

DARK HERESY™

THE BLACK SEPULCHRE™



PART I OF THE APOSTASY GAMBIT
ADVENTURE TRILOGY

WARHAMMER®
40,000
ROLEPLAY

DARK HERESY™

THE BLACK SEPULCHRE™



ROLEPLAYING IN THE GRIM
DARKNESS OF THE 4^IST MILLENNIUM

CREDITS

LEAD DEVELOPER

Mack Martin

WRITTEN BY

Ben Counter

ADDITIONAL WRITING BY

Ian Hardin, Kevin Rubitsky, Sam Stewart, and Ross Watson

EDITING

Patrick Rollens

PROOFREADING

Graham Davey and David Johnson

DARK HERESY DESIGNED BY

Owen Barnes, Kate Flack, and Mike Mason

GRAPHIC DESIGN

Kevin Childress and Mark Raynor

COVER ART

Kekai Kotaki

INTERIOR ART

A.L. Ashbaugh, John Blanche, Yoann Boissonnete, Alex Boyd, Matt Bradbury, Chris Burdett, Anna Christenson, Ioan Dumitru, Dave Gallagher, Zach Graves, Marcin Jukabowski, Marco Morte, Marc Lee, and Mark Smith

ART DIRECTION

Zoë Robinson

ART ADMINISTRATION

Kyle Hough

PRODUCTION MANAGER

Eric Knight

FFG LEAD GAME DESIGNER

Corey Konieczka

FFG LEAD GAME DEVELOPER

Michael Hurley

PUBLISHER

Christian T. Petersen

GAMES WORKSHOP

LICENSING MANAGER

Owen Rees

HEAD OF LICENSING

Paul Lyons

HEAD OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Alan Merrett

SPECIAL THANKS

"Bolters Solve Everything" Kevin Rubitsky with Ian Hardin, Charles May, Scott Ollenberger, Don Richardson, "Sons of a Rogue Trader" Robin Everett-McGuirl with Matt Robenhymmer, Chris Brandmeier, Nate Taylor and Adam Hargrave, "Furies for Everyone!" David R. Schumpert III Esq. with Adam Schumpert, Pierre Wagenseil, Marthinus J. Linde, David Hudock, Paul Shivery, Nathan Walters and Chris Hebert, Charles Kellner with Eve Bloom, Jacob Martasek, Jeff Rubinoff, Megan Cook and Pavel Ort, Dave Cerezo with Andrew Schneider, Dave Evensen, Gregory Sabino and Peter Burke, Michael Underwood with Aaron Bond, Andrew Fields, Jason West, John Beavers and Nathaniel Nicholson, "Dicebag Posse" Chris Stevens with Derek Keltgen, Jesser Aubart, Mike Weigt and John Schwartzbauer, Drew Peterson, Matt Root, Dennis Walter and Chrissy Monfette, Ron Devalk with Ross Watson, Sam Stewart, David Johnson, Timothy Kilgriff and Chris Pembelton



**FANTASY
FLIGHT
GAMES**

Fantasy Flight Games
1975 West County Road B2
Roseville, MN 55113
USA

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INTRODUCTION GAME MASTER'S BRIEFING

"What is there, but dynasty? The stars are out of our reach. The great cities of this sector, the spires and cathedrals, they are not for us. All we have, is each other. All we have is dynasty."

—Nikaea Hekate

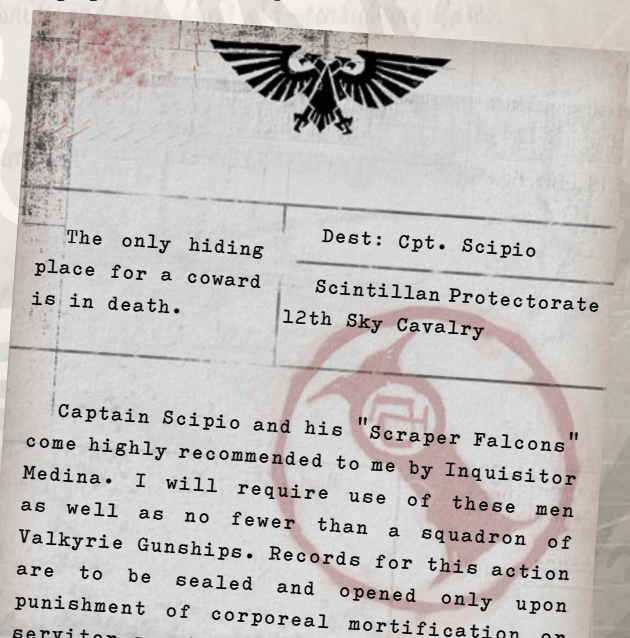
Black Sepulchre is the first part of The Apostasy Gambit, a Dark Heresy campaign that takes a cell of Acolytes from investigating the tragic history of a warped Cathedral to crusading against a conspiracy at the heart of one of the Imperium's most vaunted organisations. The Black Sepulchre can be played on its own, or it can form a part of the grand Apostasy Gambit campaign.

The Black Sepulchre ends with the Acolytes finding evidence of a long held secret. The nature of this secret is purposefully left ambiguous. While the adventure provides the hook into the next book in the series in the form of evidence against Arch-Cardinal Ignato, it is presented to the players as a handout available on page 71. To alter this secret so that the campaign follows a different storyline a GM must merely replace this final hand out and description.

The Black Sepulchre is primarily an investigative adventure in which the Acolytes, after obtaining the hand of a Daemon Prince, investigate an ancient fortress named the Haematite Cathedral. There they find the unquiet spirits of the cathedral's former inhabitants, they who belong to the Hekate Dyansty, and delve into their tragic fates to discover the cathedral's greatest secret.

The adventure in the Haematite Cathedral is non-linear—the Acolytes can explore the cathedral and encounter its denizens in any order, and part of the challenge facing them is understanding the information they accrue on the Dynasty's grim past. The Hekate Dynasty has three stories to reveal to them, each the sad tale of a corrupted soul, but the Acolytes might uncover parts of the stories intermingled with one another. The less hostile warp apparitions can help them understand the cathedral's past, and part of the challenge for the Game Master is portraying these unfortunate creatures who are part of the Cathedral. Another challenge is ensuring that the cathedral is infused with all the atmosphere that psychic apparitions, tragedies and the corruption of Chaos can give it. The true nature of the Haematite Cathedral and what has occurred there is the real mystery in this adventure, and the task of the Acolytes is to uncover this nature piece by piece. At the same time, the location itself is both adversary and ally to the Acolytes, with the mutants and psychic echoes being simply a symptom of something larger and far fouler.

Once the adventurers delve into the cathedral's lower levels and discover its greatest secret – that it is actually the upper torso of an Imperial Titan, half-buried and condemned to lay dormant by the presence of a daemon – the adventure features more action and life-or-death moments. The daemon prince is freed, the Titan walks, and all manner of mayhem erupts before the Acolytes can decipher the terrible truth held captive for centuries. This truth is crucial to the Apostasy Gambit campaign, and introduces a new and terrible threat intent on bringing ruin and catastrophe to the entire Calixis Sector.



ADVENTURE STRUCTURE

I: DEATH FROM ABOVE

The Acolytes are thrown right into the action of an Inquisitorial assault. They are part of an attack on the Scintillan estate of Bulagor Thrungg, an idle noble who has fallen into corruption and amassed a fearsome collection of forbidden artefacts and writings. Along with special forces seconded from the Army of the Scintillan Protectorate, the Acolytes storm the estate, deal with Thrungg and his lackeys, and discover upon Thrungg the left hand of a Daemon Prince. This clue leads them to the secluded Haematite Cathedral.

II: THE HAEMATITE CATHEDRAL

The Acolytes arrive at the Haematite Cathedral. Their explorations reveal both the history of the Hekate Dynasty who lived there, and the existence of a malign force known as the Dei-Phage that influenced three Rogue Traders to become degenerate villains. After exorcising the three malevolent psychic echoes, the Acolytes come into possession of a key that allows entrance into the lower reaches of the cathedral.

III: THE MACHARIAN PEACE

The Acolytes discover the truth about the Haematite Cathedral – that it is, in fact, the upper torso of an Imperial Titan known as the Pax Macharia. The Dei-Phage summons lesser daemons to stop the Acolytes as they explore the workings of the Titan, including its plasma reactor and the chamber where its machine-spirit is stored in ancient cogitators. They communicate with the machine-spirit and learn of the Black Sepulchre, a device designed to decode evidence of corruption at the heart of the Calixian Ecclesiarchy. The Titan has been kept dormant by the Dei-Phage, which was summoned to keep it silent about a terrible secret it knows.

IV: BEHOLD A DECAYING ANGEL

At the heart of the capital of Barsapine is a holy shrine, built to prevent the Black Sepulchre from completing its task. The encryption of the evidence is a geometric cypher whose key is the stars themselves in motion. To this end the Pax Macharia breaks free of the mountainside and travels to the outskirts of the nearest city, Kephistrion Altis, so it can free the Black Sepulchre to look upon stars and decypher the ancient code. The Dei-Phage manifests and battles the Acolytes across the cathedral's rooftops, and only with its defeat can the Pax Macharia reach the city.

Once the Black Sepulchre has performed its operations, it can reveal the holo-recording that serves as damning proof of a massive conspiracy. This recording tells of the founding of a conspiracy, the Maledictor's Hand, and its head... Arch-Cardinal Ignato himself. Alas, the decrepit Black Sepulchre self-destructs, forever destroying the only proof the Acolytes have.

BACKSTORY

Several hundred years ago, the Maledictor's Hand was founded as a conspiracy of Ecclesiarchy clergymen who believed that the Calixis Sector was beyond redemption and should be cleansed through a religious catastrophe. Their aim was, and still is, to bring about such religious strife that the resulting war and upheaval will effectively destroy the sector and kill billions of its sinful inhabitants. The ceremony at which the Hand was founded was witnessed by a spy, Inquisitor Griegor DeVayne, a member of the Ordo Hereticus, charged by the Imperium with rooting out evidence against conspirators within the Imperial Church.

DeVayne fled with a holo-recording of the ceremony. He reached the *Glorious Fortune*, the vessel of the Rogue Trader Barabus Zanatov. The Inquisitor intended to marshal forces to bring against the conspiracy, but, pursued by the agents of the Maledictor's Hand, he was murdered before the ship entered the warp. Zanatov, a loyal friend to DeVayne, hid the evidence, smuggling it to Barsapine.

Knowing he could not escape the power of the Ecclesiarchy, Barabus Zanatov took the name Hekate and began work to decipher the evidence acquired by his friend. He died before his work was complete. His fortune was nearly exhausted by the task of establishing a noble dynasty and building a device capable of deciphering the proof Inquisitor DeVayne gave his life to acquire. The Black Sepulchre, however, was complete and, given its position on Barsapine, could use the stars themselves as a cypher to unlock the mysteries and expose the conspiracy.

The final deathblow to the Hekate dynasty was his discovery by the Maledictor's Hand, who stopped his Black Sepulchre from performing its duty and brought to bear a Daemon Prince known as the Dei-Phage to destroy him. Not without friends on Barsapine, the Rogue Trader Zanatov mustered his forces so that his device might have the last desperate moments it required. The Daemon Prince and his army were stopped by the Pax Macharia, an Emperor Titan. However, in one last desperate ploy, the Pax Macharia was forced to wade into the sea, forever chaining the Daemon within itself. The Titan's fate was forgotten, and over time its lower half became buried in rock and sediment, leaving its ornate upper half part of the shoreline. With the Dei-Phage maimed and the Titan badly damaged, the story would have ended if not for the ignorance of subsequent generations.

Centuries later, the waning Hekate dynasty, believing the exposed torso of the Emperor Titan to be a once-lavish abandoned cathedral, began to restore the building in a desperate attempt to rebuild their waning status. Over the years, the last heirs to the Hekate fortune moved into the building, which they knew as the Haematite Cathedral. The Dei-Phage was still present, woven into the fabric of the place, and its malign presence corrupted them to its dark purpose. The Hekates eventually destroyed themselves and the Haematite Cathedral became abandoned once more.

No part of the story was ever recorded in Imperial record and the events and cathedral itself would be forever lost if it weren't for the Dei-Phage's severed hand that eventually washed ashore on Barsapine and was sold into the underground artefact market. It found its way to Scintilla and into the hands of the apostate Bulagor Thrungg.

THEMES

The Apostasy Gambit has distinct themes that run through all three parts of the trilogy, and *The Black Sepulchre* is no exception. These themes crop up again and again, sometimes foreshadowing danger, sometimes suggesting solutions or truths to the Acolytes, and sometimes just keeping them on their toes. Game Masters should feel free to include further instances of these themes whenever they want to inject a little more foreboding and tension into proceedings.

Secrets. The climax of *The Black Sepulchre* has the Acolytes discovering a secret of shattering importance, and exposing the secrets of the Hekate dynasty is crucial to their success. Other parts of the trilogy include revealing secrets about the Ecclesiarchy, the history of the sector, and even about Saint Drusus himself. Secrets are everywhere, as are the efforts by others to prevent their discovery.

Wings and feathers. The Dei-Phage takes flight on pinions of ragged feathers, and feathers signify the beast's influence on the Haematite Cathedral. Feathers are, in turn, a symbol of the Chaos God Tzeentch, whose arcane touch is everywhere in the trilogy.

Moral corruption. Bulagor Thrungg, the Maledictor's Hand and the Hekate dynasty have all suffered moral corruption, either through deliberately abandoning morality or through the presence of Chaos.

Ill-advised alliances. The Maledictor's Hand's alliance with the Dei-Phage (and other daemons) seals its position as an enemy of mankind, while the dalliances in darkness by members of the Hekate dynasty were behind the tragedies that befell them. The Maledictor's Hand's alliances with the dark powers crop up throughout the trilogy and serve to lead them to damnation.

Desperation. The antagonists of the trilogy have made their terrible deals and decisions believing that working with the Dark Powers is the only option left to them.

USING THIS ADVENTURE

The adventure is mostly investigative, but several combat-heavy events mean that Acolytes with little experience might be overwhelmed, while those with a lot of experience and wargear might find some encounters trivial (in particular characters using the rules in *Ascension*). Options are given in the relevant sections for increasing or decreasing the challenge of combat scenes, mainly concerning the power of the Dei-Phage and its access to daemonic allies.

The adventure begins on the hive world Scintilla "in medias res", on board a Scintillan special forces gunship as it makes its final approach over Bulagor Thrungg's estate. This is a sudden, exhilarating action opening, similar to an action movie that throws the explosions and carnage at the audience without any delay. After the initial gunfire dies down, the Acolytes have time to ask questions, buy equipment, and generally prepare for the adventure's next section.

The adventure assumes the Acolytes are working for an Inquisitor who is a member of the Calixian Conclave. It can be used as the beginning of a new *Dark Heresy* campaign, in which case the GM can select an Inquisitor from the core rulebook or invent one. It can also take place during an ongoing campaign, in which case the Acolytes may need to get to Scintilla (where *Death From Above* is set) before the adventure begins. In fact, the location of *Death From Above* is not crucial to the plot, so little adjustment is needed to transfer the first section of the adventure elsewhere in the Calixis Sector.

The Acolytes' patron Inquisitor is not present during the events of *The Black Sepulchre* and is rarely, if ever, seen during the trilogy, so there is a great deal of flexibility regarding the this character. Matters can be complicated if the patron Inquisitor is a Radical, but the plot of the adventure need not be changed if this is the case. A Radical Inquisitor might ask his Acolytes to recover and bring to him any Chaos artefacts or writings they recover, for instance, and might even give them instructions to bind any daemonic presence they find into a daemonhost or interrogate it for secrets concerning matters of the warp. The Dei-Phage must still be defeated before the Acolytes can achieve such goals, since it has been imprisoned within the Pax Macharia which prevents it divulging of secrets. Once the Dei-Phage's physical form has been defeated, Acolytes can attempt rituals to question or bind it according to their master's wishes.





DEATH FROM ABOVE

ASSAULT ON THE
APOSTATE CHAPEL

•

THRUNGG'S MENAGERIE
OF HORRORS

•

THE MUSEUM OF
HERESY

•

CALL FROM THE DARK

CHAPTER I: DEATH FROM ABOVE

"The powers within the Dei-Phage's hand are my birthright. They alone know the worth of my ancestry. They have brought you here to die within my grasp!"

—Bulagor Thrungg

The engines of the assault carrier roar as the rear ramp slides open. The wind shrieks in, almost deafening your very thoughts. The troopers seated alongside you check their weapons, throw one last grin at their fellow soldiers and lower the visors of their helmets. The spires of Sibellus whirl below you, a thousand mansions and noble estates competing for space among a forest of spires and flying banners.

Your mission is clear. Bulagor Thrungg is the last of a proud line. His dynasty squandered on ecstasy, he has turned to heresy as an entertainment. Somewhere in his manor is a museum of apostasy that you must locate and investigate. The Scintillan Protectorate is attempting to take Thrungg alive, if possible, for questioning.

The Valkyrie swoops down low over House Thrungg. The compound walls enclose a mansion with one wing covered by glass, the rest of the building a frowning gothic monstrosity. Rows of tombs cover the gardens around the mansion, and household troops, tiny specks from this height, run along the walls and through the grounds.

"Men of the Protectorate!" yells Captain Scipio, hanging onto one of the handholds mounted overhead. "We drop in thirty seconds! Come down fighting and check your targets!" He shoots you a nasty look, "And you. You're coming down in the false chapel. Find the proof you need and try not to get yourself killed!"

The Acolytes are riding on a Valkyrie belonging to the Army of the Scintillan Protectorate. They are executing a raid on the estate of the noble Bulagor Thrungg, on the orders of the Acolytes' patron Inquisitor. Captain Scipio is the officer in charge, and though he has orders to take the Acolytes on the mission with him, he isn't happy about it. The objective of this mission is to capture Bulagor Thrungg, preferably alive, and deliver the Acolytes into his mansion so they can search for forbidden texts and artefacts. The Inquisitor's full briefing is available as a handout on page 62. If they are to fulfill this task, however, they are going to have to pull their weight in the firefight about to erupt.

THE CRIMES OF BULAGOR THRUNGG

Thrungg's crimes are possession of forbidden texts and artefacts. Thrungg, an indolent noble without responsibilities, has dedicated his privileged life to accumulating examples of

the bizarre and frightening, so he can shock and enthrall his fellow nobles. His collection, assembled at vast cost, includes the Liber Ex Mentis, a tome authored by an insane warp-prophet, and the Dei-Phage's Hand, a weapon created by an unknown daemonic source. Also in his collection is a record of his attempts to perform dark séances that provide evidence of a daemonic presence on Barsapine. Thrungg spoke too freely of his collection, and rumours among the nobles reached the ears of the Acolytes' patron Inquisitor, who sent them with Scipio's squad to arrest Thrungg and search his mansion for incriminating items.

PLAYING SCIPIO

Captain Fidelicus Scipio is a lifelong soldier, a grizzled and uncompromising special forces sergeant in the Army of the Scintillan Protectorate. He takes absolutely no groxcrap and considers his unit to be an independent entity that does not need any help from outsiders, hence his lack of appreciation at being burdened with the Acolytes, even if it is by Inquisitorial order. Scipio's qualities lie primarily in leading his squad and enforcing their discipline, but his own combat skills are far from lacking. He's a few paces over the hill, but he has no problem putting anyone in a headlock if they're asking for it.

HIGH RANK CHARACTERS

Higher rank or Ascension characters (or Acolytes the GM deems have earned the esteem of the guard) can expect a degree of respect from Scipio. Replace the last paragraph of the read aloud text:

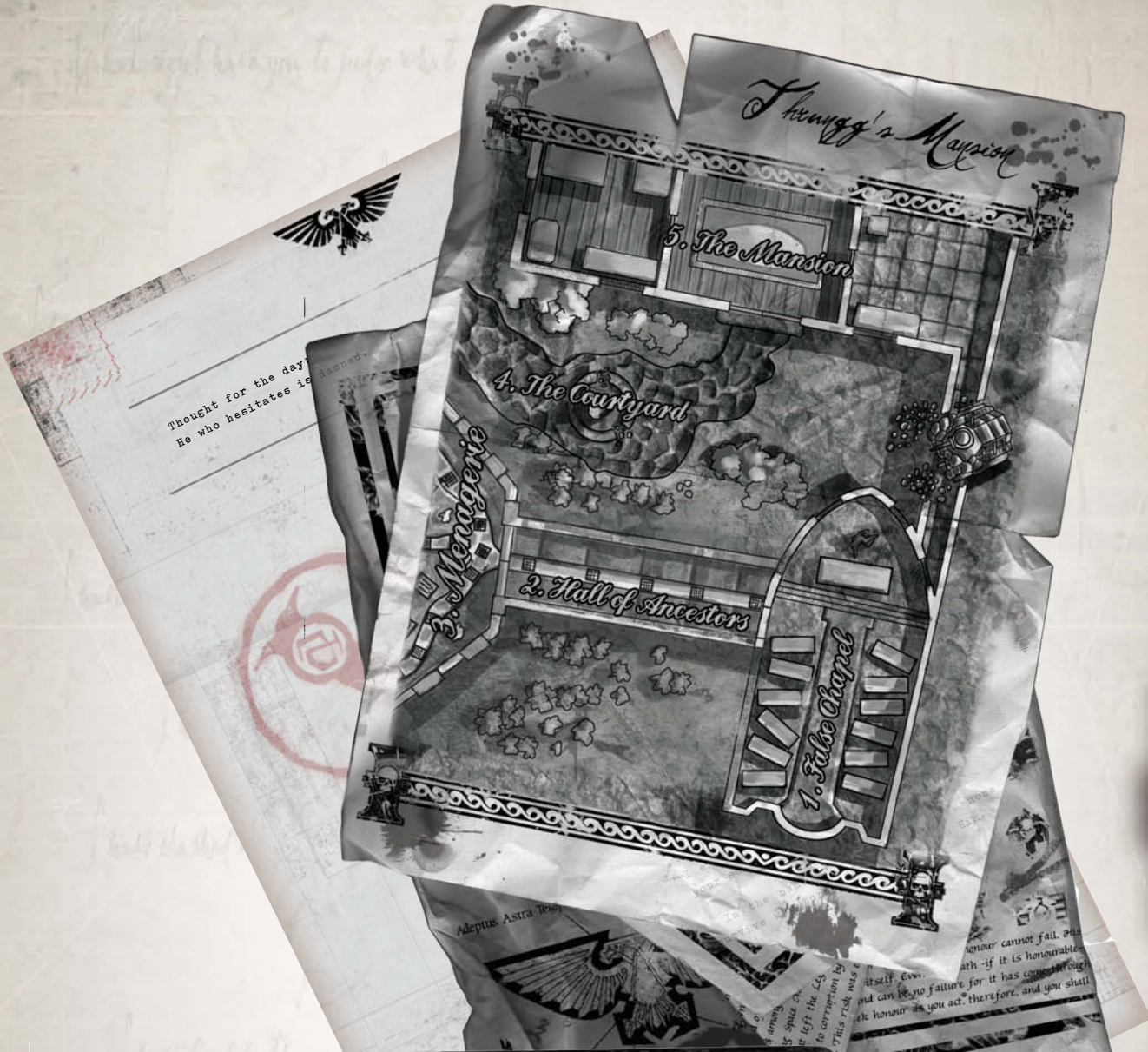
"Men of the Protectorate!" yells Captain Scipio, hanging onto one of the handholds mounted overhead. "We drop in thirty seconds! Come down fighting and check your targets!" He gives you an understanding nod, "Sirs, the battle plan has you coming down in the false chapel, I leave it to you to find the proof you need and we will try not to get in your way."

