), Mechanicus Implants, Luminen Capacitors, power field (embedded in throne), heavy and ornate robes.

LADY NEPYTHYS

A full description of Lady Nepythys can be found on page 132.

Lady Nepythys (Master)										
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf	
42	52	40	30	55	57	64	70	81	80	

Movement: 5/10/15/30

Wounds: 15

Armour: None

Total TB: 3

Skills: Awareness (Per) +20, Charm (Fel) +20, Command (Fel) +20, Commerce (Int) +20, Common Lore (Screaming Vortex) (Int) +20, Deceive (Fel) +20, Forbidden Lore (Daemonology) (Int) +10, Forbidden Lore (The Warp) (Int) +10, Linguistics (Int) +20, Logic (Int) +20, Parry (WS) +10, Psynisicence (Per) +10, Scholastic Lore (Cryptology) (Int) +20, Scholastic Lore (Philosophy) (Int) +10, Scrutiny (Per) +10, Sleight of Hand (Ag) +10, Stealth (Ag), Trade (Cryptographer) (Int) +20, Trade (Scrimshawer) (Int) +20.

Talents: Air of Authority, Betrayer, Cold Hearted, Demagogue, Fearless, Foresight, Hard Target, Heightened Senses, Inspire Wrath, Iron Discipline, Into the Jaws of Hell, Unholy Devotion, Jaded, Lightning Reflexes, Mimic, Orthoproxy, Polyglot, Radiant Presence, Total Recall, Warp Sense, Wisdom of the Ancients, Psy-Rating (4).

Traits and Gifts: Mark of Tzeentch, Psyker, Touched by the Fates (2).

Psychic Powers: Lady Nepythys has access to all of the Tzeentch Powers presented on pages 218-220 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook, as well as the additional ones presented in this book. She also knows all of the Telepathy Powers presented on pages 223-224 of the core rulebook.

Weapons: Two Axon Razors disguised as feather quills (1d5 R; Pen 4; Crippling 5, Razor Sharp), Q'Sal Glass Dagger (see page 166 of the **BLACK CRUSADE** Core Rulebook).

Gear: 10 Photon Flash grenades disguised as rings (one on each finger), 10 Hallucinogen Grenades disguised as rings (one on each toe), Displacer Field with its generator disguised as an elaborate hairpin, numerous items of priceless jewellery.



SORCERER-TECHNOCRAT COURTIER

Each of the rival sorcerers is attended by a small army of flunkies and hangers-on. While not much use in a fight, these courtiers can be relied upon to scrape, faun and inveigle with unsurpassed expertise.

Sorcerer-Technocrat Courtier (Troop)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
30	32	30	32	36	38	35	45	38	--

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Armour: None

Skills: Charm (Fel) +10, Command (Fel), Commerce (Int), Common Lore: Screaming Vortex (Int) +10, Deceive (Fel), Scholastic Lore (Bureaucracy) (Int), Scholastic Lore (Judgement) (Int) Scrutiny (Per).

Talents: Cold Hearted.

Weapons: Laspistol (Pistol; 30m; S/2/-; 1d10+2 E; Pen 0; Clip 30; Rld Half; Reliable). The most favoured also carry a Q'Sal Glass Dagger (Melee; 1d10+2 R; Pen 6; Toxic 1) while the rest carry a conventional knife (Melee/Thrown; 1d5 R; Pen 0;).

Gear: Expensive robes of office and various trinkets of the master's favour.

Wounds: 10

Total TB: 3

SORCERER-TECHNOCRAT BODYGUARD

While their true defences lie in the realm of the arcane and the mystical, no sorcerer-technocrat would be without a solid cadre of muscle-bound goons, all the better to keep the low-lives and riff-raff out of their lines of sight.

Sorcerer-Technocrat Bodyguard (Troop)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
44	32	43	46	30	25	36	37	25	--

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Armour: 4 All

Skills: Awareness (Per) +20, Dodge (Ag), Intimidate (S), Parry (WS) +10, Scrutiny (Per) +10, Security (Int) +10.

Talents: Resistance (Psychic Powers).

Armour: Ornate mesh armour plates covering much of the body, providing Armour 4 to all locations.

Weapons: Assault Shotgun (Basic; 30m; S/3/-, 1d10+4 I; Pen 0; Clip 12, Rld Full, Scatter) or ceremonial Chain Halberd (Melee; 1d10+3 R; Pen 3; Tearing).

Wounds: 10

Total TB: 4

MORTAL SUBJECT OF SURGUB

The population of Surgub consists of numerous different classes and tiers but the following profile can be used to represent the most common mortal subject the Heretics might encounter in Surgub.

Mortal Subjects (Troop)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
22	21	23	34	26	29	26	24	24	--

Movement: 2/4/6/12

Armour: None

Skills: Awareness (Per), Common Lore: Screaming Vortex (Int), Scholastic Lore (any one) or Trade (any one).

Talents: None.

Weapons: Unarmed (1d5-1 I; Pen 0).

Gear: Robes, tools appropriate to station (according to Trade or Scholastic Lore Skill).

Wounds: 5

Total TB: 3

FRENZIED MOB OF SURGUB

The following Horde profile can be used if and when the Heretics find themselves confronted with the massed subjects of the Fourteen Factors, through which they must fight to escape the anarchy that descends upon Surgub at the climax of *Toppled Spires*.

Frenzied Mob (Horde)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	Inf
22	21	23	34	26	29	26	24	24	--

Movement: 2/4/6/12

Armour: None

Skills: Awareness (Per).

Talents: Frenzy.

Weapons: Improved Weapons (Melee; 1d10 I; Pen 0; Primitive (7), Unbalanced).

Gear: Various robes and other civilian clothing.

Magnitude: 30

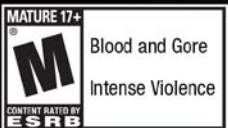
Total TB: 3



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