ACOLYTES

Only the GM and the Inquisitor would consider an assault like this without the Acolytes should be issued the following equipment:

- 1 Pump-Action Shotgun
- 10 Shotgun Shells
- 1 Krak Grenade
- 1 Knife
- 1 Pink Jacket

They are not required to use any of these, but each character should have the option. In addition, these items come from the Inquisitor's armoury, not that of the Imperial Guard. The Acolytes should be allowed to replenish spent ammunition and grenades after the assault and use the same equipment in later chapters.



Thought for the day
He who hesitates is

Thermy's Mansion

5. The Mansion

4. The Courtyard

3. Menagerie

2. Hall of Ancestors

1. Fable Chapel

MENAGERIE

HALL OF ANCESTORS

AREA 1: THE FALSE CHAPEL

The side doors of the Valkyrie slide open with a thudding noise. A pair of Protectorate Guardsmen bring heavy bolters to life, shattering the windows of the Chapel skylight, creating a clear point of entry for your descent.

As the grav-chutes slow your fall to a manageable speed, you are able to get a clear view of the landing area. Two rows of steel benches with cushioned backs line the area. There is a squat stone dais, probably reserved for sermons. The intel had shown this area empty, but unfortunately a pair of guard have fallen back to this position along with a Servitor, his left side converted to a metallic housing for an Autogun.

The Acolytes' mission is to go in through the glass roof by grav-chute. This wing of the mansion contains House Thrungg's dynasty chapel, and is not expected to be held in any numbers by the household troops. The Acolytes are to hold the chapel until Scipio's men can capture the rest of the mansion and kill or capture the household troops defending it.

The Acolytes must first land in the chapel. Using a grav-chute successfully requires an Ordinary (+10) Agility Test or an Easy (+30) Acrobatics Test. Characters who pass the Test land on their feet. If they fail, the character hits the ground in a crouched position and must roll with the motion, ending prone but otherwise combat ready.



The intelligence gathered for the assault suggests the chapel is not defended. Unfortunately for all concerned, this is inaccurate, and the Acolytes find themselves engaged with enemies. The landing zone for the Acolytes is approximately 30 meters from the House Thrungg troop's position. The pews on either side provide 6 Armour to the legs when a character is standing behind them, or 6 to all but the head if they are kneeling. A single movement is enough to get the Acolyte out of the open lane of fire and behind a pew.

The three House Thrungg Troops are scared but ready for a fight, and open fire as soon as the Acolytes hit the ground. The house guards are not being paid enough to mess with the Inquisition, and once one of their number has been taken out of action, or a Challenging (+0) Intimidate Test is made, the house troops surrender. They do not have control of the gun-servitor, however, which is programmed to kill any intruders, and the Acolytes have to destroy or disable it themselves.

INVESTIGATING THE CHAPEL

Once the fight has died down, the Acolytes will likely wish to investigate the chapel area itself. The altar at the head of the chapel is home to the body of a grizzled priest whose left arm has been removed. The stump still bleeds onto the floor and hundreds of black feathers have been used to soak the blood. A Challenging (+0) Intelligence or Routine (+20) Medicae Test lets the Acolytes know that the arm was apparently torn off at the elbow, rather than being chopped away. Anyone who makes this realisation must succeed on an Routine (+20) Willpower Test or gain 1 Insanity point.

Clutched in the priest's remaining hand is a treatise on the Imperial Creed that has been heavily annotated. A Challenging (+0) Common Lore (Imperial Creed) Test reveals that these changes are designed to prepare sermons on the nature of faith that will slowly lead the audience to heresy over the course of months.

A Hard (-20) Search Test will reveal a secret trap door beneath the pool of blood that leads into Thrungg's Museum of Apostasy, (see page 17, Investigation). If the Acolytes discover it, give them a few minutes to peruse the artefacts before moving on to Area 2. If the Acolytes do not find this room now they will automatically find it later when the battle is complete and the Acolytes have time to do a more complete search of the house.

If at any time the players seem stumped (or are just ready for more action) then it is time to move on to Area 2, with Captain Scipio calling for them to head off Thrungg.

HOUSE THRUNGG TROOPS

These gunmen are paid to protect the House Thrungg enclave from thieves, trespassers, and the agents of other families. Their job description does not include fending off an assault by special forces assisted by Acolytes of the Inquisition. They fight as best they can, but it does not take too much to break them.

The guards wear a uniform of thick brown cloth with a blue Armoured jacket held closed in the front by a row of two dozen dense brass buttons. They wear no helmets, their hair worn long in a single braid weighted by an ornamental skull. While their weapons are ornately covered in scrollwork telling the deeds of a house Thrungg ancestor, the weapons themselves are common quality.

House Thrungg Troop Profile



WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
20	20	25	25	25	20	25	20	20

Movement: 3/6/9/18 **Wounds:** 8
Skills: Speak Language (Low Gothic), Awareness (Per), Intimidate (S).
Talents: Melee Weapon Training (Primitive), Basic Weapon Training (SP).
Weapons: Shotgun (30m; S/-/-, 1d10+4 I, Pen 0, Clip 2, Rld 2Full, Scatter & Reliable).
Armour: Armoured Uniform (All but head 3).
Gear: 10 Shotgun Shells, 1d5 Thrones, House Thrungg Keys.

HOUSE THRUNGG GUN-SERVITOR

This unthinking machine consists of a human brain inside a housing of metal and flesh, festooned with guns and programmed to shoot dead anyone who does not belong in the House Thrungg enclave.

House Thrungg Gun-Servitor Profile



WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
13	29	47	42	14	09	22	31	04

Movement: 1/2/3/6 **Wounds:** 10
Skills: Trade (Armourer) +10.
Talents: Basic Weapon Training (SP), Heightened Senses (Vision), Melee Weapon Training (Primitive).
Traits: Armour Plating, Auto-Stabilised, Dark Sight, Machine (4), Natural Weapon (Pneumowrench).
Killswitch: The gun-servitor has a quick shutdown mechanism in case of accidental activation. The servitor can be deactivated with a Challenging (+0) Tech-Use Test. Making this Test is a Full Action, and the character making it must be adjacent to the servitor and may not make any Dodge or Parry Reactions that Round. Any Tech-Priest or another Acolyte with the Tech-Use +10 Skill would know about the kill switch.
Armour: Armour Plating & Machine (4) (6 all).
Weapons: Pneumowrench (1d10+5 I; Primitive), autogun (90m; S/3/10; 1d10+3 I; Pen 0; Clip 30; Reload Full).
Gear: Internal micro-bead (receiving/relaying instructions only), killswitch unit, ammo hopper equivalent to 3 clips.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

If your Acolytes are higher than rank 3 or have more than 10 members, then include the gun-servitor in the attack. In this case they would not break until at least 3 or more are defeated.

If the Acolytes are ranked higher than the House Thrungg gun-servitor can be equipped with a heavy Bolter. The grav-chute test may also be increased to difficulty 10 for more dramatic effect.

For Ascension level characters the servitor should be equipped with a Ryzal Particle Cannon and have an additional 20 wounds. The House Thrungg troops should number two for each Throne Agent.

The House Thrungg troops should not be increased in skill, allowing the players to feel powerful in comparison to such laughable opponents.

MORE COMPLEX ENCOUNTER OPTION

The GM may wish to provide a more complex encounter where the gun-servitor is used more directly. This is especially appropriate for combat heavy parties or for groups unacquainted with the system. Groups that are new to Dark Heresy or for campaigns with a more investigative theme should use the original encounter.

This initial encounter can be a surgical strike to remove a defensive point. The Acolytes descend into the room as described above, with the goal of defeating an Autocannon emplacement. The guards protecting the position will attempt to wheel the cannon around to fire at the Acolytes, so they must make short work of the weapon.

Every other round the weapon is wheeled to fire at the Acolytes inside the chapel, on the other rounds it must rotate again to point out the large glass window and fire on the Valkyrie strafing its position. The Gun-Servitor is replaced by three troops manning the autocannon emplacement, while the other House Thrungg troops will fight the acolytes.

AREA 2: THE HALL OF ANCESTORS

When the gunfight in the chapel is done, the Acolytes receive a call from Captain Scipio over the vox-net.

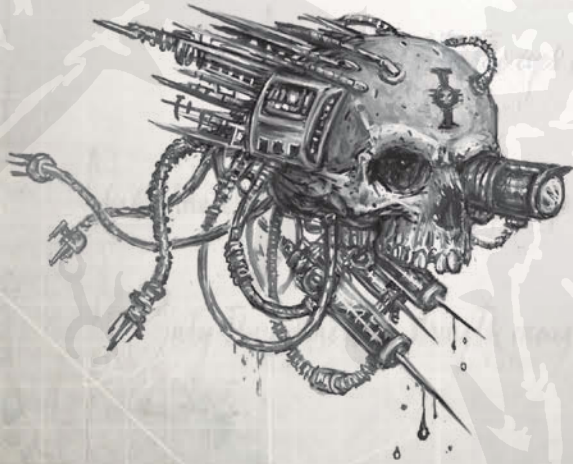
Your vox bead crackles to life, the sounds of gunfire can be heard echoing over the channel. Captain Scipio's voice rings clear against the din of combat, "Thrungg's making a stand in the menagerie! It's to the west of your position. Our aerial intel shows that you're just down the hall. Head west, make yourselves useful, and head him off!"

The smell of smoke fills the air, stray blasts of lasgun fire have ignited the building during the initial breach. A single pane of the chapel windows shatters and there is the briefest glimpse of the battle in the courtyard beyond. A Chimera APC has breached the outer walls, allowing more Protectorate guardsmen to spill into the immaculate garden.

On the western wall of the chapel is a gilded doorway with a large, dense wood door. A bronze plaque aids visitors in navigating the mansion. It reads:

*Hall of Ancestors
Managerie
Servants Quarters*

There is a doorway to the west from the chapel that leads into a long hallway decorated with portraits of the Thrungg ancestors. The door itself is not locked but the player who first opens it should make an Easy (+30) Awareness Test. If successful, he feels that the door knob is warm to the touch and opens it slowly, releasing pressure without taking damage. However, if he fails the Awareness Test he will be knocked prone by the hot air and must make a Challenging (+0) Toughness Test or suffer 1 level of fatigue.



The hallway beyond is ablaze. While much of the mansion is made of rockcrete, these walls are ornate wood and the passageway contains floor to ceiling portraits of the Thrungg family over the last thousand years. The heat from the blaze is not dangerous but the smoke obscures the end of the hall from sight.

Characters with rebreathers (or other breathing apparatus) suffer no ill effects in the hallway. Those without take a -10 penalty to all Tests while in the hallway.

Approximately halfway down the passage there is a servant door that has a large gothic cabinet pushed in front of it. An Ordinary (+10) Strength Test pushes the cabinet aside. Failure causes one degree of fatigue to the character but the door is still opened. Within the small chamber is a scared chambermaid wearing a singed servant's tunic and hiding behind a row of mannequins displaying the attire of famous Thrungg dynasty leaders. An Easy (+30) Charm, Interrogate, Intimidate, or Inquiry Test reveals the following information (read aloud each one, up to the scored successes):

Failure: She sobbingly clings to the most devout-appearing Acolyte, pressing a key into his hand.

Success: "Emperor preserve us! Thrungg has locked himself in the menagerie and is claiming that he will kill us all if we don't fight for him. Here, take this key and stop him!"

1 Degree of Success: "He's got those beasts with him too, be careful!"

2 Degrees of Success: "I caught a glimpse of his hand as he shut the door, I can't imagine what made him do that to himself, it was grotesque!"

After that she falls into hysterical sobs, gasping for breath and is completely unintelligible.

There is a locked blast door at the end of the hall that can be opened with one of the keys off the bodies of the guards or the servant woman. It can also be opened with a Difficult (-10) Security Test or with the use of an explosive (even a grenade will do) and a Routine (+20) Demolition Test.

HIGH RANK CHARACTERS

The doorway into the Ancestors Hall could be trapped instead, a grenade crudely wedged between the door knob and jam on the opposite side of the door. Instead of allowing an Awareness Test to avoid damage, every character within 5 metres must make a Hard (-20) Dodge Test or suffer 1d10 damage with 0 Penetration.

Due to her terror, the Test to get information from the servant should be increased to Challenging (+0).

Finally, replace the first paragraph of the read aloud text:

Your vox bead crackles to life, the sounds of gunfire can be heard echoing over the channel. Captain Scipio's voice rings clear against the din of combat, "Thrungg's making a stand in the menagerie! It' is to the west of your current position. Our aerial intel shows that you're just down the hall. We aren't in position to persue, but if are quick enough you just might be able to head him off."

AREA 3: THE MENAGERIE

Bulagor Thrungg has no intention of being captured. If push comes to shove, he is willing to die rather than face the justice of the Inquisition. He is barricaded in the menagerie and Scipio's squad can't get in, but the door from the chapel to the menagerie is unguarded, so the Acolytes can get at him easily. If the Acolytes refuse to attack Thrungg, the heretic flees from the menagerie to the chapel and the Acolytes have to face him anyway.

The menagerie is a private zoo, with several cages containing various exotic animals, each more deadly than the last. The many birds kept here have escaped their aviaries and are flying around in a state of agitation, attacking each other in primal displays of dominance, making an unholy din. Such is the number of birds flying around the enclosed space that Ballistic Skill Tests are at a -10 penalty beyond Short range while in the menagerie. While the screeching beasts are pre-occupied with each other, should the Acolytes attack the birds in an attempt to remove their interference, then they will attack for 1d5 rounds (until they return to each other), dealing 1d10+2 damage each round unless the Acolyte finds cover (or dives into one of the cages). The flock has a WS of 45 and cannot be eliminated during this battle (there are just too many of them).

Thrungg is accompanied by his pets, slaving quadrupeds somewhat resembling a cross between a crocodile and a hyena, although larger than either. Thrungg refers to these creatures as 'My Pets,' and has trained them to attack on command. Thrungg himself is armed with the Dei-Phage's Hand, a daemonic weapon that fits over one of his hands. It can spit shards of bone at enemies and drain their blood up close. The Dei-Phage's Hand is proof of Thrungg's possession of a forbidden artefact, and so the Acolytes have caught him literally red-handed.

Thrungg sends his pet in to attack moments after the Acolytes enter the room. He attempts to use the power of the Dei-Phage's Hand from approximately 20 metres away as his pet engages the most heavily armoured Acolyte in melee.

The glass domed ceiling of the menagerie is obscured by the erratic flight of hundreds of exotic birds. Their cages opened by remote, they swoop and dive in hysteria, squawking and attempting to escape the confines of the building.

A rockcrete path winds to the top of a small hill at the centre of the chamber. There stands a noble that can only be Thrungg. In his right hand he holds the reins to two powerful beasts. Reptilian eyes dart about, locking briefly on the throats of possible victims. Their shape is made all the more hideous by matted canine fur and large snapping jaws.

Hideous as they are, the monstrosities pale in comparison to what Thrungg has done to himself. His left arm twisted into a mockery of flesh, armoured plates marked in foul ruinous decoration guard his wrists. Above the elbow he is indistinguishable from any other noble citizen of the Imperium. His face relaxed in the expression of mild amusement that so many of his class practice.

With a sly wink he presses a small button on the leash of the xenos creatures and calls "Perhaps you will provide me some amusement. Save their hearts for, my pets!"

THRUNGG'S DEFEAT

When Thrungg is killed or rendered unconscious, he dies and the Dei-Phage's Hand slips from his body.

Thrungg's body begins to shudder and convulse. Rivulets of black ichor bleed from his mouth, eyes and nose. His muscles strain at his bones and the sick crack and snapping of cartilage echoes through the now silent menagerie.

His daemonic left hand slides from his body, revealing his own mortal form beneath. The arm itself is hollow in the stump for another apostate to brandish against heroes of the Imperium.

The players may wish to destroy the arm, but it appears impervious to all harm. The resources of an Inquisitor will be required to purge it from reality.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

The encounter can be scaled up by giving Thrungg more pets, increasing the number of Dei-Phage's Pets or by increasing the number of pet attacks. It can be scaled down by giving Thrungg fewer pets or by giving the Dei-Phage's Pets fewer attacks.

Ascension characters may find Thrungg as more of a threat. The hand of the Dei-Phage is a foul sower. He has an effective Psy+10, a Strength of 2 and the Lightning and Psychic powers. He is also a member of the Haematre Cathedral cult, on page 21 of the book. He is also a Perils of the Warp. In addition his reckless nature means he will Push every time he activates a power.



USING THE DEI-PHAGE'S HAND

Bulagor is armed with the Dei-Phage's Hand, the remains of a daemon prince's left hand. The hand is completely invulnerable to normal damage, providing 8 points of Armour to the right arm when attached. Only the resources of an Inquisitor can find a way to destroy it.

The Dei-Phage's Hand is the left arm from the elbow down of the creature fought in the last climactic battle of this adventure. This might be a hook usable for a later game session, as the Acolytes struggle to destroy the artefact after the events in later chapters. Unscrupulous Acolytes might decide to keep the Dei-Phage's Hand and use it themselves, rather than handing it over to the Inquisition. This is certainly the act of a Radical (or worse) and Puritan Inquisitors will look angrily upon Acolytes who take this path and get caught, probably condemning them to execution.

Attaching the Dei-Phage's Hand requires an Ordinary (+10%) Forbidden Lore (Daemonology) check. Once the weapon is attached, it cannot be removed until the current user is dead. Attaching the weapon causes the user to gain 1d10 Corruption Points as the user's humanity is eroded. In addition, each time the Dei-Phage's Hand kills another living being, the user must take a Challenging (+0) Willpower Test. A failure means the character acquires another Corruption Point as he is influenced by the weapon's nature.

The weapon can hurl razor sharp shards of bone, feeding on blood to replenish its reserves. In melee it is a terrifying weapon capable of cutting through flesh and armour with a single strike.

In addition, the hand has such a strong tie to the Dei-Phage that any psyker wearing it will have visions of the creature. Whenever the character looks in a reflective surface he will see the Dei-Phage with a single hand on his shoulder. Any Psychic Phenomenon created by the psyker will roll on the Haematite Cathedral chart on page 21.



THE DEI-PHAGE'S HAND

Name	Class	Size	Range	Damage	Rate	Cost	Special	Wt	Availability	
Boneslivers	Basic	60m	S/2/-	1d10+5 R	2	10	Special	Tearing	3kg	Unique
Claw	Melee	—	—	—	—	—	Hungry	3kg	Unique	

Reload: The Dei-Phage's Hand does not need ammunition, instead growing a bony core from which ammunition is flaked off as needed. It can only be reloaded by draining the blood via the Hungry special rule or by the owner suffering one level of Fatigue to feed it his own blood. A single Fatigue level reloads the weapon to full capacity as a Free Action.

Hungry: A character taking damage from the Dei-Phage's Hand in melee must make an Ordinary (+10%) Toughness Test or suffer 1 level of Fatigue as the weapon drains his blood. This only affects living creatures with a circulatory system – creatures with the Machine, Amorphous, or Strange Physiology traits may be immune if the Game Master determines that they would not be edible by the hand.

BULAGOR THRUNGG

Thrungg is a degenerate, libertine, glutton, and coward. He was raised with lots of money and no responsibilities, a situation typical of second sons in Scintilla's minor noble houses. Thrungg, having worked his way through most mundane vices, is jaded and finds satisfaction only in knowing he is doing something that would outrage any moral-minded Imperial citizen. To this end he has collected some forbidden artefacts, although he does not have the contacts or the cunning to assemble a truly formidable gallery of horrors. Thrungg thinks he is rather more outrageous than he is, and when faced with taking responsibility for his actions he is more likely to soil himself than to laugh in the face of authority. Thrungg's debased life has left him rather thin and he dresses in the most ridiculous of Hive Sibellus's cutting-edge fashions.

In combat, Thrungg prefers to hide behind something and shoot, relying on his pets to deal with fighting up close. He fights only through desperation, because he is scared of being captured — if taken alive he breaks down and begs for mercy for a moment before the Dei-Phage's Hand lets go of his body, killing him in the process.

Bulagor Thrungg Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
31	25	28	32	30	40	30	28	39

Movement: 3/6/9/18 **Wounds:** 12

Skills: Awareness (Per), Blather (Fel), Carouse (T), Common Lore (Imperium) (Int), Decieve (Fel), Dodge (Ag), Forbidden Lore (Daemonology) +10, Forbidden Lore (Heresy), Forbidden Lore (Cults), Gamble (Int), Literacy (Int), Speak Language (High Gothic, Low Gothic) (Int), Trade (Merchant) (Int).

Talents: Decadence, Exotic Weapon Training (Dei-Phage's Hand), Melee Weapon Training (Power, Primitive, Shock), Pistol Training (Las, SP), Quick Draw, Sure Strike.

Armour: Mesh-armoured ermine robe (Arms 4, Body 4).

Weapons: The Dei-Phage's Hand.

Gear: Fashionable clothes, 300 Throne Gelt, Best Quality Sword, Best Quality Las-Pistol.

BULAGOR'S PETS

Bulagor's Pets are large and very ugly reptilian predators kept in line through the use of a drug injector controlled from the interface on the end of its leash. Thrungg usually has his pets to loll around nearby and look impressive, but when pressed into combat he sets the beasts to kill-mode and hopes they will swallow his attackers. The pets are not intelligent combatants, usually going for the closest enemy and trying to crush it between their powerful jaws.

Bulagor's Pet Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
35	0	52	55	25	11	40	38	08

Movement: 6/12/18/36 **Wounds:** 20

Skills: Awareness (Per), Swim (S)

Traits: Dark Sight, Natural Armour (2), Natural Weapons (Teeth), Size (Hulking), Sturdy, Unnatural Speed (x2)

Armour: Natural (2)

Weapons: Crushing Jaws (1d10+5 R; Lockjaw)

Lockjaw: If the beast successfully grapples a target it does 1d5+2 R damage (targets of a grapple normally suffer no damage).



AREA 4: THE COURTYARD

There is a minor skirmish between Thrungg's guard and the Scintillan military forces going on in the courtyard. The players can attempt to get to this location, but the moment they do, Scipio calls for them to head off Thrungg in the Menagerie. If they try to help, Scipio yells at them, telling them that he has it under control and that they better not fail to stop Thrungg. The Scintillan military has a Chimera APC that is making short work of any hostile forces, and it should be made clear that this battle is well under control once the Scintillan soldiers have cleared out the defensive positions of Thrungg's guard.

Players who are eager to take part in the battle can be given a chance here. Rather than having the Protectorate forces winning the skirmish, they are in a stalemate with the House Thrungg troops.

The Acolytes have a clear line of sight (from their position) to the Sergeant of House Thrungg's guard. With a successful Ballistic Skill Test an Acolyte can kill the leader in one shot, if he fails then his position is given away and the Sergeant repositions himself, ruining the vantage point and the stalemate continues.

AREA 5: THE MANSION

This is the rest of Thrungg's mansion. It is an opulent building that has been set aflame by the firefight taking place in the courtyard. Entering here is dangerous. Assuming Thrungg has been defeated, some players may wish to rescue servants after Thrungg has been captured.

Each player should describe what they are doing to fight the flames or rescue those inside. Each player should then make a Challenging (+0) Test appropriate to their actions. Failures do not hamper the process, but count the total Degrees of Success the group achieved as a whole. For every degree of success, one servant is rescued from the blaze, to a maximum of 10 servants.

Example Tests that players could try (but they are not limited to these):

- Dodging the flames and dragging people out of the fire would require an Agility Test.
- Breaking down barred doors or creating new exits for those inside could be a Weapon Skill or Strength Test.
- Rallying the Protectorate to help in the rescue with a successful Fellowship Test could prove useful.
- There is a defunct fire suppression system that an Intelligence Test could repair.

AREA 6: THE HALL OF HISTORIES

While the passage from Menagerie (area 3) to the Mansion (area 5) is intact, Thrungg's Hall of Histories has been nearly destroyed. Where once there was a passageway that boasted his dynasty's long history upon Scintilla, only rubble remains. The ceiling and walls have collapsed as the Chimera APC rammed its way through the mansion walls into the courtyard. If the players wish to get to the rest of the mansion, they must pass through the menagerie or the courtyard.

Passing through the courtyard is inadvisable, as anyone not in cover becomes an instant target for the Gun-Servitors of the House Thrungg's Guard. If the GM wishes to nudge the players towards the Menagerie conflict then he can make this readily apparent. If the players, however, are more interested in the battle raging outside or the other events in the house then it is advisable to not attempt to force them down the presented path, instead consult the sidebar "The Sandbox Approach".

THE SANDBOX APPROACH

It is not the intention of this adventure to force the players to take a certain path. If the players are serious about getting to the end of the adventure (before their intent before they hear of Thrungg moving to the Menagerie) simply allow them to dodge their way across the courtyard and into the remaining manor and save a few servants from the burning house. One of them presents the key to the manor, the key they would normally find in the House of Servitors (area 2) and tells them that Thrungg is still in the house ablaze and that they should go in to rescue him.

In games where the players wish to be traditionally heroic, then Thrungg's whereabouts might be completely unknown. Instead he can be heard over the Vox calling for help to fight the troops and lamenting that he is trapped to the people in the house. He could also call for players for help, allowing them to enter the manor and rescue him as they save the house.

Once the manor is secured, then the players are pointed towards the Menagerie while Scipio continues to fight Thrungg.



INVESTIGATION

"On pain of death you are hereby bound by judgement."

—Acolyte Haxtes during the "arrest" of Bulagor Thrungg

When Thrungg is captured or dead, the house guards' resistance crumbles and Scipio's men rapidly take control of the estate. A search by the Acolytes over the next few hours reveals a secret room with a collection of art and artefacts.

It was almost impossible to notice at first glance, but the blood stain from the dead priest was draining away. The feathers soaked much of the fluid, but a steady pull from beneath tugged at each quill until they floated slowly to the cracks that revealed the trap door beneath the false chapel.

The room is immense. Dimly lit by dozens of servo-skulls floating above each display, a single light pointing beneath them. Rows upon rows of heretical proof are presented for viewing in an audacious display of wealth, influence and damnation. Any single exhibit could earn Thrungg a death sentence, and by Scintillan law his family holdings can be seized, destroying the entire noble line.

Captain Scipio descends the small staircase after you and gives a whistle of awe, "You boys sure have your work cut out for you. This room needs a routine sweep, I'll take care of it, don't want the men to see what's down here." He begins to move through the dark room pointing a stab-light and Lasgun at shadows or perceived movement.

There are dozens of daemonic and xenos artefacts as well as several pieces of ancient text that the Ecclesiarchy will be glad to see recovered. In addition there is a collection of expensive weapons used by sergeants and commanders during notable battles of the Angevin Crusade.

The GM may wish to limit the equipment, but this is an opportunity to give acolytes some unique gear iconic to the Dark Heresy setting. Any of the following items might be available in the museum; much of which could reasonably be claimed by Acolytes as "seizure of family holdings" under Scintillan law:

- A Best Quality Long Las with several scratched X's in the stock, that was used by a Ratling to slay the Seigemaster during the Gunmetal Uprising.
- A Xenos sword that is effectively a Good Craftsmanship sword with the Mono weapon upgrade. An Easy (+30) Forbidden Lore (Xenos) Test reveals this to be of Eldar design.
- A Bolt Pistol used by Commissar Gild during the Lugg City Massacres to execute over a hundred of his own men.
- A laspistol with an odd knotwork pattern on the grip. It functions normally, but has the Unstable quality.
- A Xenos Cloak from the thick skin of a Cruorian War Beast that functions as a Good Quality Mesh Combat Cloak.
- A decanter of Amasec so old that it no longer has a label, but it remains sealed and fresh.
- A fine chrono depicting an ancient and fading symbol on a thin titanium chain with an Auspex built into it. A Hard (-20) Forbidden Lore (Inquisition) Test lets the character

know that the symbol was once used by the Ordo Chronos. There are at least a dozen other books of various religious or heretical content, but a few are notable:

- An Ordinary (+10%) Forbidden Lore (Daemonology or Heresy) Test identifies the Liber Ex Mentis among the exhibits and confirms that it is a forbidden text. Reading any portion of the book requires an Easy (+30) Willpower Test or the Acolyte gains a single point of Insanity.
- An Ordinary (+10) Common Lore (Imperial Creed) Test identifies the musings on faith of Palatine Selera. This small, unassuming, leather bound journal was transcribed from the original text and will be valued by members of the Ecclesiarchy.

There are various other objects on display such as a single Bolt Shell from an Astartes bolter, a pair of feeding brands used by ancient Scintillans to cook and eat their food at the same time, and a clay brick made from mud from Holy Terra (although this is easily uncovered as false).

The GM should feel free to get creative, using items in the museum to lead to further investigations in later adventures.

THE LEAD

As you pore over the dozens of heretical artefacts Scipio returns from his sweep of the room. "I don't know what you expected to find here, but I certainly didn't expect this. I'll leave you boys to it. Odd though, the 'spex kept acting up around that dataslate in the back. You might want to check that out."

Thrungg has a data-slate on display, which is odd considering it is a mundane item among Scintilla's nobles. It is encoded. Any character using Scholastic Lore (Cryptology), Logic or Tech-Use can decipher the code and reveal the diary of Thrungg with ease, although the GM may require them to make a Test to see how long it takes, Thrungg has kept exact records, including pict recordings of séances he has performed in an attempt to discover more about the Dei-Phage's hand.

The Acolytes' patron Inquisitor can identify the Liber Ex Mentis and the Dei-Phage's Hand if the Acolytes do not, although he may not be impressed if they missed them. He can also have the data-slate investigated if the Acolytes lack the required skills.

Once they have deciphered the data-slate, give the Acolytes the dataslate handout found on page 64.

The data-slate reveals the cryptic musings and flashes of insight about a golden cathedral with a black heart beneath a night sky. Any Cleric or Adepta Sororitas Acolyte will immediately recognize this as the Gilded Cathedral on Barsapine, which is made entirely of a gold coloured alloy mined from Barsapine's desert. If the Acolytes do not have an Ecclesiarchal character with them, then Scipio remembers an image he saw once of a cathedral made of gold on Barsapine and mentions it to the Acolytes.

TROUBLESHOOTING

During this first chapter, the Acolyte should be fairly assured of success. While a GM should make every attempt to prevent Acolytes from getting lost or confused during the game, it is impossible for a GM to predict the infinite combinations of character concepts, Acolyte abilities and previous gaming history that any gaming group may have. If players appear stumped it is important for the GM to give them a new clue to keep this part of the plot moving forward.

The Acolytes have a clear objective and a reasonable amount of authority. Thrungg cannot argue or plead for compassion and the soldiers fighting the battle outside will win given enough time. The Acolytes should feel confident and capable during this opening chapter. Keep the action going!

- If the Acolytes miss an important clue (such as the keys for the blast door in area 2) the Imperium loyal servants of Thrungg can otherwise tell them or cry for help to draw them to important locations.
- If a character has suffered a significant amount of fatigue or damage, then one of the servants can dress their wounds or provide a dose of stimm (which is of a high enough quality that it also cures fatigue).
- If the Acolytes are in really bad shape and definitely going to lose when they encounter Thrungg, he might be single handedly holding off a group of guardsmen in the Menagerie (firing bone shards at them as they take cover behind a door). He has been wounded in his fight and the Acolytes can get the jump on him.
- If the Acolytes attempt to leave with the Dei-Phage's hand before discovering Thrungg's Museum of Apostasy, one of the Imperial Guardsmen will come and get them, desperate to show them the room just uncovered.
- If the Acolytes are about to die (or have been greatly incapacitated), Thrungg will escape. His museum will still be found but the Acolytes will have to track him down later.

The second chapter of Black Sepulchre is designed to make players nervous. There will be plenty of opportunities to terrify and jeopardise the Acolytes later. This chapter creates a moment of strength that the Acolytes must reclaim in the third act by defeating the Dei-Phage.

A CALL FROM THE DARK

The journal on the data-slate that was in Thrungg's collection references the powers of the warp, and leads the Acolytes to the Gilded Cathedral on the world of Barsapine. It is the clue that sends the Acolytes on the next stage in their investigation, so it is essential they either find it themselves or are told of its contents by their patron Inquisitor after Thrungg's collection has been captured.

The Acolytes' patron Inquisitor has many investigations currently running under his aegis, and cannot attend to this himself. However, the journal is suitably disturbing that he orders the Acolytes to go to the Gilded Cathedral, ascertain the truth of the writings, and deal with any moral threat that might be present.

EXPERIENCE AND DOWNTIME

Following this chapter is an opportunity to award experience and allow the players some downtime while their patron Inquisitor looks into the signal they have found. It takes four months for the proper research to be done and for them to travel to Barsapine. The characters should accrue wealth during that time to spend as they see fit.

Experience Earned: Each player should earn at least 300 xp. If you are using the detail-based experience method, use the following.

Experience Earned:

- Base: 100 xp
- Defeated Thrungg: 75 xp
- Turned the Dei-Phage's Hand over to their Inquisitor for destruction: 75 xp
- Uncovered the contents of the data-slate that leads them to Barsapine without aid from their Inquisitor: 100 xp





THE HAEMATITE CATHEDRAL

BARSAPINE AND
KEPHISTRON ALTIS

•

INVESTIGATIONS IN THE
GILDED CATHEDRAL

•

EXPLORATION OF THE
HAEMATITE CATHEDRAL

•

INTO THE BELLY OF
THE BEAST

CHAPTER II: THE HAEMATITE CATHEDRAL

"Sometimes I am moved to wonder... do I live in this place, or does this place live in me?"

—Koronath Hekate

While this chapter begins with a visit to the Gilded Cathedral the Acolytes spend much of The Black Sepulchre exploring the Haematite Cathedral and assembling clues about the location's sinister past. Descriptions of important rooms and actions the characters are likely to take are given. The players should be free to explore the ruins of the cathedral in any order.

The Cathedral is inhabited by a powerful Chaos daemon prince, the Dei-Phage, and has become corrupted as a result. This corruption is more obvious in some locations than others, but it is always present in the form of eerie and foreboding events and sensations. While exploring the Haematite Cathedral, the GM can adjust the tone and pacing by describing one of the many strange events that might rattle the Acolytes. This also serves to foreshadow the Dei-Phage later on. These events might be experienced by all Acolytes

or only one at a time, perhaps by means of a note handed to that Acolyte's player. If the players find themselves stuck, these strange happenings can be used to hint at a new clue or guide them to an area they have missed. Imaginative Game Masters can doubtless come up with many more examples.

- A piece of art, such as a portrait or sculpture, that depicts a human form appears fleetingly to possess tattered, feathery wings and to be in a state of decay.
- An Acolyte glimpses himself in a mirror or a window pane. A shadowy, winged form behind him lunges forwards, closing spindly talons on the Acolyte's shoulders and then disappears.
- Some trivial mundane item belonging to the Acolyte, such as a chrono or a block of corpse rations, appears without explanation to be extremely old, tattered, rotten, rusted, or otherwise decayed. In the case of organic matter like food, the item has reduced to a foul-smelling black mass writhing with maggots.
- The Acolyte idly touches a surface like a wall or a tabletop. His palm comes away slick with blood, with no hint of where the blood came from.
- The sinister voice whispers, "How long before they betray you too?"
- When an Acolyte opens a door, a single black feather floats to the floor of the room beyond. There is no indication of where the feather came from or what was holding it up.

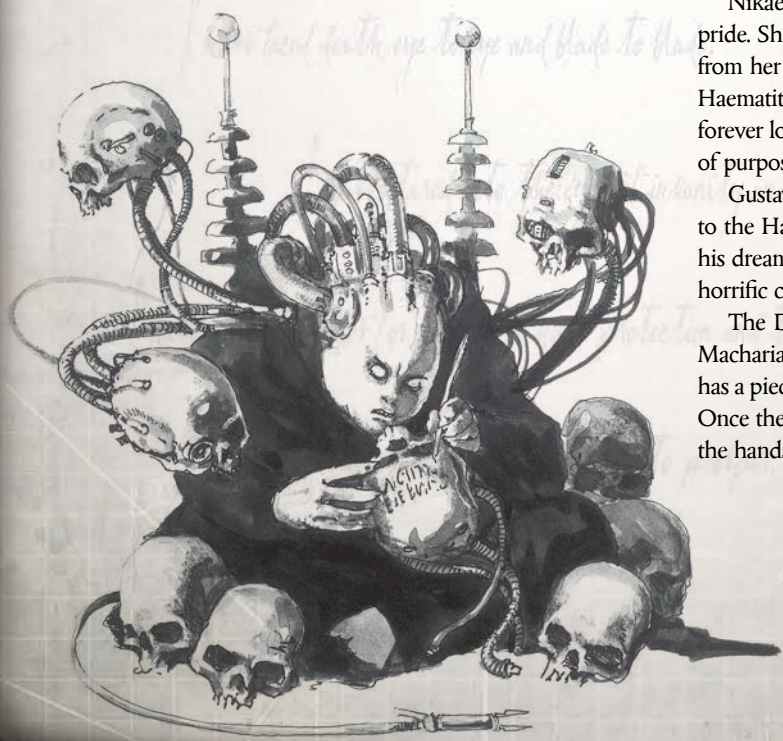
A TALE OF WOE

For over a decade, the Hekate Dynasty lived in the cathedral in attempts to discover the secrets that Inquisitor DeVayne hid with Barabus Zanatov. Notably Koronath Hekate attempted to continue Zanatov's work and took up residence in the years before his death, desperately attempting to rebuild the Black Sepulchre halted by the Maledictor's Hand. Unsuccessful, the Dei-Phage drove him mad.

Nikaea Hekate attempted to conquer the cathedral out of pride. She served as the Rogue Trader's seneschal, but was driven from her sanity. Believing herself a true noble, she looked to the Haematite Cathedral for proof of her divine position. She was forever lost to the Daemon despite her indomitable will and sense of purpose.

Gustavus Hekate, however, was a heretical cultist when he came to the Haematite Cathedral to serve the creature he witnessed in his dreams. He murdered uncounted innocents and cobbled new horrific constructs until the Dei-Phage betrayed him.

The Dei-Phage desperately wants to be released but the Pax Macharia and the Hekates struggle against it. Each warp apparition has a piece of a key needed to release the Dei-Phage hidden away. Once they are defeated, the Dei-Phage is able to place the key in the hands of those foolish enough to free him.



GETTING THERE

The Acolytes arrive on Barsapine on a rogue trader vessel from Scintilla. The voyage should take some time, allowing the characters to accumulate two months of income. After being ferried down by lander to Kephistrion Altis (the closest city to the Haematite Cathedral) there is an unarmed transport vehicle waiting for their use. They can spend some time trading in the city; anything up to a Scarce rating is available, and the players might find Rare items if they are willing to reveal that they are in service of the Inquisition. What is available is really up to the GM's discretion, but the players are going into a dangerous area where they are unlikely to have any opportunity to equip themselves.

Provide the characters with the hand out on page 65, their orders from their patron Inquisitor. This describes their mission here on Barsapine and provides some initial clues to follow. The characters are expected at the Gilded Cathedral by Abbot Jurutas. When the Acolytes have finished about the city or decide to head to the Gilded Cathedral, the adventure begins on page 24.

UNFORUNATE EVENTS

The isolation of the Haematite Cathedral can make dealing with possible character death very difficult. If a character does die, there are few ways to introduce a new Acolyte to the cell that blend into the overall storyline.

- As punishment for perceived transgressions, a local desert tribe locked someone (one of their own or someone they captured) in the manse. This person has been chained in a closet as the Dei-Phage attempts to drive him mad. This character should begin the game with 1d10 Insanity points.
- An Ecclesiarchal servant from Kephistrion Altis has been watching the Haematite Cathedral for a long time, mindful of dark rumours surrounding the place. When the Acolytes arrived he followed them into the cathedral.
- The Administratum occasionally sends out adepts to survey the property, or the Mechanicum could have sent a Tech-priest to investigate the rumours of the Haematite Cathedral as a remnant of the war with the Greenskins.

HAEMATITE CATHEDRAL PHENOMENA

The Dei-Phage saturates the atmosphere with a variety of psychic phenomena generated within his vile form. Whenever the Dei-Phage generates a Psychic Phenomenon, roll this table rather than the one in Dark Heresy.

ROLL

1-9 Wings of the Angel. The psyker takes 1d5 Explosive Damage to the torso as bloodstained, black-feathered wings burst from his back. This damage is not reduced by Armour or Toughness. The wings then quickly rot away, leaving only a pair of bloody scars on the psyker's back.

10-18 Matter Warp. A swirling vortex within a few metres of the psyker's body causes objects to disappear for a moment and then return to normal.

19-27 Merciful Blindness. The psyker's eyelids melt together, rendering him blind for 1d5 Rounds.

28-36 The Angels Bless. Several dozen black feathers flutter down from the sky above the psyker.

37-45 The Cathedral Speaks. All open doors slam shut, and all closed doors bang open, within a radius of 1d10 x 10 metres.

46-54 Marked for Death. The psyker feels a pain of great heat throbbing across his forehead, but nothing appears to be the matter. For the next hour, all mirrors and reflective surfaces show a stylised crescent moon in the centre of the psyker's forehead.

55-63 Rot Thy Soul. A force of corruption and decay grips the heart of everyone within 5d10 metres of the psyker, including the psyker himself. All those affected must make a Willpower Test or gain 1 Corruption Point.

64-72 Truth Hurts. The Dei-Phage whispers a truth so horrible into the psyker's ear, a truth so horrible that it cannot be expressed in words. The psyker must make a Willpower Test or gain 1 Insanity Point.

71-81 Bless This House. The Haematite Cathedral reacts violently to the Acolytes' presence. The psyker and all within 5d10 metres of him are assailed by a cacophony of fragmented sounds and images, an onslaught that can shatter minds. All affected must pass an Intelligence Test to rationalise what they see and hear. If they fail, they gain 1d5 Insanity Points.

82+ Perils of the Warp. The psyker's actions reach out to the warp beyond the Haematite Cathedral. Roll on the Perils of the Warp table.

INCITING EVENTS

The Haematite Cathedral contains clues to the actions of three rogue trader dynasty descendants; Gustavus, Nikaea, and Koronath Hekate. Each of these three linger on as psychic apparitions in the cathedral, bound shadows of their former real selves in the immaterium, they each serve the Dei-Phage now in a state of endless madness. The Acolytes may stumble on clues that lead them on the trail of one or another of the cathedral's villainous warp apparitions, but in case they do not, an inciting event may be used to set them on the right trail. A different event can be used to put the Acolytes on the path of each villain.

Gustavus Hekate: A few pages from Hadria Hekate's diary appear in an Acolyte's belongings. The pages mention Hadria's fears that his father is involved in something sinister, and mentions the barricaded chamber that contains clues to the demise of Hadria Hekate (see the handout on page 69). The pages can turn up at any time, particularly when the Acolytes are not sure what to do next or are pursuing a dead end. This can prevent the players from becoming frustrated.

Nikaea Hekate: A psychic howl from the audience chamber of the cathedral alerts the Acolytes to some presence. The howl is a cry of utter rage, and is issued by the psychic apparition of Nikaea Hekate, whose pride has been crushed by her failure to solve the riddle of the cathedral.

Koronath Hekate: Before the Acolytes' eyes a series of impossibly complicated equations and mathematical symbols appear on the walls, ceiling, and floor, apparently written by an invisible hand, and burned into the wood panelling or stones rather than made in ink. The symbols spiral around until they form a single trail that leads along the floor until it reaches the door of the Sanatorium Wing. A Challenging (+0) Logic or Ordinary (+10) Scholastic Lore (Numerology) Test suggests that the symbols, while evading standard mathematical thinking, suggest a form of twisted logic redolent of a brilliant but disturbed mind.

HOME AGAIN

The Black Sepulchre is written under the assumption that the characters will not leave the Haematite Cathedral once they have arrived there, and that they will see the adventure through to victory or defeat without returning to Kephistrion Altis. However, the Acolytes have easy transport back to the city, and if the players are determined, there is nothing to stop them breaking off their investigation into the cathedral. They might want to return to Kephistrion Altis to heal up, resupply, find a new member, or try to contact their patron Inquisitor (although their Inquisitor is likely far too busy to nursemaid them through the investigation, and is unavailable to speak with them until they are finished at the cathedral).

Optionally, the Maledictor's Hand may attack when they attempt to go back to their vehicle to leave the cathedral, destroying the transport and assaulting the Acolytes. Thus leaving them with little choice but to continue investigating.

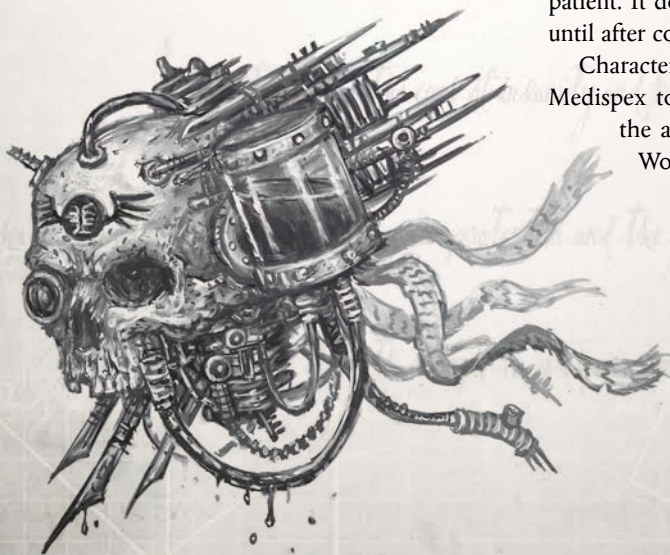
MEDISPEX SERVO-SKULL

Within the manse, the Acolytes will be called upon to make Medicae Tests discern information about corpses. If the group does not have a character with the Medicae skill, their Inquisitor has provided them with this rare Medispex Servo-Skull. A type of Servo-Skull, this assistant has a variety of calipers, syringes and chem-scrapers that allow it to analyze corpses for data.

It has the same statistics as a Servitor Drone found on page 344 of Dark Heresy. When required to make a Medicae Test to determine information about a corpse, the Medispex Servo-Skull allows a character to make an Intelligence or Tech-Use Test in place of a Medicae Test.

In addition, the servo-skull has a built in treatment device. Whether the user wants it to or not, it will automatically attempt to inject any wound with a painful stim-salve, causing the user 1 point of fatigue but healing 1d5+2 Wounds from a Lightly Wounded character or 2 wounds from a Heavily Wounded character. It has no effect on a Critically Wounded patient. It does not place itself in harms way, instead waiting until after combat to heal the Acolytes.

Characters trained in medicae may instead use the Medispex to augment their own treatments, adding 1d5 to the amount that they would normally heal a Lightly Wounded target.



BARSAPINE

The bulk of The Black Sepulchre is set on Barsapine, an inner planet in the Adrantis Nebula subsector. The planet is one of the few that do not rotate. Its magnetic western face is a barren wasteland, with a daily sweep across the planet from the north to the south along the night ridge, and is under constant attack by the winds and lit by reflected light from the sun.

PLANETARY DATA

Population: 1.5 billion
Climate: Frigidus Extremis
Geography/Demography: The population is concentrated around the southern continent, thus populated.
Principal cities: Kephistrion Superior, Kephistrion Inferior (northern polar), Skaltine (planetary capital), Thaumocryne (southern polar). Numerous smaller communities make up the remainder of the total population. The northern and southern polar regions have experienced several periods of glaciation, including periods of total glaciation.
Governmental Type: Elective Thaumocracy. Regional leaders and governorship decided by the Council of the Magnificence Ordus Malinar Vel Coronasse, Chosen of the Spoils.
Adept Presence: Dominus Arctus (Skaltine and Kephistrion Inferior), Administratum (both cities), Skaltine.
Military: Northern and Southern Thaumocratic Guard (medium/low level protection units based at Skaltine). Considerable rivalry between the two reduces their effectiveness as a planetary defence force.
Economic Notes: Barsapine's principal production is cogitator parts, which make up the majority of the planet's exports. The rest of the title consists of raw materials and manpower. Barsapine pottery is considered among the finest in the sector and can command high prices.

Barsapine is a small world of little importance in the grand scheme of the Calixis Sector, save for the cogitator parts its large cities produce. The Acolytes do not see much of the planet since the Haematite Cathedral is some distance from the nearest city, Kephistrion Albis. The spaceport of Kephistrion Albis is a center of toil and religiosity. Barsapine is a world of hidden secrets, its inhabitants are often secretive, rarely claiming any status and tend to go about masked and cloaked so they can hide themselves from the Inquisitor's sight and not commit the dreadful sin of seeking out His attention. Their true selves are revealed in private among the planet's countless secret societies.



II: THE HAEMATITE CATHEDRAL

My old friend Inquisitor Medina,
I have received your correspondence on the matters requesting information on the practices of the faithful here on Barsapine. I am happy to report that of all the worlds I have come to loathe, my hatred for Barsapine is minor at best. While the climate and solar cycle leave something to be desired, once I became accustomed to the forced twenty four segment day it became tolerable. Indeed, because there is no natural cycle on Barsapine the local population have instead tied their artificial night and day to that of Terra, in the hopes that they may worship at the correct times. The population spends much of its time beneath the surface or indoors, depending on their location as sunward or starward, respectively. It is currently the fashion for both ladies and gentlemen to wear simple slate grey masks and hoods when in public. These fashions, occasionally grey, but often maintaining muted colors, the nobility favours elaborate coverings, often veiled about the eyes and cheeks. Their hoods too are grey, but often present fine trimmings of gold or silver.
The secret societies on Barsapine are the only troubling element within the population. At first I believed these to be a breeding ground for heresy, however, after personally joining several of them, I discovered they are simply social affairs, designed to help members of the same nature. Their reserved nature is not a sign of disapproval, but rather a sign of respect. Instead

THE GILDED CATHEDRAL

All Cathedrals are grand monuments to the will of the God-Emperor of Mankind. The sweeping architecture drives the viewer to moments of silent faith in open structures. The Gilded Cathedral before you now is a towering edifice of solid gold. Where stone or iron would brand the perpetual night skyline with but a shadow, the Gilded Cathedral would reflect even the smallest candle. A single beam of sunlight shines down from orbit, reflected by a massive mirror. The citizens of Kephistrion Altis use the glow of the cathedral to mark the day and night cycles, living their lives by the will of the God-Emperor's servants.

As you climb the steps to the doors of the building, an ancient figure greets you. His wizened form stooped and shrouded in a hood, he holds in his hand a large staff with a hefty tome bound to a plate at the head.

"Welcome servants of the Holy Ordos. I am Abbot Jurutas and I have been told to expect your arrival. Surely you will wish a repaste after such a long journey."

The Abbot is happy to discuss the situation with the Acolytes and may be a font of information as long as that information eventually leads the characters to the Haematite Cathedral. He is willing to provide the Acolytes with rooms that, while sparse, are furnished with well crafted and comfortable items. In addition he can answer any questions about the cathedral's purpose or even the mirror in orbit as they progress through the cathedral.

ABBOT JURUTAS

The Abbot is an aging man, passed over by his superiors countless times for his bland demeanor and uninspired sermons. This is just as the Abbot, and the Maledictor's Hand, want it. He watches the cathedral and the Black Sepulchre, occasionally attempting to break through the impenetrable field that surrounds the device without any success. Jurutas received communication from the Acolytes patron Inquisitor and immediately contacted his superiors within the Maledictor's Hand. Seeing this is a grand opportunity to release one of their most power servants, the Dei-Phage, they have ordered him to guide the Acolytes to the Haematite Cathedral (although he knows nothing of the Dei-Phage or its true history). The Abbot happily shows the Acolytes to their quarters or the Librarium.

He has found several books on the history of the Haematite Cathedral and added them to the collection in the Librarium of Reflection. They tell of a great war between Xenos forces and the Imperium in which the Haematite Cathedral was built to defend against ocean attacks.

These books were written in earnest by their authors, who are simply mistaken. There was a great war between the Greenskins and the Imperium, and the Pax Macharia was first brought to the planet for that purpose and the authors have extrapolated the most likely truth... albeit a wrong one.

THE BLACK SEPULCHRE

The thick doors are pushed open by a dozen servitors, six on each side, their augmetics struggling to move the wrought gold slabs. Rows of polished silver pews with red velvet cushions line either side of the audience chamber, framed with pillars depicting movements in the life of St. Drusus. At the end of the centre isle is a velvet-covered dome several stories high, above it the Aquila shaped pulpit hangs by chains from the ceiling.

"I see you have noticed the Black Sepulchre. Beneath that black shroud is a tomb. Within it lies a weapon against the enemy beyond that, when the God-Emperor deems it necessary, will be a hammer of his righteous fury."

The Abbot knows only a portion of the story behind the cathedral's founding. He has been told (and believes) that there is a powerful field beneath the velvet that holds a relic of impossibly ancient power, that will one day lay low a daemon and his servants. If the Acolytes attempt to look under the cloth they will be reprimanded. If they later return to check under it any way, they will find an impenetrable force field of strange design. Behind the field is an ancient sepulchre with silent stone guardians and an odd turbo-laser-like protusion that has been highly modified to look like nothing even a Tech-Priest has ever seen before.

THE LIBRARIUM OF REFLECTION

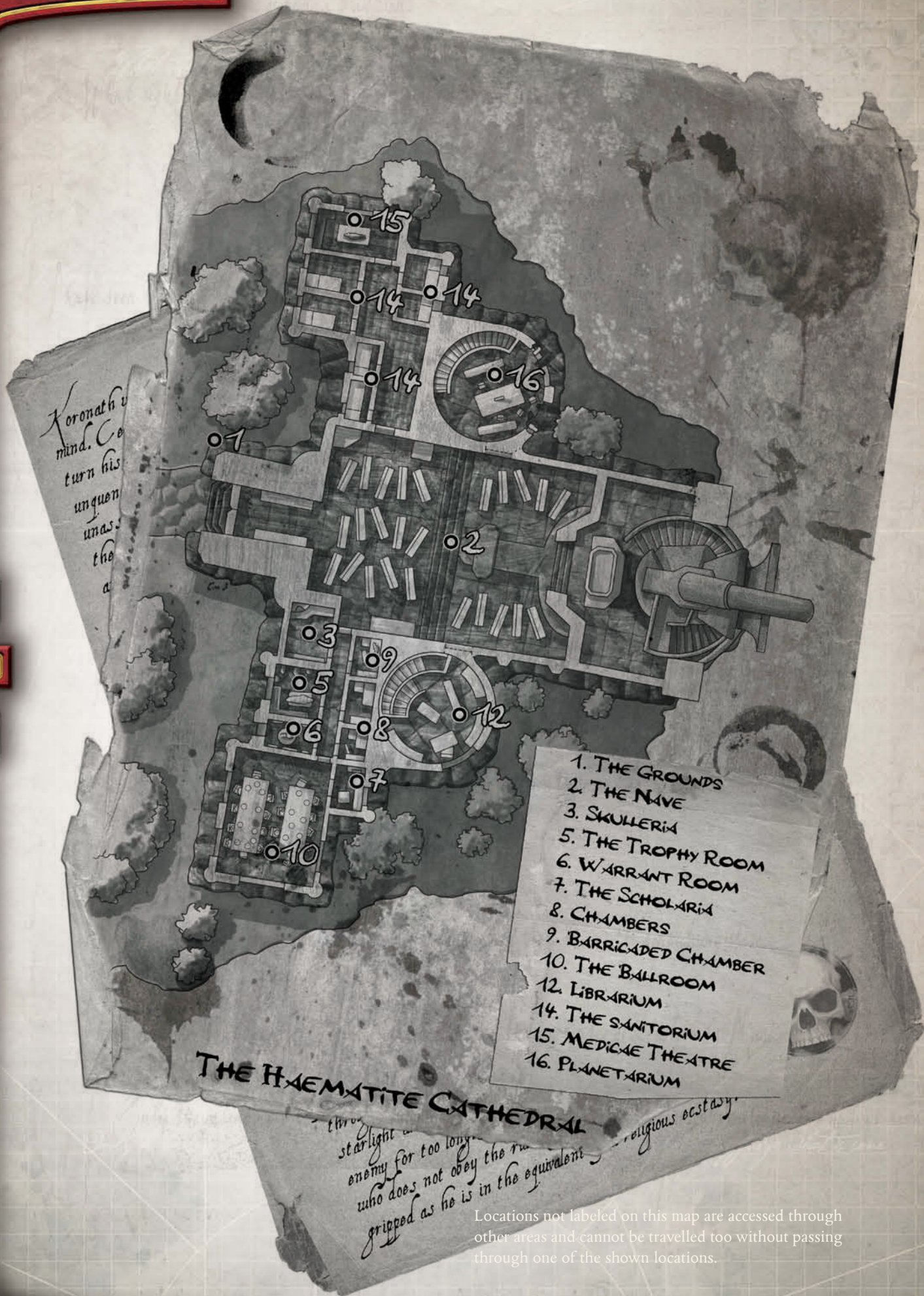
Several servo-skulls and a curator-servitor tend to a pair of book cases groaning under the weight of large leather bound tomes. Through a pair of wavy glass doors is a small garden enclosed by high walls. The light from above shines down on what must surely be the only trees in the entire city. Stone benches provide a place to sit as the servitors hold books aloft for careful study. A pair of clerics sit along a wall quietly discussing the contents of an old red leather book.

"This is the Librarium, I have been told you have much research to do into the history of this place. I am here to assist you in any way I can. I do ask that you refrain from discussing these matters with the students, however, as their minds are not ready for the horrors Acolytes of the Holy Ordos must face."

The Librarium has been seeded with several books that the Abbot intends the Acolytes to find. Have one of the Acolytes make a Literacy Test. For each Acolyte trained in literacy who wishes to help, the acting character gains a +10 bonus to the Test. If the Acolytes fail they find a partial inventory of Ecclesiarchal holdings (hand out 66) that notes a Haematite Cathedral. If they succeed, they have also found a stray passage in an unrelated book with cryptic notes in the margin, the coordinates in the note could match the location described as the Haematite Cathedral.

These are designed to direct the Acolytes to the Haematite Cathedral. A location that Abbot Jurutas is easily able to direct them to, and provide them with transport.

II: THE HAEMATITE CATHEDRAL



Locations not labeled on this map are accessed through other areas and cannot be travelled too without passing through one of the shown locations.

AREA I: THE GROUNDS

The journey from Kephistrion Altis to the cathedral can be skipped, depending on the GM's style of play and the tendencies of his players. If the GM wishes to fill in more detail, the Acolytes arrive at the spaceport and find a ground-effect vehicle waiting for their use. A journey of several hours yields no experience more dramatic than a sight of Barsapine's wasteland – vast flinty shards of the planet's crust reaching up towards a stormy grey sky. The Acolytes get their first sight of the cathedral, and of the sea, as the vehicle rounds a low stony hill.

Months of travel and research have brought you to the Haematite Cathedral. The mad writings of Thrungg and the books within the Librarium of Reflection point to this accursed location as the source of the Dei-Phage's Hand.

The journey from Kephistrion Altis took the better part of the day as the path to the cathedral left the well kept lanes of the Governor's rockcrete dispenserways for dirt roads and finally the heavy grit terrain. As you move further away from Kephistrion Altis, the sky begins to lighten into a perpetual state of twilight, the Barsapine star glowing patiently along the western horizon.

The Haematite Cathedral is a hideous gothic construction. Sitting on the edge of a cliff that gives way to a slate-grey churning sea, the cathedral is as isolated as it is threatening. The tumbledown steeples of a dozen extensions frown at overgrown gardens. Black arrow-slit windows glare like narrowed eyes. A hundred gargoyles seem frozen mid-cackle, mocking the sorry state of this once-grand house. A number of tombs and grave monuments stand choked in vegetation in the shadow of the house, and in the half-light of Barsapine, the cathedral seems to loom down on you like the harbinger of some grim fate.

The cathedral's grounds are overgrown and dark. The grass is knee-high and dense, and the branches of the trees grow together to form dense canopies that shut out the sun. Once, raised planting and elegant topiary created an impressive if rather regimented garden, but now the grounds speak of nothing but neglect.

The characters may attempt to search the grounds but there is nothing of value in the overgrown grass itself. A Hard (-20) Forbidden Lore (Occult) Test tells the Acolytes that the shrubbery and paths once formed an intricate protection symbol. The only visible entrance to the building are the great double doors leading into the main chapel. However, some players may attempt to enter through an outside window which can be easily accomplished, leading them into a different area.

Acolytes who undertake a search of the grounds discover the dried remains of an ornamental water receptacle, and a house built for a long forgotten groundskeeper. On the banks of the water feature is a folly, an artificial cave built to beautify a waterfall that once fell in front of it and which has long since dried up. The remains of the giant archaic pumps which once powered the waterfall can be found in the dense undergrowth beneath the trees.

Inside the cave are about two dozen sets of human bodies that appear to have been rotting here for only a few weeks. Little can be told about them except by their number, although a Difficult (-10) Medicae Test reveals marks on various exposed bones suggesting they died by violence, and

that some of them may have even been dismembered before being hidden in the cave. On the back wall of the cave, the words "Burn in a thousand hells Gusta..." have been carved with a blade, the words trailing off as if the carver lacked the strength to finish them.

This is where Gustavus disposed of some of his victims' corpses once he had finished experimenting with them. The words were carved by a victim who survived a short time before succumbing to the wounds Gustavus had inflicted.

THE UNBURIED DEAD

If the GM wishes, these corpses (and dozens more buried in shallow graves) can awaken should the Acolytes reach an impasse in their investigation. The corpses respond to the dark will of Gustavus, whose Warp Apparition has been awoken by the characters. Body parts stitch themselves together and shamle towards the house, desperately moaning "please" to Gustavus Hekate, begging him to allow them to die.

These sorrowful shades are all that remains of the victims Gustavus buried in the cave by the edge of a water feature and in shallow pits on the grounds. The Unburied Dead swarm one or two Acolytes at once, trying to overwhelm with numbers.

GUSTAVUS' VICTIMS

Decaying and mishapen human forms with sunken faces and rotted-out eye sockets, their mouths yawing as they beg for release. Many appear to be cobbled together from multiple bodies, flesh sewn seams weep blood where they connect. At the end of wrist stumps or the remains of fingers are protruding jagged bones, sharpened by the gnawing of vermin.



Gustavus' Victims

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
25	0	25	30	15	00	25	25	00

Movement: 1/2/4/8

Wounds: 1

Skills: Speak Language (Low Gothic).

Talents: Heightened Senses (Smell), Natural Weapons.

Armour: None.

Traits: From Beyond, Fear 1.

Weapons: Begrimed Claws (1d10+2 R; Primitive).

AREA 2: THE NAVE

A large reception alcove gives way to the Nave proper, once a place of worship and grandeur. The Nave is a vast room, dominated by a grand staircase wrapping around the remnants of a massive cannon and leading to a landing with doorways to the cathedral's second floor structure. Cobwebs and dust are thick on the pews here, which in spite of their disrepair suggest a stifling opulence, as if the clergy of this place were trying to crowd out any disbelief in the worshippers by cramming it with valuable works of art and craftsmanship of several clashing styles. Most of the furnishings are bolted to the floor, gold trimmings hiding where carved wood meets fading carpet.

The Nave serves as a hub for the entire building with thick wooden doorways leading into the rest of the building. The second floor landing has additional pews for the faithful to worship from and a pair of doors leading into other areas of the building.

In spite of the length of time the cathedral appears to have been abandoned, a large clock near the cannon still dolefully ticks away the time, chiming every quarter hour.

The Nave is probably the first area of the cathedral the Acolytes will encounter, unless they look around the grounds before entering. The primary purpose of this room is to look impressive – it is two stories high, with the grand staircase leading to a mezzanine floor. The floor was once deeply plush, but the carpet is now a drab mass of mould and damp stains. The tattered leather-backed pews, on closer inspection, turn out to have been upholstered in xenos hides and the altar where sermons were no doubt delivered from is crafted of a tropical hardwood.

When any of the three villainous warp apparitions – Gustavus, Nikaea, and Koronath – is defeated, their corpse is unearthed by the powers of the Dei-Phage and found seated on one of the pews in the front row, if the players have not already found the body elsewhere. On their lap is a piece of the cog-key. Once disturbed in any way (including picking up the cog-key piece) the body immediately crumbles to dust, rapidly decaying away, leaving only the cog-piece behind.

A successful Easy (+20) Common Lore (War) or Forbidden Lore (Archeotech) Test reveals that the cannon could be made to function still and is currently loaded.

THE COG-KEY

The ancestor's clock is still ticking, even though no one has been around to wind it for a very long time. Examining the clock reveals that it is not mechanical but runs off a power pack similar to that found in a lasgun – the inside of the clock contains no weights or clockwork, but only an empty space through which can be seen the wall behind it. In the wall is a depression about the size of a man's palm, in the shape of a cog. Any Tech-Priest will recognize this impression's outline as belonging to the Adeptus Mechanicus, although its purpose cannot be discerned at this time. The depression is plated with metal and is, in fact, a keyhole, shaped to receive a three-part key in the shape of a skull surrounded by a cog. When this key is inserted into the depression, a hidden door slides open, revealing a small elevator. This elevator leads to the lower floors of the Haematite Cathedral (see Macharian Peace, page 45). A Difficult (-10) Search Test reveals the existence of a door, but there is no means to open it. The ancient technology of the Pax Macharia is proof against any technological means to fool the lock, as well as explosives since it is made of the same super-dense alloys as the rest of the war machine.

The parts of the key fit together to form the key without any difficulty or need for skill Tests. If the Acolytes have acquired the key but have not discovered the keyhole behind the clock, it chimes once and then stops working, and the front visibly swings open a bit.

Once the players have taken enough time in the Nave or ask about exits and the layout of the rest of the cathedral read the following:

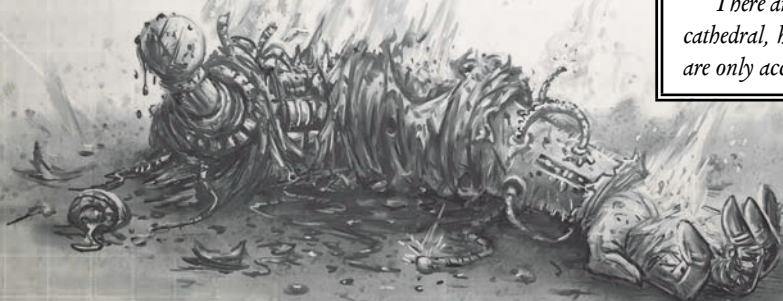
Visitors can rapidly gauge the general layout of the Haematite Cathedral from small bronze plates inlaid into the walls. There are three towers as well as two wings connected to the Nave you are currently in.

Located through a thick wooden door is a wing containing a Skulleria, an indoor garden, a series of personal rooms and a grand audience chamber.

A heavy iron door with rusting hinges has been secured by a pair of thick metal bars and sealed with mortar. The bronze plaque reads "Sanatorium".

One of the towers doors has been caved in with rubble, the spire having collapsed into the sea long ago. The central tower is accessible only from the second floor of the Nave, as it must be passed under to enter the chamber proper. The remaining tower is clearly marked and contains a Librarium and Solarium.

There are two additional towers visible from the outside of the cathedral, however, the layout of the building suggests that they are only accessible from the wings.



AREA 3: THE SKULLERIA

The Skulleria is a dismal and windowless place where only servants would normally have trod. Now water drips from the ceiling, forming stagnant puddles. An enormous oven covers one wall, with a massive steel door like the entrance to a furnace in a factorium, large enough for several men to stand side by side. The other walls are lined with work surfaces, each with score marks where thousands of beasts were butchered and prepared for the house's occupants. Empty cupboards reach the ceiling, doors hanging open. A dusty pantry contains only spiders, whose webs have caught a few flies. The remnants of a long decaying servitor stand leaning against a wall, its knives and utensils having rusted into uselessness. Perhaps once this place bustled with harried servants, but now all is darkness and silence save for the steady drip of water.

Searching the Skulleria reveals a tattered book whose title is illegible. This was once a hand written preparation manual containing hundreds of recipes for local wildlife, all of them for over-complicated and almost unpalatably rich meals that take a minimum of eight hours and several servitors to prepare. The cook, who worked here in Nikaea's time, annotated the book thoroughly. These are mostly notes complaining about the incompetence of others but she occasionally comments on punishments she had dreamt up for her sub-servants, including the sharpening of feathers to be stabbed into flesh. The servitor is long past repair, but its remains have dozens of black feathers sharpened and stuck into what was once flesh.

The Skulleria is the location of the entrance to Gustavus Hekate's hidden laboratory. The entrance is very well concealed, consisting of a hinged plate inside the enormous oven. It can be accessed by crawling into the oven and operating a complex hidden switch under the flagstone. Finding the switch requires a Hard (-20) Search Test, or it can be found automatically using the information from Gustavus' study. The entrance leads to a short, pitch-black staircase of cold, sweating stone ending in a solid bronze door inscribed with the Hekate dynasty crest. The smell of preservative chemicals is heavy in the air. The door is not locked, and leads to the Hidden Laboratory (area 4).

Down the ragged path to the Librarium Nax. There lies not madness but freedom. Shed your corpse god's chains and allow your mind to be filled. Wash away the grime and soot of those who wish to paint your soul black. The body is an illusion of flesh that only the blessed can carve in their own image.

AREA 4: THE HIDDEN LABORATORY

This dismal room is lit only by the feeble light reaching here from the skulleria above. The flagstones and granite walls are sweating with condensation. Cages line the walls, and into the floor is inscribed a complex circular symbol. Laboratory benches with arcane implements and devices form a study area at one end of the room. Though this place looks abandoned, the smell of sweat, blood and decay still tinges the air. The floor near the entrance is metal, hard and impervious, but it gives way to dirt with simple stone laid atop it.

This room is where Gustavus Hekate conducted experiments on his captives or the bodies of those he killed, hoping to summon the Dei-Phage and find out the secrets it promised to tell him. Early victims were simply killed, later ones were horribly mutilated or used to create bizarre stitched hybrids at the Angel's instruction.

The room is dark, so without additional lighting, Tests affected by sight (like Search, Ballistic Skill or Weapon Skill Tests) are at -20. Acolytes will probably have to provide or rig their own light source.

The cages contain a mixture of detritus, mostly dried leather scraps and bones. A Routine (+20) Medicae Test confirms most of them as human, with a few dogs and wild animals thrown in. The laboratory benches have lots of scientific implements and



dissection tools, and bizarre abstract symbols are burned into the wood. An Ordinary (+10) Scholastic Lore (Chymistry) Test suggests the implements are for various forms of alchemy, mostly fringe sciences based around the manipulation of non-existent elements and the transmutation of one material into another. An Ordinary (+10) Scholastic Lore (Occult) Test identifies the symbols as concerning transmutation and eternal life. A Routine (+20) Forbidden Lore (Daemonology) Test identifies a version of the stylised crescent moon symbol among the scorched images, a symbol associated with the Chaos god Tzeentch, lord of change and sorcery.

A Routine (+20) Awareness Test is enough to notice that one of the walls is false, and the stone fronting can be swung away to reveal another wall beneath. On this wall are mounted some of Gustavus's creations. When they are discovered, any Acolyte witnessing them must pass an Ordinary (+10) Willpower Test or gain 1 Insanity point.

These bodies are all withered beyond identification (even genders are unclear), but Gustavus used preservative and taxidermic techniques to keep them from rotting away completely.

Two corpses are stitched together to form a monster with one set of legs but two torsos, heads and sets of arms. Another body has had feet transplanted onto the ends of its arms and had its pelvis and legs altered, so it is now a quadruped that looks like, in life, it ran like a dog. Another body is still human-shaped but has horned scales running along its arms and legs. These growths burrow into the bone and resemble hard seedpods or the chrysalises of pupating insects. The final corpse is a serpentine horror of six limbless torsos sewn together end on end, topped by a head which has a horribly enlarged jaw crammed with distorted fangs.

The most important feature of the hidden lab is a well, hidden beneath one of the large flagstones in the floor. A Routine (+20) Search Test reveals that one flagstone is not mortared in and covers a shaft in the floor. If the Acolytes do not pass this Search Test, a strange event such as a single feather falling onto the flagstone takes place to point them in the right direction.

The well is about twenty metres deep. Almost its entire depth is full of decayed bodies, a mix of foul black sludge and age-browned bones. Gustavus dumped unneeded bodies here so he had a convenient source of body parts for future experiments and rituals. Opening the shaft causes Gustavus' psychic apparition to manifest, as his anger flares at his possessions being disturbed.



"You! What do you think you are doing? This is my place of study! You have no right to disturb my work! Explain yourself!" A powerfully built man in regal clothing barrels his way into the room. He is furious, brandishing his fist at you in rage. He would look almost healthy if not for the massive hole in his abdomen. The wound refusing to bleed or heal.

If the Acolytes simply attack, Gustavus is happy to accommodate their desire for a fight. If they talk, he turns to violence once he has become bored with explaining himself.

Gustavus is accompanied in this combat by five corpses of his victims, animated by his evil will. They crawl out of the well at the rate of one per Round. Hauling the flagstone back over the well requires a Full Action and a Challenging (+0) Strength Test, but prevents any further animated corpses from emerging.

Gustavus taunts the Acolytes with their perceived inferiority and lack of culture and learning. He fights to destruction, whereupon his psychic apparition dissipates. His last words are "And now, you see that even death means nothing to the truly great..." His defeat exorcises him, his body slumps to the ground and quickly erodes into a decaying corpse. In his clenched fist is a part of the cog-key.

GUSTAVUS HEKATE

Gustavus Hekate is a monster, a supremely arrogant, cruel, and brutal man with no sense of empathy for anyone else and concern only for his own needs. Gustavus was easy prey for the influence of the Dei-Phage, which only had to whisper suggestions that he might find power and eternal life by sacrificing victims. Gustavus killed his victims to offer them to the powers of the warp, use them in various rituals, and prove his superiority over his fellow human beings. Gustavus is a bulky, bull-headed man who wears severe formal dress and his expression ranges from glowering to raging.

Gustavus Hekate is a psychopath and killer and is eager to mix it up with his foes in hand-to-hand combat. He uses the reanimated corpses of his victims to isolate one foe and kill that enemy up close, before moving on to whoever remains.

Gustavus Hekate

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
35	25	50	40	30	40	40	25	40

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 22

Skills: Awareness (Per) +10, Common Lore (Imperium) (Int), Deceive (Fel) +10, Forbidden Lore (Daemonology) (Int), +20 Interrogation (WP, Intimidate (S), Scrunity (Per), Literacy (Int), Speak Language (High Gothic, Low Gothic).

Talents: Crushing Blow, Fearless, Frenzy, Iron Jaw, Melee Weapon Training (Primitive), Basic Weapon Training (SP, Pistol Weapon Training (SP).

Traits: Fear 1, From Beyond, Warp Weapon (Bloodstained Fists)

Warp Apparition: Gustavus's substance can be made incorporeal at his whim, allowing him to both fight in combat and allow incoming attacks to pass harmlessly through him. This works like the Dodge skill, except it uses Gustavus' Perception attribute instead of Agility. Gustavus cannot use her perception attribute to dodge weapons with the Sanctified trait.

Weapons: Bloodstained Fists (1d10 +3 I: Primitive).

Armour: Flak Greatcoat (3 Arms, 3 Body, 3 Legs).

REANIMATED VICTIMS

These foul creatures are the pathetic remnants of those victims that Gustavus murdered in the hidden laboratory. They are reanimated by his evil will and have no consciousness of their own. They shamle forward to claw at foes, trying to grapple and overwhelm them, and have no concept of self-preservation. Once Gustavus is dispatched they immediately crumble to dust.

Gustavus's Victims

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
28	10	35	50	15	10	35	25	00

Movement: 1/2/4/8

Wounds: 10

Skills: Awareness (Per).

Talents: Double Team, Enhanced Senses (Smell), Fearless.

Traits: Natural Weapons (Teeth).

Abominable Stench: Such is the unholy stink of these shambling monstrosities that any character within 10 metres of one, except Gustavus or another Reanimated Victim, suffers a -10 penalty to all Toughness Tests.

Weapons: Teeth (1d5 +3 R; Primitive).

Armour: Desiccated Flesh (2 All).



TALKING TO GUSTAVUS

Gustavus fully intends to kill these mortals. He will only give you a chance to talk to him by explaining a little of what he is trying to achieve. If the Acolytes do not understand the situation, Gustavus finds an excuse to explain his purpose.

"This is my life's work. I seek nothing less than eternal life! Thanks to an intercession by a most gracious patron, I am but a few experiments away from the ritual that will endow me with life everlasting. The living are fuel, you see. Fuel for this process. For how can life be created but from life? Few of these people were missed. I have had hardly anyone asking after a missing relative. The only trouble came from the Astropath Hadria, and I saw to it that she shall interfere no more. What think you, then, of my work? It is as much an art as a science."

"I see I deal with lesser minds after all. How terribly ordinary you are. And so your fate shall be most ordinary, too, reduced to mere ingredients for the whims of a greater man!"

AREA 5: TROPHY ROOM

This long gallery contains several freestanding stuffed animals and the heads of larger beasts mounted on the walls. The most spectacular is a bipedal ursine creature with reptilian scales and a long tail posed rearing up with its jaws wide open. Most of the animals are badly moth-eaten. A few frames of mounted insects and beetles also hang on the wall. A pair of brackets holds a long ornate rifle over the window, in front of which is a handsome desk with a surface of tessellated bone fragments. A glass-fronted display cabinet holds the claws, teeth, and stingers of several presumably dangerous animals, all carefully labelled. There is a closed door on the eastern wall that bears a single hand print in smeared and dried blood.

The various hunting enthusiasts of the Hekate dynasty, in particularly Vorkas, built an impressive collection of trophies. Nikaea Hekate displays her favourite kills in this room, when she thought that the cathedral would be the proper place to transplant her dynasty. Her hubris was short lived and in her insanity she avoided this room for fear the trophies would come alive. A Routine (+20) Scholastic Knowledge (Beasts) Test reveals that all the stuffed animals are native to Barsapine, including the large scaled creature, which is actually a docile herbivore from the planet's desert equatorial regions. The stingers and claws were collected from dealers from across the sector.

The hunting rifle is a valuable and sought-after weapon made by an exclusive shop in Descrayne that no longer exists. It belonged to Vorkas Hekate, now a mutant locked up in the Sanatorium Wing.

The desk's surface folds up, revealing a compartment containing a hip flask half-full of well preserved spiced alcohol, a stub revolver with two reloads, and a folded letter sealed with wax. The letter is signed by Vorkas Hekate and is so damaged that it requires an Easy (+30) Literacy test to decipher. It warns the authorities in Kephistrion Altis of Koronath's suspicious behaviour. Vorkas went mad and was consigned to the Sanatorium Wing before he could send the letter.

The door to the Gallery has a bloody hand print. When the players approach it, it locks itself with a loud click.

THE SCAPULA IV

The Scapula IV Handcannon is a valuable and sought-after weapon made by an exclusive shop in Descrayne that no longer exists. It belonged to Vorkas Hekate, now a mutant locked up in the Sanatorium Wing. The letter is signed by Vorkas Hekate and is so damaged that it requires an Easy (+30) Literacy test to decipher. It warns the authorities in Kephistrion Altis of Koronath's suspicious behaviour. Vorkas went mad and was consigned to the Sanatorium Wing before he could send the letter.

Name	Class	Range	ROF	Damage	Pen	Clip	Reload	Special	Wt
Scapula IV	Basic	150m	S/-/-	1d10+3 I	4	6	Full	Accurate, Reliable	7kg

AREA 6: WARRANT ROOM

The carpet and wood panelling of this room have mostly been spared the damp that has claimed much of the rest of the house. On the walls hang dozens of portraits, each one would have been moodily lit by now ruined servo-skulls so the painted faces seem to loom out of their dark backgrounds. The frames are ornately gilded, and the paintings themselves are in a heroic style that has each subject posing regally in their finest clothes. None of the paintings are intact, but remnants of one still shows its subjects.

The centre of this room is dominated by a large circular viewing couch. In front of the one visible portraits sits the corpse of a matronly woman. Her skin long eaten away by the ravages of time. Her large powdered wig and ball gown smeared with dried bloody hand prints. Her dress matches the woman in the portrait.

Atop a small platform at the centre of the viewing seat is a glass covered stone platform. One pane of the glass has been shattered open, but the stand for a large object remains. A small adamantium plate reads "Zanatov Warrant of Trade".

The door has locked itself (in front of the players). It is easy enough to kick the door in or simply pick the lock. If Nikaea Hekate has been defeated in her tower then the door does not lock itself and the Acolytes may simply enter.

The Hekate dynasty had the best of Barsapine's artists (who were all mediocre by sector standards) paint them looking as rich and important as possible. None of the gallery's portraits are intact and have suffered the effects of time and damp conditions and are faded beyond repair.

A Routine (+20) Medicae Test shows that the blood on the corpse's dress and wig is her own, left when she attempted to adjust her clothing while her hand was dampened by her own fluid. Even a cursory inspection of the body reveals part of the cog key gripped in her lifeless fingers. From the look of the corpse's clothing this could be Nikaea Hekate's body.

The pedestal at the centre of the couch once held the Rogue Trader warrant for the Zanatov family, this is the first clue that the Hekate's might not be what they seem.

AREA 7: THE SCHOLARIA

This small, neat room has been relatively unharmed by the years, save for the coating of dust over everything and the stains of age on the window, which render the room dark. An autoscribe's desk plate stands under the window, still strewn with yellowing papers. The autoscribe itself is nowhere to be found, but a cupboard above the desk has ink wells and replacement quills for the servitor. Several framed certificates hang opposite, proclaiming services rendered to the Imperial Governor, and beside the desk is a large leather upholstered dictation throne.

This room served as Gustavus's study, and the Hekate dynasty kept it in much the same condition as when he used it. The papers on the desk include, among various mundane household receipts, designs for a hidden trapdoor concealed among the large flagstones of a floor. Acolytes who have been to the Kitchen, or go there after seeing the designs, recognise the Kitchen as the location of this hidden trapdoor, and are able to find the trapdoor using the designs without a Search Test.

In the top desk drawer are a stub automatic (without any ammunition, although the gun still works), a glass paperweight with the skull of a rat set into it, and a loose handful of human teeth. The certificates on the wall are honorary accolades and memberships from various educational and military establishments in Kephistrion Altis, suggesting the study was used by an individual of very high social standing.

In the cupboard are a number of framed boards with dozens of insects pinned to them. They vary from elegant butterflies to ugly fat beetles and spider-like predators. Behind these are stashed the remains of a servo-skull that was once used to perform medical procedures. It is brown with age, and can be identified with an Easy (+30) Medicae Test as having fluids for preserving corpses in several of its syringes.



AREA 8: THE CHAMBERS

The personal chambers in this wing include several rooms. Once-lavish they are now utterly ruined. For some reason the windows here have been left open, as have the doors into the central corridor, and the resultant wind and rain have all but obliterated the finery within. Mouldering bedclothes lie rumpled beneath mildewed curtains, and most of the drapes have been blown entirely off their rails. In one room is a large chest with its gaudy paint now muted and peeling. In another, a wardrobe stands open, revealing several elegant floor-length dresses, now tattered on their hangers. Birds' nests and colonies of insects have set up on window sills and on the torn canopies of four-poster beds. A chill gust of wind ruffles the remaining drapes.

There is, in fact, one secret chamber closed off. The door to the Barricaded Chamber is not immediately obvious since it has been painted shut and blends in well with the wall. It is not hidden, however, and any Acolyte who makes a search of the chambers notices this single door painted over. Opening this door is discussed in Area 9: Barricaded Chamber.

Little remains of use in the other chambers. The chest contains a few leather straps and pieces of curved metal. An Easy (+30) Medicae Test reveals these to be restraints similar to those in the Medicae Theatre. The clothes in the wardrobe are barely wearable, and are all damp and musty with their embroidery coming off. While the Acolytes have little to discover in the open chambers, this is a good place for an eerie or inciting event to take place.

How long until they betray you too? I have seen a thousand men turn upon a thousand brothers. The trust you give them is undeserved. Are you certain I do not speak to them? You may ignore what I offer, but you've seen others who do not. What makes your companions different? Nothing.

AREA 9: BARRICADED CHAMBER

The air in this room is close and heavy, laden with the smells of age and decay. The drapes are closed, letting only a thin film of light into the room. It is cluttered, with pieces of furniture and cast-aside clothes everywhere. Though the light is poor, the gloom cannot disguise the shape lying on the bed. It is a human skeleton, its bony hands still clutching the dagger thrust through its midriff into the mattress underneath, G.H. inscribed on the small gold pommel.

The door to this room is both painted shut and locked. The lock is rusted making it difficult to pick, needing a Difficult (-10) Security Test. It is easier to bash it open with an Ordinary (+10) Strength Test. If this Strength Test fails, the Acolyte succeeds in barging the door open, but takes a level of Fatigue in the process.



This room was the chamber of the Astropath Hadria. She was murdered by Gustavus and left where she was killed on the bed. Gustavus subsequently had the room sealed up, and no one in the dynasty ever sought to open it and see what was inside. Hadria's body can be identified as belonging to a female of average build, probably in her thirties when she died, with an Easy (+30) Medicae Test. There are no suggestions of any injuries other than the sword through her body, which partially severed her spine. The bedclothes below her are stained black and dried out, the processes of decay long since having been completed. The weapon is an aged power blade whose power source has long since died. A Challenging (+0) Tech-Use Test can repair the device, failing by more than 2 degrees of failure will ruin the blade forever.

The furniture includes a chest of drawers full of mouldy clothes, a desk under the shaded window, a table beside the bed, a couch and a footstool. In the chest of drawers, on top of the clothes that fill one drawer, is a small leather bound book. This book, which is found by any Acolyte checking the chest of drawers or the room, is Hadria's journal.

The entries are spaced far apart and give little detail, for Hadria was not a great diarist, relying on the scribe-servitors as much as she had too. However, it reveals that she was an Astropath on a vessel of the Rogue Trader Barabus Zanatov and that the crew came to this place possessing a great secret. Hadria became suspicious of Gustavus's behaviour, which included sudden, violent mood swings and long periods of unexplained absence. Meanwhile Hadria noticed many strange phenomena about the cathedral, including whispering voices, psychic echoes and sudden changes in temperature. If the Acolytes have been given the pages from Hadria's diary as an inciting event (see page 22), they can see that the pages they found have been torn from this same book. If they have not, then the diary has those pages loosely folded into the book's cover.

These entries are the most relevant, and can be found on page 69 as a handout (Extract from Hadria Hekate's Diary). They describe how Hadria became suspicious that some recent visitors to Gustavus at the cathedral had been reported missing in Kephistrion Altis, and that Hadria had been asking questions in the city about a clergyman who recently came to visit and appeared to have vanished. She fears that Gustavus might become angry with her if he discovers her investigations. Indeed, she was right to fear this, for this was why Gustavus murdered Hadria and sealed her chamber.

AREA 10: THE BALLROOM

Two long feasting tables dominate this high-ceilinged hall. The stained glass windows at the head of the room are largely intact, sending shafts of strangely coloured light slanting through the dusty air. Spiderwebs hang between the candelabras on the tables and the corpses sitting in the chairs, frozen in a moment of a high society elegance.

This Feasting Hall was the location of Nikaea Hekate's grand celebration of her dynasty's proud history. Blissfully insane, she clung to the hopes that her nobility could be proven despite her discovery that the entire Hekate dynasty was a fraud perpetrated by the Rogue Trader Barabus Zanatov. Here is the final scene of the last events to take place within the cathedral before the arrival of the Acolytes. A grand ball was thrown in her family's honour, but none of the Barsapine nobility would travel to the manse to attend. In her madness she dressed her servants in the best finery she could manage so that they might stand in for her absent guests. Poisoning their food, she watched them all die.

When the Acolytes arrive there are a number of bodies sitting at the tables equal to the number of Acolytes in the group. The first Acolyte to investigate discovers that the bodies are all versions of himself in different times of his life. The Acolyte who notices this is subject to a Disturbing (+0) Fear Test.

When another Acolyte inspects the bodies this horror is gone, each body is different. An Easy (+30) Medicine Test reveals that most of the bodies show signs of a lifetime of hard work. Clubbed fingers, numerous healed bone fractures, inferior augmetics and curved spines are not the hallmarks of nobility but rather the drudging class.

A Trivial (+50) Trade (Valet) Test reveals that the clothing was popular twenty years ago, but the location of Barsapine in

the Calixis Sector would suggest that the style of dress arrived here within the decade. The notable exception to the bodies are three actors who are wearing cheap representations of clothing not popular for nearly a millenia. One of them has a copy of *Rodrigo and Thesaladona* tucked in his shirt pocket.

Nikaea hired these players to put on her favourite play for the assembled crowd and invited them to sit in for the nobles who did not come.

If a player inspects the food a Challenging (+0) Trade (Cook) or Scholastic Lore (Chymistry) Test reveals that the food was poisoned with an incredibly fast acting drug popular with nobility called Redux. A single dose can be found in a vial near a stack of wine glasses on one of the tables.

Some characters may wish to loot the fine dinner ware here and depending on the campaign the GM may wish to allow such actions. The easiest to transport (and most valuable) things here amount to roughly a thousand thrones worth of jewellery and gilded cutlery. It is unlikely (given the nature of the adventure's ending) that they will be able to come back for the hundreds of plates and other expensive finery that has withstood the Test of time.

A small doorway leads to the tower staircase. When the Acolytes approach it the door locks itself. Picking the door requires a Challenging Security (+0) Test that takes a full minute. If the character achieves 2 or more degrees of success they do so in under thirty seconds. For every degree of failure, the lock takes another minute to pick. Bashing open the thick wooden door requires a Hard (+10) Strength Test, failure deals 1d10 damage to the leg or arm (depending on the strike) that is not modified by armour, but the door still opens.

REDUX

This powerful psychoactive drug causes its victims to repeat the last action they took until it wears off. The imbiber usually does not even notice that anything has gone wrong. Common amongst nobility as a means to embarrass their lessers, Redux can be deadly if given in large doses.

Redux is distilled from the plant known as the Barsapine. The plant grows near locations rich in underground water and is only viable above ground in high, damp high black reed about as big around a man's fingers. Humans abound that are at least capable of surviving on the land based upon these plants, but as of yet no expedition has successfully located such a cream. The drug is a byproduct of the plant as a waste product. Spaced metres apart, the canisters are used until it is too late. Large numbers of the plant can cause travelers to become lost as they inhale the toxin without noticing it. The drug can be drunk with water or wine until they do not know where they are.

The smell and taste of Redux is extremely potent. It tastes sweet, however, and in circles where it is used frequently bitter or sour. If the drug is ingested via water, once ingested via food it is likely that the target will continue laughing and eating, repeating the last one until death unless the dose is closely monitored.

When a character first imbibes Redux he must make a Challenging (+0) Toughness Test or suffer 1d10 Toughness damage and immediately repeat the last action he took, which often involves consuming whatever had the drug in it. Recognising the flavour of the poison requires a Challenging (+0) Trade (Cook) or Scholastic Lore (Chymistry) Test and does not require the character to taste enough to be affected.

If used in combat, this drug causes the victim to repeat their last action, just as if they had been subject to the Deja Vu psychic ability. Redux can be coated on a weapon or ingested.

AREA 11: NIKAEA'S TOWER

Mirrors line every inch of this grand stair case that loops back and fourth in a helix pattern up the tower's height. Landings every few floors lead to massive display rooms. Empty of all their grandeur, they were yet to be filled with specimens and trophies. Small circular couches in the centre of each hint that viewers were to spend hours in the echoing chamber.

At the peak of the ascent there is a single reinforced wooden door. Three iron bands wrap around the centre band, set with a large lock. A heavy click at first sounds like the door locking itself, but as the door cracks open the sliver of light hints that the noise was the door becoming unsecured.

Within the room is a massive stone table, covered in a fine silken cloth. Lit by large silver candelabras, the meal set out is prepared for the first course. Roasted fowl appears to be set out in anticipation of the main course and the corpses of several servitors stand rigid, holding silver trays laden with additional courses.

Each high backed chair is plush and comfortable, a single manila card set on each plate has the birth name of each attendee assigned a place setting.

When the Acolytes investigate they discover that the place setting names cards are their own. A place at the table is reserved for each of them except for one at the head of the table. The other end of the table should have the name of any character with the Noble background or, failing that, the character who is presented the most elegantly (typically determined by highest fellowship but other factors may play into it as the GM determines appropriate).

The food is, of course, drugged with Redux, but a much smaller dose was available than that used down stairs in the Ballroom. The poison is in the desert course, but all of the food was created with foul warp energy. A Challenging (+0) Psyniscience Test will tell the character that eating this food is dangerous, even if it is not drugged. Consuming a course of the meal makes the character feel refreshed (curing 1 level of Fatigue and healing 1d5 wounds) but the character also gains 1 Corruption point.

The food is made supernaturally enticing and any character suffering from at least one level of Fatigue or who has any wounds must pass a Hard (-20) Willpower Test to not sit down and dine. There are a total of 5 courses (the last is the drugged desert course) and as each course is finished, any character who is still injured must pass another Hard (-20) Willpower Test, if at least one Acolyte fails this Test then the decayed servitors lurch forward and set another course out for the Acolytes to feast upon.

If the characters all refuse to eat, the Acolytes attack her servitors or they attempt to leave the room before dining, then Nikaea rushes up the tower and into the room, attacking the characters in a fit of blind fury, focussing her attacks first on any character with the Noble background. If the Acolytes dine she waits until the fifth course and strikes just as the poison takes its effect.

Acolytes may attempt to save some of the food to consume later for healing. Unfortunately for them, the food loses any of its special properties once Nikaea has been defeated and simply rots away to dust.

When Nikaea is defeated, she howls in anger but quickly erodes away into dust along with the contents of the room, leaving only a barren stone floor and the servitors. If the Acolytes have not found her body in the Warrant Room then her corpse now appears in one of the front pews in the Nave.



NIKAEA HEKATE

Nikaea Hekate is the dragonish matriarch who desperately seeks to prove the nobility of the Hekate dynasty. Nikaea shares many of Gustavus' qualities – arrogance, cruelty, and a willingness to kill. Unlike Gustavus, however, she does not actively dabble in the dark arts. The Dei-Phage chose to make her ignorant of her own corruption. Instead, Nikaea was always deeply concerned with keeping up appearances, maintaining stultifying etiquette when dealing with guests and dressing in all the most impractical of fashions. She deals with others in as decorous and proper a way as can be imagined, unless she is moved to anger or feels disrespected, in which case she is moved to a violent, murderous rage from which no one can calm her. Nikaea is a large and matronly woman, her ample frame made to look even larger by her manner of dress. She is deeply concerned with her appearance and favours voluminous many-layered ballgowns and the kind of towering wig that is at once ridiculous and intimidating.

Nikaea's warp apparition dislikes the crudeness of hand to hand fighting. She uses her ranged powers as much as possible, hurling nearby objects and demanding to be given the respect she deserves. She constantly derides her enemies for not showing the respect she is sure she is owed, cursing their ugliness and crudeness to her last breath.

I shan't be questioned by you. You are beneath me, as the dirt is beneath the stars. You may but look upon my kind and dream of coming closer, you may imagine what it must be to attain such heights, always outside your grasp.

NIKAEA'S SERVITORS

Nikaea employs four servitors to tend to her banquets. In life these creatures were soulless automatons, blindly following orders but never having the opportunity to fulfil Nikaea's greatest dreams of noble life. Their flesh is long dead and they are little more than animated objects, performing their tasks not at the whim of their instructions but rather the foul sorcery Nikaea can conjure from the warp. Their metal bodies have powerful blunt augmetic limbs that can, if necessary, be used as clumsy clubs.

The Servitors have no natural weapons and shamble forward to block the Acolyte's attacks. They clumsily strike any Acolyte who attacks Nikaea, attempting to place themselves between the attacker and their master.

When Nikaea is defeated, these servitors cease to function entirely. Their bodies go rigid and simply stand motionless.

Nikaea Hekate



WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
25	29	30	37	28	42	38	45	38

Movement: 2/4/6/12

Wounds: 15

Skills: Awareness (Per), Common Lore (Imperium) (Int), Deceive (Fel) +20, Forbidden Lore (Psykers) +10, Invocation (WP) +20, Literacy (Int), Scholastic Lore (Heraldry, Occult) (Int), Speak Language (Low Gothic, High Gothic).

Talents: Melee Weapon Training (Primitive), Fearless, Resistance (Psychic Powers), Psy Rating 3, Strong Minded

Traits: From Beyond.

Warp Apparition: Nikaea's substance can be made incorporeal at her whim, allowing her to both fight in combat and allow incoming attacks to pass harmlessly through her. This works like the Dodge skill, except it uses Nikaea's Perception attribute instead of Agility. Nikaea cannot use her perception attribute to dodge weapons with the Sanctified trait.

Psychic Powers (Psy Rating 3): Compel, Dominate, Terrify, Psychic Shriek.

Weapons: Sceptre (1d10+3 I).

Nikaea's Servitors



WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
19	—	22	44	20	07	13	17	05

Movement: 2/4/—/—

Wounds: 15

Skills: None.

Traits: Machine 6.

Armour: 6 All.

Lifeless Husks: The Servitors do not have a reaction and may only take Standard Attack and Move actions. They cannot charge. They are immune to any psychic power that affects the mind or sense of the target, but not those that would damage the body.

Weapons: Hands (1d5+2 I, Primitive).

AREA 12: THE LIBRARIUM

High bookcases line the walls of this room, winding up a massive staircase reaching to the ceiling. In an alcove formed by a large bay window is a huge reading desk with high-backed chairs. Various timepieces tick and chime from placement along the height of the tower, and the smells of decaying paper and leather are very strong. The carpet, once a deep burgundy, has been ruined with damp, as have many of the books. In similarly poor condition is the fresco on the ceiling. It once depicted scenes from the lives of Imperial saints, but large parts have been obliterated as the damp plaster beneath has fallen away.

The Librarium of the Haematite Cathedral holds thousands of volumes. Many are now ruined but the survivors are mostly books on Imperial history, dogmatic texts of the Imperial Creed and various esoteric philosophical works.

The Librarium is a useful resource. While an Acolyte has free access to its various books, he gets +10 to Scholastic Lore Tests. Koronath Hekate's warp apparition is willing to follow an Acolyte into the Librarium during the course of the debate, so the Librarium can be of considerable advantage to an Acolyte debating with Koronath when the time comes.

One of the bookcases contains a hidden compartment that contains some of Koronath's books. A Hard (-20) Search Test reveals its location, but the Test is automatically successful if the Acolytes have found Koronath's notes in the Medicae Theatre. A section of one shelf swings forward revealing three heavy books chained to their own concealed shelf. There is one book with a dark green binding emblazoned with the image of a planet with two interlocking rings, another with a cover of cracked brown leather, and a third with a cover of hinged bronze. These books are saturated with psychic corruption and are dangerous in their own right, as is revealed by a Routine (+20) Psyniscience Test. A further Difficult (-10) Psyniscience Test reveals that the green and the leather-bound books are particularly nasty, and handling them may be very unhealthy.



An Acolyte who picks up the green book is assailed by apocalyptic visions of ruination, with whole planets boiling away in vast conflagrations bleeding forth from the warp. The Acolyte must make a Difficult (-10) Willpower Test or suffer 1d5 Insanity Points as the visions find purchase in his unprotected mind. The book then crumbles into foul greenish sludge in his hands. He must pass a Challenging (+0) Toughness Test or the foulness forces its way through the skin of his hands and arms. The horrendous sensation of something unclean and aware courses chillingly through his veins and causes the Acolyte gains 1d5 Corruption Points.

An Acolyte who picks up the leather-bound book must pass a Challenging (+10) Willpower Test as unreasoning anger bubbles up within him, and his blood seems to boil with hatred. If he fails this Test, he is taken over by the maligned intelligence of the book and must immediately attack his nearest fellow Acolyte. Such is his rage that all Ballistic Skill and Weapon Skill Tests made in this state are at -10, and he must hold the book in one hand. Each turn he is entitled to another Challenging (+0) Willpower Test. This Test is Difficult (-10) if the character's fellow Acolytes have taken offensive action against him such as attacking or trying to restrain him. If he passes this Test, he snaps out of his rage and is able to act normally, although he gains 1 Insanity Point and may be given more at the GM's discretion if he has badly wounded or killed an ally. He also snaps out of it in the same way if the book is wrested from his grip, although he resists any attempt to take it from him. The book continues to inflict its madness on anyone who touches it, and it is best destroyed, preferably by fire. Keeping the book (perhaps by wrapping it up or otherwise sealing it away from human touch) is a radical act and would be looked upon dimly by most Inquisitors. Should the characters decide to keep the book, it is up to the GM on how to proceed.

The bronze-covered book is not as dangerous, although it is certainly a heretical artefact. It is a work penned by Koronath Hekate, mostly consisting of intricate diagrams of the night sky over Barsapine and the way patterns in the sky can be made to fit depictions of mythical beasts and various occult symbols. It also reveals that Koronath believes a conjunction of the Barsapine system in which a simultaneous eclipse of the seventh and ninth planets would create a great pattern he believes links all the constellations together, and that this pattern, once interpreted, will reveal a great truth. Such an alignment is extremely rare and occurs once every twenty thousand years or so. The next is not due for about five thousand years. The Acolytes' players can read a section of this book in the form of the handout on page 70.

A final work of note in the Librarium is entitled *The Collected Plays of Soloman Grish*. One particular play, Rogerigo and Thulsadonna, is heavily thumbed and annotated. The play is a high melodrama of forbidden love and doomed rivalries in which the entire cast list dies during the histrionic final act. This is Nikaea Hekate's favorite play, and its inclusion here may lead to an inciting event that leads the Acolytes to her.

AREA 13: THE SOLARIUM

This large conservatory is entered through a trap door in the ceiling of the librarium. It was once home to dozens of plants that climbed the trellises leading up to the steepled glass ceiling, or bloomed in neat rows in raised flowerbeds. Now the plants are all dead, just a few grey-brown stalks remaining in the dried out soil. The panes of the ceiling covered in grime and clay have darkened the room and little light breaks in. The turf that once grew underfoot is similarly dead, leaving little more than a dirt floor. A rickety spiral staircase leads to a balcony overhead, where a few dead vines still dangle. A wrought iron bench once presumably afforded a grand view of the cathedral's grounds, but the foliage outside is too overgrown to see more than a few metres.

The Solarium is home to a regular manifestation of Gustavus Hekate's psychic apparition. Occasionally, Gustavus's warp echo appears leading a spectral man in the robes of the Ecclesiarchy around the Solarium, proudly pointing out the plants that once grew there. If the characters spend any significant time in the room and have not banished Gustavus then he appears, walking through the doorway.

Two men, walking side by side, enter into the Solarium, through the floor; they speak quietly to each other. Their voices echo as if from a great distance. An unmistakable feeling of sorrow and suffering stifles the air. They appear murky, as if being viewed through melting glass.

"See, this speckled brainvine can no longer be found in the wild," says the powerfully built man. "Mine is the sole exemplar in the whole sector. And these wormblossoms have won prizes in Skaltine, don't you know?"

As the two men walk and talk, the speaker takes a shimmering blade from behind his back, and raises it as if to stab the unsuspecting clergyman. Before the blow can fall, the men turn to dust and blow away.

The haunting here represents the killing of one of Gustavus's many victims, who was indeed stabbed to death in the Solarium. The psychic echo here cannot be interacted with, and simply appears performing the same actions over and over again as is necessary for the GM to scare the Acolytes. When Gustavus is exorcised, the haunting in the Solarium ceases.

The balcony overhead is in extremely poor repair and is on the point of collapse. An Acolyte who ascends the spiral staircase, which sways alarmingly under his weight, must pass a Challenging (+0) Agility Test or fall when staircase shears away from its mountings. The fall is about 6 metres and does 1d10+5 Impact Damage. On the balcony are several dangerous plants in large pots. Most of them are long dead, but one is lush and flowering. It has curled spiny fronds and large red glistening flowers, and smells pleasant but overpowering. This plant is a Lacustan faceripper bloom, and can be identified with a Challenging (+0) Scholastic Lore (Beasts) Test along with its dangerous status as a carnivorous plant that is unusually fond of the flesh of humans. Characters from certain Feral worlds may be allowed to make this Test at the GM's discretion, intuitively knowing that this plant might be dangerous.

The Faceripper Bloom attacks anyone who comes close, although Acolytes should get the chance to identify it before they venture into its attack range. The Acolyte who handles the plant or gets within a hand's breadth of its blooms is snared by its fronds, and bare skin will be injected by thousands of tiny hair-like needles. The Acolyte must pass a Routine (+20) Toughness Test or suffer a debilitating condition caused by the Faceripper's toxins, which inflicts 1d3 levels of Fatigue. This Fatigue can be alleviated by an Ordinary (+10) Medicae or Scholastic Lore (Chymistry) Test, with each Degree of Success removing one level of Fatigue. Otherwise, the Fatigue heals at the standard rate.

In the Faceripper Bloom's plant pot, buried in the soil, is a badly pitted human skull.



AREA 14: SANATORIUM

The Sanatorium wing door is heavily reinforced, but time and decay have eroded the hinges that keep it in place. The players can break down the door with an Easy (+20) Strength Test or by simply working at pulling it from the iron bars that lock it in place, which takes about an hour.

Beyond the reinforced door lies a corridor lined with cells. This was likely a dark, filthy, misbegotten place even before the decay affecting the rest of the cathedral took hold. Pools of foul water lie fed by constant dripping from the ceiling, and streaks of rust run down the steel doors. A thin, cold breeze whispers through the corridor and one of the cell doors bangs against its frame.

"Koronath?" comes a reedy voice, barely more than a whisper. "Koronath? Is that you? Have you come for us?"

One of the cell doors bangs open and a decaying figure crawls out. It is a woman, her eyes hollow pits and her fingers long silvery claws. Hatred washes across her long-dead face as the entity sees you.

"You are not Hekate!" she hisses. Her mouth distends to hideous dimensions and she screams. In response, more figures emerge from their cells, angry mutations intent on stripping the souls from the intruders.

This wing was built by Koronath Hekate to contain the servants and staff driven mad by a combination of his writings and the influence of the Dei-Phage. The dynasty members who died here include Vorkas Hekate, whose prized possession, his hunting rifle, lies in the Trophy Room and may be in the possession of one of the Acolytes. The wing leads to the Medicae Theatre, but to get there the Acolytes have to face the angry mutants.

Once the mutants are vanquished, the Acolytes are free to search this place. There are a total of eight cells. The first six cells are open, while the last two are barricaded with sharpened support rods. They require a Routine (+20) Security Test to unlock them without collapsing. These are the cells inhabited by Vorkas Hekate and are covered in words scratched into the walls. The only legible passage reads:

"Koronath has promised I can go free when the heavens are aligned. Then he says all knowledge will be his and time and space will run like wax. He says the secret is in the seventh planet! He says I can hunt again when I am free... I have counted the days for so long that numbers mean nothing..."

The body of Vorkas can be found among those mutants that attack the Acolytes. The index finger of his right hand, which was used to scratch the words on the wall, is worn down almost to the first knuckle.



On the first six cell walls is the crude image of a winged, hooded figure gouged into the plaster by hand. In one of these cells (the fourth one) sits a massive barrel full of several eyeballs suspended in preservative fluid. This vat is fed by a runoff pipe of brackish water. The corpses of half eaten vermin litter the floor around the barrel. Any Acolyte who finds this must succeed on a Challenging (+0) Willpower Test or gain 1 Insanity Point as he realises this is where the mutants must have sustained themselves.

A Very Easy (+40) Search Test also finds a cell with a cache hidden by one of the inmates. It contains a knife, two injectors with doses of frenzon, one injector with a dose of spook, one injector with a dose of stimm, and a tome full of crude drawings. The sketches are mostly of angels with skeletal or decaying faces, and several pages are covered in dense patterns of feathers. One picture is of a planet surrounded by two interlocking rings, underneath which is written a word that requires a Hard (-20) Literacy Test to decipher. It reads simply "beware" but was written by someone so frightened that they could not keep their hand from shaking violently.

At the rear of the Sanatorium is an iron bound door leading into the Medicae Theatre. It is not locked and rests slightly askew in its frame. When an Acolyte moves to inspect the door it is a perfect time for an inciting event.

THE SANATORIUM MUTANTS

The servants of Koronath Hekate have been trapped in the Sanatorium wing and are hopelessly and violently insane. They appear as rotting decaying figures, glistening muscles showing through ragged pale skin, and they move in an inhuman crawl as they scabble towards living intruders. They screech and howl, uttering random snippets of speech drawn from their shattered memories.

The Sanatorium Mutants want to tear the living limb from limb to express a wordless hatred instilled in them by the evil of the cathedral. They rush their enemies and try to tear them apart, without any thought for tactics or cunning. They can climb the walls and ceiling to get past one another and close with their prey.

The mutants attack in a frenzy, with no thought for preserving their own existence. They are both male and female, of unidentifiable age, numbering two for each Acolyte. The Mutants charge the Acolytes as quickly as possible, pairing off on their targets. Vorkas Hekate concentrates on any Acolyte who possesses his prized rifle, cursing them as thieves. Vorkus will attempt to wrestle the rifle from the character and if successful will use it as a club, which will destroy the weapon on the first successful hit, dealing 1d10+5 Impact damage.

AREA 15: MEDICAE THEATRE

This room, which was tiled in white before mould and decay yellowed them, reeks of untold crimes. Black stains speckle the floor and walls. A surgical table sits in the middle of the room with the remains of a decrepit skeleton in wrist, ankle, and neck restraints. A complicated device on one end of the table not only holds the head of the subject in place, but also mounts several forceps and drill bits with which to perform operations on the skull. An autosurgeon unit, a device of spindly metal limbs, is folded up on the ceiling. A medical cabinet and a set of large metal sinks complete the furnishings in this dismal room.

Koronath Hekate performed procedures on those driven mad by the Dei-Phage in this Medicae Theatre. The autosurgeon unit is very old and has malfunctioned, so the Acolytes cannot make use of it. In the medical cabinet are numerous medical implements, including a miniature handheld circular saw attached to a power pack which still works (1d10 R, Pen 4, Unwieldy), as well as several dozen scalpels and needles, most of which are rusted and blunt.

Several loose pieces of paper, notes from Koronath's studies, are stuffed into the back of the cabinet. They describe various observations about the brains of his subjects, which generally remark on his disappointment that their madness seems to be exacerbated rather than cured by surgery, and conclude with the decision to concentrate more on observing the heavens and leave them to tough it out in their cells. It also describes how he has built a secret compartment in the Librarium to hide the books that he understands could be viewed as heretical, along with the details of the locking mechanism. This information can be used by the Acolytes to locate the hidden bookshelf.

The autosurgeon unit is in a state of terrible disrepair. A Challenging (+0) Tech-Use Test can repair it well enough to function for one person plus an additional person for each degree of success. The autosurgeon is able to make Medicae Tests to treat Lightly and Heavily wounded Acolytes (but not critically wounded) with an effective Intelligence of 25. Alternatively a character trained in Medicae may use the autosurgeon in place of a medicae kit to gain a +30 on any Medicae Tests made here.

The Sanatorium Mutants



WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
33	07	22	28	44	11	35	19	09

Movement: 4/8/12/24

Wounds: 8

Skills: Awareness.

Talents: Swift Attack, Lightning Reflexes.

Traits: Dark Sight, Natural Weapons (Talons), Unnatural Senses (15m), Fear 1 (as a group).

Wall Crawl: The Sanatorium Mutants can move along walls and ceilings with no penalty or need to make Climb Tests.

Weapons: Spectral Talons (1d10+2 R).

The mind cannot be understood without first knowing its failures. Do you know the limits of yourself until you fail? Without knowing what we cannot do, we cannot hope to ever expand beyond our own minds and grasp the stars in our fist.

AREA 16: PLANETARIUM

The stairwell to this tower is crammed with scraps of metal, odd gears, chains and large wrist-sized wire bundles. Several times while ascending, piles of toppled debris must be shuffled about.

At the peak, a plain red door opens to reveal a turret-topped, circular room dominated by a model of the Barsapine system. A huge, golden orb represents Barsapine's sun, with the eleven planets of the system orbiting on gilded hoops. Each planet in the device is represented by a single human skull encased in an orb of tinted glass. The model is powered by a complex set of oversized clockwork gears set into the floor. On the walls are elaborate murals of the night sky, the stars connected to form images of various constellations in the shape of mythical beasts and heroes of Imperial history. A section of the domed roof looks like it slides aside to allow a large and ornate telescope to gaze upon the night sky. A desk and bookcase form a place to work near the telescope. Though dust is heavy in the air, this room is largely intact and has not suffered as greatly from age as much of the rest of the cathedral.

The model of the Barsapine system is key to summoning the warp apparition of Koronath Hekate. It is here that Koronath spent endless hours working, observing the night sky and noting down what he glimpsed there. Koronath's spirit is linked to the planetarium, and it is here that the Acolytes can summon and defeat him.

The model of the Barsapine system holds two secrets. The first is that the base of the device contains a hidden cache



of Koronath's belongings. This cache can be found with a Challenging (+0) Search Test. It contains a book entitled *Prodigious Heavenly Occurrences of the Barsapine System*, a slim volume penned by Koronath at the height of his madness. Also in the cache is Koronath's personal weapon, an inferno pistol with the Accurate and Recharge qualities and several vials of yellowish fluid. A Difficult (-10) Medicae Test identifies this as cranial fluid. Koronath drew the fluid from the skulls of his dynasty members while 'treating' them in the Sanatorium wing.

KORONATH'S OPUS

Prodigious Heavenly Occurrences of the Barsapine System is a baffling collection of equations and astronomical observations that make an appalling, obscure sort of sense to a psychically-attuned mind. It can be used to add +3 to a Power Roll used to activate a psychic power. However, each time the book is used, one of its chapters is wiped clean, the pages turned blank. The book has a total of five chapters. The book itself is worth barely anything, for in the hands of any potential buyer it appears to be nothing more than several dozen pages of gibberish.

THE DEVICE

The second secret in the planetarium is that when the model is aligned to represent a simultaneous eclipse of the seventh and ninth planets, Koronath Hekate's warp apparition is summoned. Koronath appears seated at his desk, poring over spectral star charts in his hands. He can be recognised from his portrait in the gallery, and wears a tattered formal suit and elaborate multi-lensed spectacles.

A voice begins to echo from the small desk near the telescope. A handsome, well-dressed man sits studying star charts. His skin is covered in hand-drawn mathematical equations.

"Yes, yes," he murmurs. "It is as I thought. The stars themselves speak unto us! There... there the secrets are to be found! All the truths of the galaxy can be found in the stars!"

The section of the roof above slides open and a yellowish light bleeds into the room, as if all the stars were turning their gaze on the Planetarium. Koronath turns to see the Acolytes who have summoned him.

"No!" he cries. "The eclipse of the seventh and ninth worlds is not due for another five thousand years! How dare you disturb the equilibrium of this place! How dare you interrupt my studies? Do you have any idea of what I am about to accomplish here? Do you? Well, do you?"

If the Acolytes do not attempt to placate Koronath or engage him in debate, Koronath starts using his corrupted Psy Gaze, and he must be defeated if the Acolytes are to exorcise him.

If the Acolytes give him a reasonable answer, however, Koronath can be spoken with and even convinced to abandon the Haematite Cathedral. Koronath is eager to speak with someone who is as intelligent as he believes himself to be, and expresses gratitude that at last he has encountered a mind far sharper than those of his dynasty, who he views as dull and bovine.

A total of three Degrees of Success in debating with Koronath causes him to see that he has no more to learn among the walls of the cathedral. Acolytes can use Challenging (+0) Logic, Scholastic Lore (Astromancy or Numerology), Forbidden Lore (Warp), or Psyniscience Tests to accrue these Degrees of Success. Alternatively the Acolytes can try to dazzle Koronath with debating skill rather than knowledge, using a Difficult (+10) Charm, Literacy, or a Speak Language (High Gothic) Test to gain their Degrees of Success. Attempts to Intimidate Koronath will only drive him to anger, and Acolytes should be made aware of this before they attempt such a Test.

This scene should heavily involve roleplaying, Tests are made after the players describe their characters actions or interact with Koronath. It is also possible to simply roleplay the scene and not require players to make Tests to challenge Koronath but instead simply talk to him.

Once convinced, Koronath says:

"Of course! I had not considered before the paucity of knowledge I can gain here. There is nothing in this place for me but madness and dust. I shall ascend from here, I shall leave this place, and seek what I can beyond the veil! Farewell, my friends. Perhaps we shall meet again, in that future where all knowledge has melted to one truth!"

Koronath's body then rots away, along with the strange starlight, and the roof grinds closed.

If the Acolytes fail any of the Tests by more than three Degrees of Failure, Koronath scorns their inability to string two thoughts together. Deeming them unworthy of his presence, he attacks as above. When Koronath is exorcised by either of the two methods, his form erodes to dust and simply blows away on a soft breeze. He leaves a piece of the cog-key on the table.

KORONATH HEKATE

Koronath was perhaps born with a fractured, vulnerable mind. Certainly it took little effort for the Dei-Phage to turn his natural intelligence and curiosity into a destructive, unquenchable thirst for profane knowledge. Pale, slender and unassuming, Koronath responded to the madness caused by the Dei-Phage by imprisoning and experimenting on his relatives and, after his attempts to find a cure failed, to shut himself in his Planetarium and seek answers among the stars. Koronath is eager to debate high-minded matters such as astrology and philosophy, and sees no conflict between the tragic fates of his dynasty and the lofty aims of discovering the secrets of the universe. Koronath does not appear dangerous at first, looking very much like the bespectacled intellectual he is.

When forced into combat, he is infused with an ecstatic passion as the sum total of his vast, obscene knowledge flows through him. He keeps moving, hurling bolts of baleful psy gaze and never staying in one place or focusing on one enemy for too long. To fight Koronath is to fight a madman who does not obey the rules of tactics or common sense, gripped as he is in the equivalent of a religious ecstasy.



Koronath Hekate

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
28	40	25	28	34	55	43	30	29

Movement: 6/12/18/36

Wounds: 20

Skills: Awareness (Per), Common Knowledge (Imperium) (Int), Forbidden Lore (The Warp) +20, Literacy (Int), Logic (Int) +10, Scholastic Lore (Archaic, Astromancy, Numerology, Occult).

Talents: Melee Weapon Training (Primitive), Deadeye Shot, Fearless, Sharpshooter.

Traits: From Beyond.

Weapons: Psy Gaze (20m, S/-/-, 1d10+2 E, Pen 5, Clip —, Rld —). The Psy Gaze has no effect and deals no damage unless Koronath hits his target in the head. It does not require eye contact, instead lashing out at the target's mind. A target hit by the Psy Gaze must pass a Challenging (+0) Willpower Test or gain 1 Corruption Point from Koronath's visions of the warp. Koronath will therefore aim for the head of his targets.



THE BELLY OF THE BEAST

This chapter ends when the Acolytes have successfully re-assembled the cog-key to enter into the lower levels of the Haematite Cathedral, there to discover the secrets of what transpired with Inquisitor DeVayne and the Maledictor's Hand.

TROUBLESHOOTING

The Acolytes need to have unraveled several mysteries. If they have missed key clues or simply not connected the dots by the end of this chapter, each mystery will need to be revealed or additional clues made available.

THE HEKATE "DYNASTY"

The Acolytes should have discovered that the Hekate dynasty was really the crew of a Rogue Trader vessel driven mad by the Dei-Phage. If they did not discover Hadria's body or notes then they should be guided to the barricaded room by a scream that clearly comes from the room. The person screams (it sounds natural, occasional yells of "No, Gustavus don't!" or "I won't tell") as the Acolytes hear her murdered over and over again until they break into the room. The pages from her journal are clutched in her lifeless hand.

THE DEI-PHAGE

If the Acolytes have not figured out that the Dei-Phage corrupts the Haematite Cathedral they need to be led to a clear clue. As the Acolytes pass a window or reflective surface they see a hunched hooded figure with large feathered wings. Its eyes glow from beneath the hood and its beaked face shrieks while clutching the stump of its arm. The Acolyte must pass an Easy (+30) Willpower Test or gain 1 Insanity point.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

It is likely that the exploration of the Haematite Cathedral will take more than one game session, therefore GMs may wish to award experience every game session rather than waiting for the exploration to finish.

Experience earned: Each player should earn at least 500 xp by the conclusion of this chapter. If you are using the detail-based experience method, use the following.

Experience Earned:

- Base: 200 xp
- Defeated Nikaea Hekate: 75 xp
- Defeated Gustavus Hekate: 75 xp
- Defeated Koronath Hekate: 75 xp
- Discovered that the Hekate Dynasty was false and actually a Rogue Trader and his crew: 75 xp





THE MACHARIAN PEACE

THE PAX MACHARIA

•

OUT OF POWER

•

THE TITAN STRIDES

•

AGAINST ALL ODDS

CHAPTER III: THE MACHARIAN PEACE

"Rust, steel, and fail ye engines! Fall silent, O guns, and give up your wisdom, my cogitators, to the talons of time! Yet the machine-spirit shall never weaken."

—The Princes of the Pax Macharia

The Haematite Cathedral's secret is that it is actually the upper torso of an Imperial Emperor-Class Titan, a bipedal war machine. Titans have an almost mythical image in Imperial culture, ranking alongside the mighty Space Marines and the most powerful naval battleships as symbols of the Emperor's might. The Titan in question, the Pax Macharia, is an ancient machine that was buried here when the Princes sacrificed his machine to trap the Dei-Phage.

The Pax Macharia is in as bad repair as the cathedral. The Titan lacks many of its weapons, and the Genatorium and maintenance levels, which the Acolytes can access through the cathedral's Nave, are dark and rusted places. They are haunted by the minions of the Dei-Phage, and these foul creatures are determined to prevent anyone from uncovering the secrets held by the Titan. Sinister events can still occur in these levels, as in the cathedral above, and the revised Psychic Phenomena chart still applies. The Acolytes also have the chance to follow the path of Griegor DeVayne, the Inquisitor who made the pict-recording to which the Pax Macharia is now the only witness.

In this chapter the Acolytes delve into the cathedral's lower levels, discovering the Titan itself. The Pax Macharia is aware of the Acolytes the moment they enter into the Spinal Shaft. It watches them silently through its pict-orbs stationed throughout the halls and chambers. A Challenging (+0) Tech-Use Test is needed to tell where the pict-orbs are looking, but once the Acolytes are aware of them it becomes apparent that they are being watched.

The Pax Macharia's machine spirit is a combination of the cogitators on board as well as the mind of the Princes in command of the machine when it imprisoned the Dei-Phage. It works hard to keep the daemon prince trapped within its walls, but will change this once it learns of the Black Sepulchre along with the Acolytes.

The Pax Macharia no longer speaks, but it can puppet the corpse of the Princes still seated in the command chair. It will roll its head to look at components (directing the characters) or point if it can. More likely, however, it communicates by editing pict-recordings of the Prince. The Pax Macharia is not able to communicate through the pict-

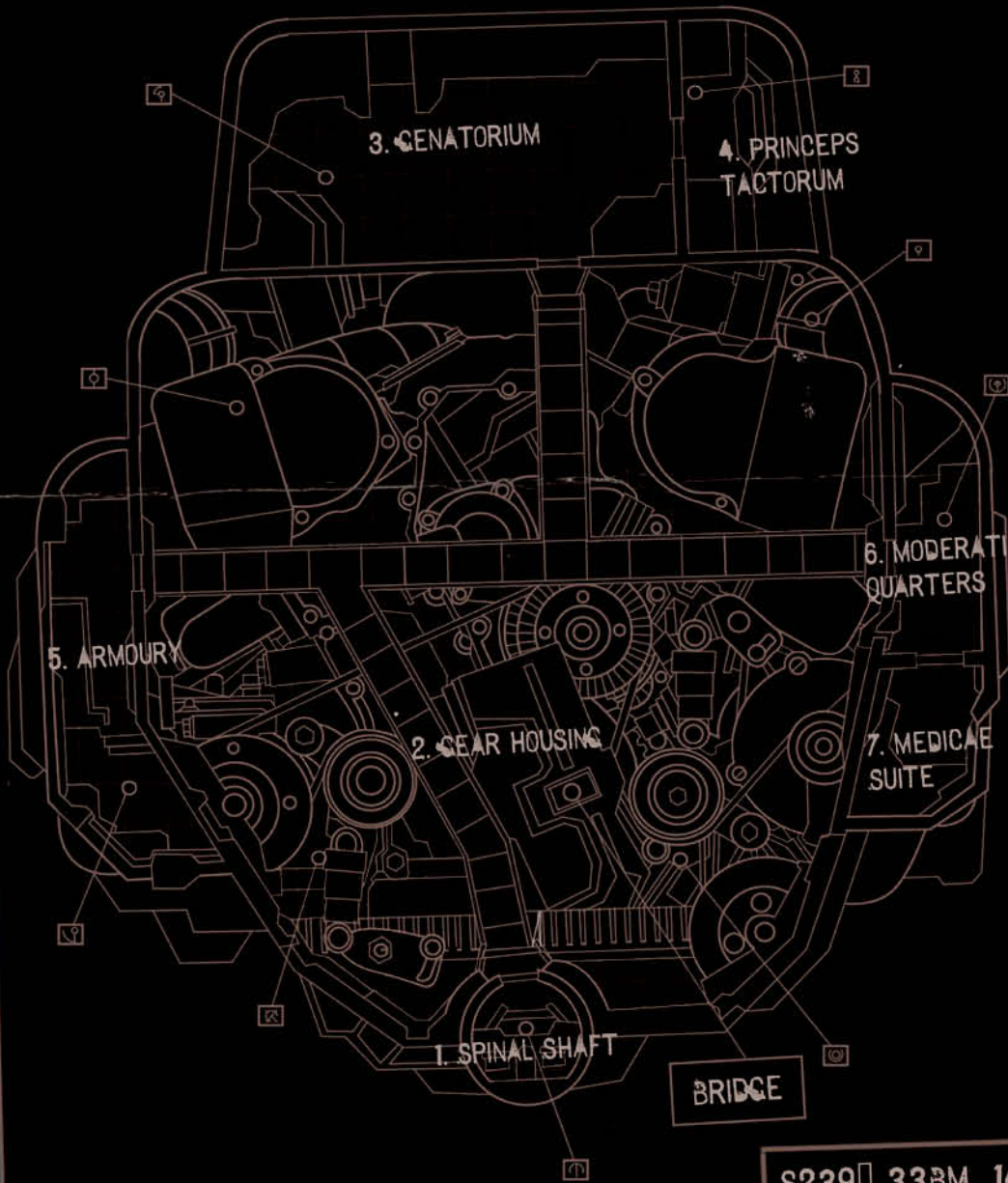
screens until the Genatorium has been restored, however, and it is likely that the Acolytes will assume that it is further trickery or corruption by the Dei-Phage. Discerning the two may be quite a challenge for the Acolytes.

THE REVEAL

At the end of this chapter is the "big reveal" of the adventure, that the Haematite Cathedral was a Titan all along. Players may guess at this as they move through the body of the Pax Macharia. If they do, allow them to find evidence that supports this suspicion. Dark Heresy is a game of mystery and uncovering such a massive secret will no doubt be a moment players remember fondly.



PAX MACHARIA



AREA 1: SPINAL SHAFT

The hidden door in the Nave opens onto a black shaft of ribbed steel, like a negative cast of an enormous spine. Rusted handholds lead downwards into the blackness. The smell of oil and rust reaches you on the faint breeze from below, along with the sound of grinding machinery.

This shaft is difficult to navigate. Descending it without mishap requires a Routine (+20) Climb Test. The use of a rope or other sensible climbing equipment gives an additional +20 to this Test.

Acolytes who fail the Test slip and fall down the shaft. This is not as dangerous as normal, thanks to a tank of fuel run-off that lies at the bottom of the shaft. Acolytes who fall down the shaft, land in the tank, which is full of foul-smelling brownish gunk. Such Acolytes must pass an Ordinary (+10) Toughness Test to avoid swallowing the fluid. Acolytes who can reasonably claim their mouths are covered, such as those wearing respirator masks, can automatically pass this Test. Swallowing the gunk is a horrible experience and causes great intestinal discomfort. The cramping pains, retching and dizziness impose a level of Fatigue.

At the bottom of the shaft, which is scattered with spare parts and other maintenance detritus, is a door set into the shaft wall. This door is electronically sealed and can be opened either with an Easy (+30) Security Test, with explosives, or with a Challenging (+0) Strength Test. An Acolyte who fails this Strength Test still wrenches the door open, but suffers a level of Fatigue in the process.

There is a small room at the base of the shaft. It is poorly lit by a single glowing, green, bar-shaped bulb. Below it are a half dozen Servo-Skull Flamebearers. These servo-skulls will follow any character and shed light roughly 10 metres from the electorch mounted on their underside. This will be the characters only light (other than what they brought with them) until they restore power to the machine.

There is a round door leading to the Gear Housing area that attempts to open as the Acolytes approach it, but cannot due to age. It opens approximately half way, forcing the characters to squeeze through one by one. While not dangerous, this is a chance to play up the mystery of the cathedral and add a bit of fear to the room.

All prisons fail. Bars shall rust. Gates will bend. Guards will grow weary. It may be a day, or an age, but this cell too will release its captive unto the stars. I cannot be forever contained.

AREA 2: GEAR HOUSING

The floor of this large, circular chamber has collapsed, leaving the enormous churning cogs below exposed. In spite of the time this place has been abandoned, the cogs are still working ceaselessly. Maintenance walkways still cross the chamber, connecting the many doors leading in various directions. On one wall is a diagram of escape routes, headed with the name Pax Macharia. The shape of the diagram suggests some sort of large machine. You are currently in its centre area. Around and below you are other areas accessible from this chamber, but the markings and name plates have long since worn away and are nearly illegible.

From this chamber, the Acolytes can access the various parts of the Pax Macharia. The gears are as dangerous as they look, and anyone falling or being thrown into them suffers 1d10+8 Rending Damage each Round from being crushed and shredded by the teeth of the churning cogs. A Routine (+20) Climb Test can get the victim back onto one of the walkways.

An Ordinary (+10) Perception Test causes an Acolyte to notice a room beneath the gears, just glimpsed through the cogs. Reaching this room requires the cogs to be stopped. A Challenging (+0) Tech-Use Test locates a junction box on the wall from which the cogs in question can be shut down. Alternatively, jamming a suitably large piece of debris (a steel bar from the floor of the Spinal Maintenance Shaft will do) into the cogs will stop them temporarily, but the accompanying explosion of shattered debris and shards of metal inflicts 1d10+3 Rending Damage to everyone in the chamber (this damage can be Dodged, but not Parried).

A map located in a small window-box labels the exits out of the Gear House as follows:

Ge-at-r--m: Area 3. The Genatorium and is the doorway directly across from the spinal shaft.

-rmo-r-: Area 5. Armoury and is reached via a short ladder climb and a narrow catwalk around the curve of the room.

Mo-e-ati Qu--t-rs: Area 6. A large cog slowly turns, requiring the characters to duck between the gaps to get to this room.

-o-it-t-r Core: Area 8. This is the Bridge at the bottom of the gears reachable only if the gears are shut off (or if the Genatorium is re-activated).

Prompt the players as to which room they wish to enter based on these illegible labels. While some groups will simply enter the rooms methodically, many players will enjoy the puzzle of deciphering the decrepit script as they go. The GM should indulge those players wishing to investigate the mystery and perhaps figure out the nature of the Pax Macharia before the machine itself is re-activated.

AREA 3: GENATORIUM

This large, circular chamber is distorted and befouled by some daemonic presence. Stinking ichor runs down the walls and pulsing, veiny growths cross the floor. A thick, cylindrical shield prevents access to the centre of the room.

The Genatorium is the heart of the daemonic infestation. Daemons wait here to be awakened by the raising of the generator shield.

An Ordinary (+10) Tech-Use or Search Test locates an interface in the wall from which can be read the state of the Genatorium and allows a character to raise the shield. If they fail to find this, there is another option for raising the shield in the Princeps Tactorum (Area 4). The Genatorium is currently in working order, but is dormant. To activate the Titan's power systems, the shield must be raised and the plasma fuel rods inserted. The Tech-Use Test also notes that the fuel rods are radioactive and should be handled only with appropriate protective gear.

A compartment in the wall contains a withered servitor. This is a menial model which is of no use in combat and possesses only rudimentary programming. It can be reactivated simply by disturbing it. An Ordinary (+10) Tech-Use Test confirms that the servitor is programmed to insert the fuel rods into the reactor. The servitor trundles around the Genatorium idly until the blast shield is raised, whereupon it picks up the four fuel rods one by one and inserts them.

Once the shield is raised, the central console is revealed with four holes. Beside it, in four transparent cases, are the fuel rods, each a shiny black rod about a metre and a half long with a faint greenish glow. The raising of the shield

also releases the lesser daemons inhabiting the Genatorium to manifest and attack. The daemons attack with abandon, lusting for violence and blood after so long in this artificial prison. The daemons consist of four Genatorium Daemons.

Once the daemons are dispatched, the Acolytes are free to insert the fuel rods. If they have reactivated the servitor, it does this for them, removing each rod from its casing and inserting it until all four are in place. Otherwise, the Acolytes have to do it themselves. Removing the rods from their casings and inserting them requires no Test, but the Acolytes are at risk from the corruption pumped out by the rods. An Acolyte handling a rod must make a Routine (+20) Toughness Test or suffer 1d5+2 Energy Damage to the arm. This damage ignores Armour, but not Toughness. Wearing the protective garments from the stash in the Armoury grants a +40 bonus to the Toughness Test. This Test is only required once per Acolyte each time they handle a rod.

Once all the rods are inserted, a loud thrumming fills this room. Various lights and gauges are illuminated and the floor vibrates as the whole Titan starts pulling power from the generator to become fully active again.

GENATORIUM DAEMONS

These foul pink creatures are minions of the Dei-Phage, and are lurking in the immaterium watching the Titan's Genatorium. Rolling, twisting, twitching masses of iridescent flesh and fire, these Horrors serve their master with the powers of change and sorcery. Their many mouths scream and gibber, and their shifting, clawed hands twitch with incantations. The Genatorium Daemons are not very intelligent and speak only gibberish.



Generatorium Daemons

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
35	25	25	30	30	20	35	40	10

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 10

Skills: Awareness (Per), Psyniscience (Per) +10, Speak Language (any one) (Int).

Talents: None.

Traits: Daemonic (TB 6), Dark Sight, Daemonic Presence[†], Fear 2, Fire of Tzeentch[‡], From Beyond, Natural Weapon (Teeth or Claws), Regeneration, Warp Instability.

Psychic Powers (Psy Rating 2): Fire Bolt.

[†]**Daemonic Presence:** All creatures within 20 metres take a -10 penalty to Willpower Tests.

[‡]**Fire of Tzeentch:** These daemons are immune to Perils of the Warp.

Weapons: Claws and teeth (1d10+3 E).

AREA 4: PRINCEPS TACTORUM

Three massive map tables dominate this room, along with a brass-cased cogitator built into an ornate desk. A couple of yellowing maps still lie on the tables among compasses and other drawing implements. On the walls hang military honours and icons of the Cult Mechanicus.

The Tactorum, found by passing through the Genatorium, is where the Pax Macharia's captain, the Princeps, pondered tactical problems. He was also able to pilot the Titan from here using the cogitator, a measure intended to keep the war machine mobile if the control centre in its head was destroyed.

The maps are very old indeed and depict areas of the planet Barsapine. A Challenging (+0) Common Lore (War) Test dates the map to the Angevin Crusade. Several more maps are rolled up in drawers in the sides of the map tables, all of them areas of Barsapine.

The cogitator here is shut down but it switches on as the Acolytes enter the room. Once it has been reactivated, its pict-screen displays an Aquila.

The cogitator can be used by a Princeps to pilot the Pax Macharia in desperate times. The lack of power, however, makes the cogitator far less useful to the Acolytes. The instructions that appear on the screen describe how to restart the Genatorium (calling it by name) and prompt the user on how to activate the control panel in the Genatorium to raise the shield and replace the fuel rods.

Characters trained in Secret Tongue (Tech) understand the instructions immediately. Otherwise a Challenging (+0) Speak Language (High Gothic) or Hard (+20) Speak Language (Low Gothic) Test should be made by every Acolytes who can read the pict-screen.

If at least one character succeeds read the following:

The cogitator describes a simple process for performing the Right of Replenishing. The sacred shield is first to be released through the proper activation runes. Once this is completed, the faithful must remove the voided rod and into its chamber place an Isotropic fuel rod. The faithful will repeat this thrice more. The sacred shield is to then be brought to bulwark position.

If the Acolytes fail, read the following:

It's unclear, but this machine apparently has instructions for raising the shield in the Genatorium and replacing fuel rods.

After the Genatorium is activated, this room can be used to communicate with the Pax Macharia in the same way as in the Bridge, although it will direct them to that location so that it can better communicate with the Acolytes.

AREA 5: ARMOURY

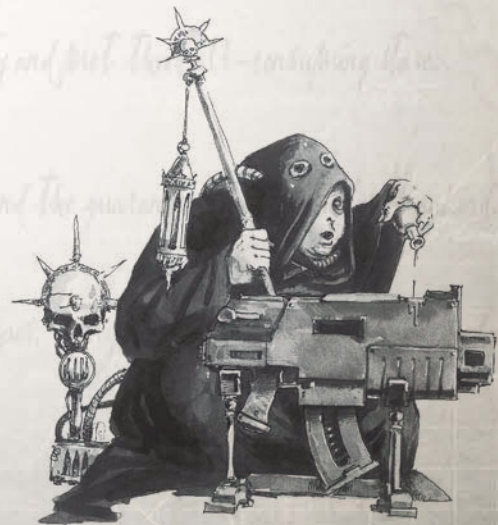
The walls of this chamber are padded to prevent sparks, and its floor is panelled with wood. Inscriptions on the gigantic ammunition hoppers call for the Emperor to lend strength to the guns of the Pax Macharia. A loud rattling comes from one of the hoppers and a shell casing the size of a man rests in the corner.

The Armoury is home to the armaments of the crew stationed in this part of the Pax Macharia. The ammunition hoppers still contain dozens of shell casings and other debris, and the Acolytes can use this as an opportunity to replenish their weapons or gather equipment useful in the Genatorium.

Acolytes can search the Armoury. Behind one of the ammo hoppers, next to an aperture through which shells were fed to one of the Titan's guns, is a steel case, the contents of which are still in good repair. If an Acolytes is low on ammunition you may allow them to scrounge additional rounds suitable for their ballistic weapons, but most of the ammo here is designed for the much larger weapons of the machine.

There is a steel wall-mounted case that holds a stash of emergency supplies for the crew. A large Adeptus Mechanicus symbol is stamped on the sliding doors of the cabinet. It includes weapons, rations, safety and survival gear and a religious pamphlet extolling the Pax Macharia as an aspect of the Emperor reborn (see the handout on page 67 for an extract). The rest of the stash contains in total:

- 2 lasguns
- 2 laspistols
- 4 charge packs (2 basic and 2 pistol)
- 12 packs of corpse rations (spoiled and inedible)
- 3 sets of protective overalls (AP 1, Body, Legs & Arms)
- 1 welder's helm (AP 5, head, -10 to Tests involving sight)
- 2 rebreathers with full canisters



AREA 6: MODERATI QUARTERS

This room is a cramped dormitory for five or six people. Devotional icons of the Priesthood of Mars are fixed over each bunk bed and on the doors of several storage lockers. A headless corpse holding a bolt pistol sits on one of the bunks with a vox recorder in its lap. The body is wearing a uniform reminiscent of an Imperial Navy officer, but covered in ornaments and additional armour plates.

This is the corpse of Barabus Zanatov. He took his own life rather than be driven insane by the Dei-Phage. On his lap are his last words, if a character plays the recording, read the following aloud:

Damaged by time, but still functional, the vox-record plays back the static filled message of a desperate man. His voice weary but determined.

"My name is Tauron Hekate. No, that's a lie. My last words shan't be a lie. My name is Barabus Zanatov. I came to Barsapine in service of Inquisitor DeVayne, whose faith and strength I admire even more in these last days. I do not have his will, but I carry his mission.

"The evidence he entrusted to my care was safely within a cypher and in my hands. Unfortunately, the process for unlocking its secrets were not. The details of what brought me to this place are inconsequential. Should a loyal servant of the Imperium of Mankind find this recording, know this... the Dei-Phage does not wish the secrets I nearly decyphered to be brought to light.

"I am pursued by agents of the ruinous powers, men who hide among the flock of the faithful. My ruse, masquerading as a noble here, served me well this last decade. I have nearly bankrupted the fortunes gathered by my family's warrant. It was worth it. The Black Sepulchre was built, the evidence nearly decoded. That's when they caught up to me.

"They have taken my Black Sepulchre. Unable to dismantle it they took the land to raise up a new monastery. If they manage to block the night sky, the translation will not proceed.

"The Daemon, I can't forget the Daemon. It spoke to us all, calls itself the God-Eater. Promised us... everything. I resisted but not all of my servants did. It's talking to me now. I won't listen.

"I've asked one last thing of my old friend, the Magos has brought to arms this machine. This last chance to prevent the fall of all of Barsapine. This last chance to stop the Dei-Phage.

"I will not see the battle through. I cannot. It wages even now, but should the Daemon take my mind I will be too dangerous to the cause. Uncover the Black Sepulchre marked on the Princes' maps, learn the truth I could not discover.

"Emperor Protect us all."

A single explosive shot from a bolt pistol is the last noise from the vox-record.

The Pax Macharia listens along with the Acolytes. If the Genatorium has been activated, it attempts to summon them to the Bridge by playing a loop of the Princes voice saying "Engineers Excellar to the Bridge."

If the Genatorium has not been activated, then the

Machine-Spirit simply bides its time, knowing that it must take the Acolytes to the Black Sepulchre.

The location of the Black Sepulchre is clearly labelled on the maps in the Princes Tactorum among dozens of other locations. It is easy to determine the location once the Acolytes know what they are looking for.

The bolt pistol is a Best Quality Bolt Pistol with seven Sanctified Rounds. These Sanctified rounds ignore the Unnatural Toughness of any Daemon they hit. Some players may not wish to loot the weapon of a dead man. However, it may be considered an even bigger heresy to leave such a revered weapon here to rust. The coat was custom made for the Rogue Trader, it provides 4 Armour to every location except the head. The coat, on the other hand, is not revered and only truly debased scum would consider taking it.

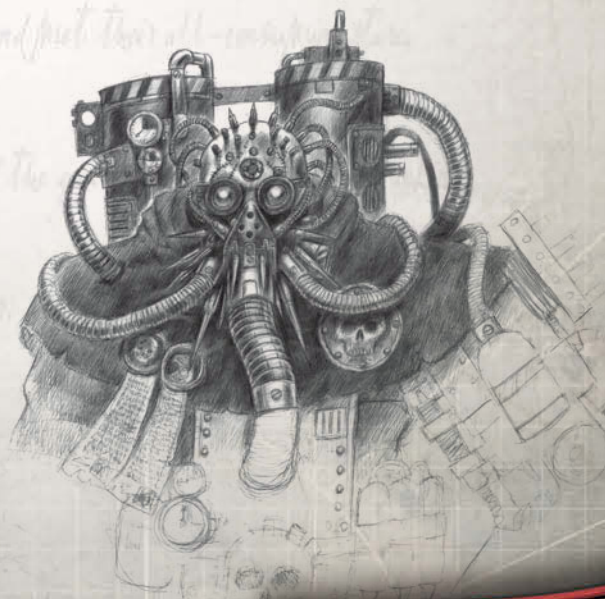
There are a pair of double doors leading out of this chamber, clearly labelled to anyone with training in Secret Tongue (Tech), they lead to the Medicae Suit.

AREA 7: MEDICAE SUITE

Though small, this medical room is well equipped. An autosurgeon, apparently in working order, is fixed to the ceiling above a surgical bed, and medical equipment is housed in glass-fronted cabinets.

The autosurgeon is indeed intact and functional. An Acolyte who uses this room to heal his wounds or remove Fatigue is set upon by the autosurgeon's many bladed limbs which, with mechanical precision, sew and bind his wounds. The autosurgeon can be used, giving +40 to any Medicae Tests made in this room. It can also heal wounds on its own, making Medicae Tests with Intelligence 40. Any successful Medicae Test made in this room to restore a character's wounds heals 1d5 additional Wounds.

The medical implements in the cabinets are in working order. Among them are several scalpels, bonesaws, and empty syringes. A Routine (+20) Search Test finds two injectors with a dose of stimm, and one with a dose of spook, in a hidden compartment.



AREA 8: BRIDGE

Slabs of glossy black data-medium, like standing stones, line the walls of this room. The room is cold, with minimal power used to operate the climate control system that pumps frigid air from vents in the ceiling. A thin freezing mist clings to the floor.

Massive viewing windows dominate one end of the room. It's possible that some sort of observation chamber lies beyond, but thick adamantium shutters block the view. Pict-screens and cogitator consoles dominate the remaining walls.

At the centre of the room is a control chair. At first the occupant appears to be a tech-priest, ready for battle. The cold has, however, stifled the decaying process, this servant of the Ommissiah has been dead for quite some time.

The Bridge is the brain of the Pax Macharia. It contains the Titan's machine-spirit, the ancient intelligence that helps to govern the Titan's actions. The cogitator needs a lot of power, and until the Genatorium is reactivated, it cannot be switched on, even with a Tech-Priest's potentia coil.

IF THE POWER IS ON

Once power is restored by restarting the Genatorium, the central cogitator comes to life, wheezing and clanking as its valves and cogs begin to move. The vid-feeds on the pict-viewers show the cathedral above and the ocean below, an Easy (+20) Perception Test allows the Acolytes to notice bits of metal structure all the way down to the ocean floor, hinting that this structure may be much deeper than what is explorable currently.

The crew has a cache of equipment that is easily noticed in the light of the room when the power is on. It contains:

- 6 doses of Frenzon
- A Medikit
- A Laspistol with a Red-dot laser sight
- 4 Hot-Shot Charge Packs
- A flask of Best Quality Amasec

IF THE POWER IS OFF

The body can be identified as a Princesps with an Easy (+30) Forbidden Lore (Adeptus Mechanicus) Test.

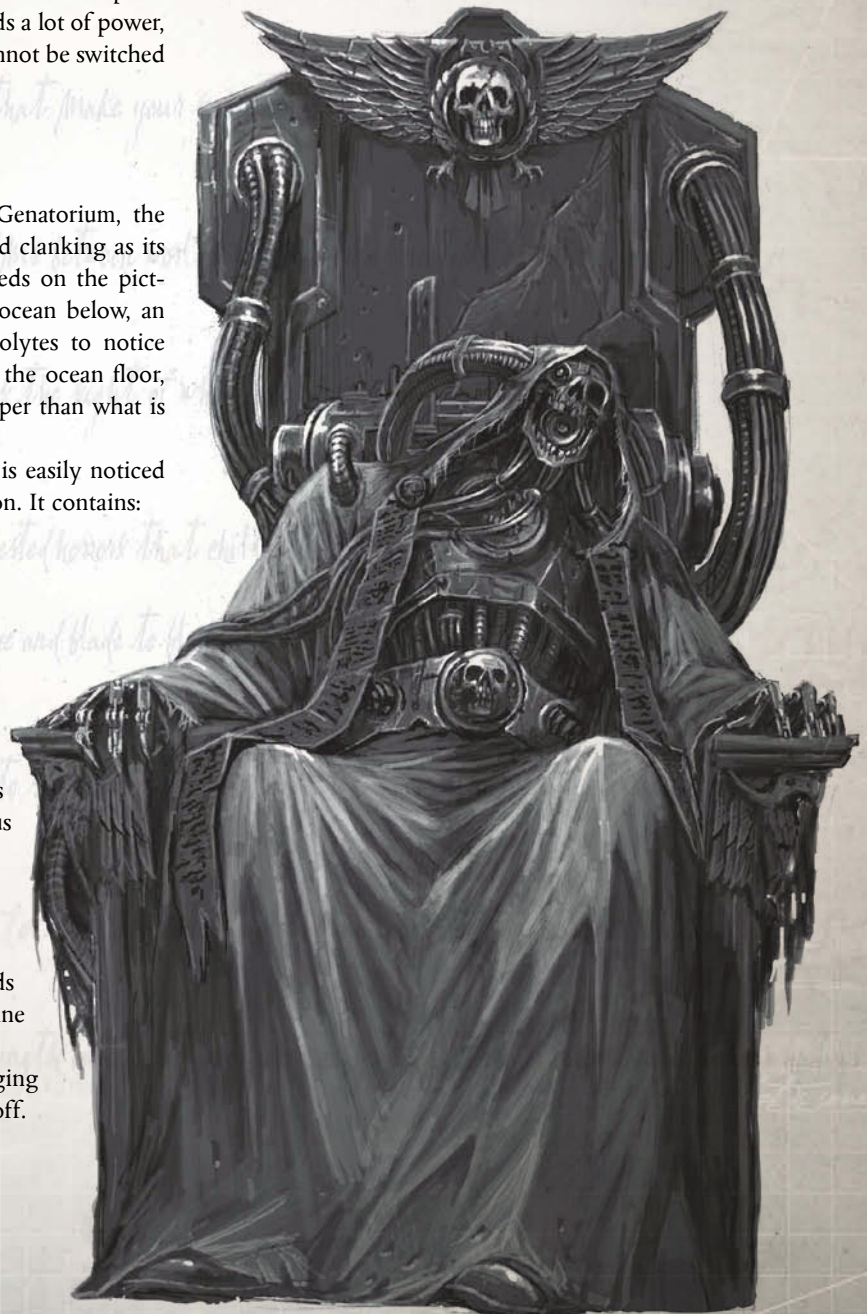
IF THE POWER IS OFF

The Acolytes may power individual vid-feeds using an external power source with an Routine (+20) Tech-Use Test.

The cache of weapons requires a Challenging (+0) Search Test to find while the power is off.

GETTING IN THE CHAIR

In the event that one of the acolytes (likely the Tech-Priest) wishes to get into the control chair, they may attempt to do so, but it is extremely dangerous and requires a Hard (+20) Tech-Use Test. Removing the Princesps' bionic interface requires a Hard (+20) Tech-Use Test. Interfacing with the Pax-Macharia's proper Princesps bionic interface requires a Hard (+30) Willpower Test, failure requires a Degree of Failure. The Princesps does not have control of the structure through any of its vid-feeds and cannot be used beyond use.



Once the Machine-Spirit has heard the Vox-Record and the Genatorium has been restored and the Acolytes are in the Bridge read the following:

Dozens of pict screens throughout the room spring to life. Each shows a drawn and pale man hunched in a command throne. Even at a glance, the augmentics are identical—this can only be a recording of the individual whose corpse now sits behind you.

A mechanical voice booms through out the room, “Brace—drives engaging!” You have scant moments to grasp handholds and the edges of consoles before the entire room lurches violently. With a deafening hiss and burst of static, the pict screens switch to showing myriad vid-feeds from points within the structure, the cathedral above, and the surrounding grounds.

As you watch, cracks split the earth around the cathedral, the soil shuddering and falling away. Before your eyes, the cliff-face begins to disintegrate, collapsing into the surrounding ocean. You can feel the floor lifting and shifting beneath your feet, as a deep, terrible groan reverberates through the structure.

“Primary drive-train engaged. Power at 38 percent.” the voice says tonelessly.

The adamantium shutters at the front of the room suddenly clatter open, allowing you to see out of the viewports. Rocks and dirt block the outer frames, but even as you watch it sloughs away, revealing a grey, leaden sky and the expanse of the ocean. The horizon seems to be moving.

Peering out the veiwports, you realize that the cathedral and entire structure beneath it are somehow rising into the air as the remains of the cliff sink into the waves around you. Massive arms—encrusted in barnacles and covered in sea-bed silt—rise out of the water on either side.

The machine finishes straightening, and bone-shaking seige-sirens blare—the sound flattening the ocean and nearly deafening you. Then the voice speaks again.

“Primary reactor core lit. Weapons at 17 percent capacity. Motive-power at 27 percent standard. Emperor Titan Pax Macharia...operational.”

The Hematite cathedral was nothing less than the superstructure of an Emperor Titan, which now stands waist-deep in the ocean, the shards of the cliffside that encased it sinking away on either side.

With full view of the Titan’s surroundings from the bridge, the power of this machine becomes clear. The vast ocean and endless shoreline feel small and conquerable.

At first you mistake the screeching for a the wail of metal on metal. Its source darts across the main viewport before stopping to hover directly in front of the Titan. It is a robed figure, massive feathered wings holding it impossibly still in the air. Dwarfed by the Pax Macharia, it is none-the-less massive, large enough to crush a battle tank with its fists. It turns its long neck to look directly into the chamber. A name resounds through the mind of all present. None can mistake that this... this is the Dei-Phage made manifest before you.

The Pax-Macharia speaks again “Crewmen, Battle Stations. Man the cannons.”



AGAINST ALL ODDS

This chapter ends when the Acolytes have successfully awoken the Pax Macharia and in the process freed the Dei-Phage from its prison. They are now being told by the ancient machine to man the large Quake Cannon located in the Nave. The next chapter begins with the Acolytes rushing to the siege weapon to fire its last remaining shot at the Dei-Phage itself.

TROUBLESHOOTING

By this stage the Acolytes should know that the Dei-Phage came to this world at the behest of a shadow cult that wished to stop the Black Sepulchre from deciphering its encrypted evidence acquired by Inquisitor DeVayne.

THE BEAST TO COME

The Acolytes must now face the Dei-Phage in the final climactic battle. They will need to face a variety of fear causing foes as well as a wounded Dei-Phage. If the Acolytes have not found at least 1 dose of Frenzon per Acolytes then the Pax Macharia can point the Acolytes to a store of the drug in the Bridge, opening a small door and booming "Steel thyselfes for battle" over the loudhailer.

In addition, if the Acolytes lack qualified combatants, the rounds in the Bolt Pistol found in the Moderati Quarters can be Psybolt rounds. These shells ignore the Dei-Phage's Unnatural Toughness quality.

NO POWER

If the Acolytes cannot figure out how to restore power to the Pax Macharia, then the Servitor in the Genatorium can be used to perform the task. It begins making a loud noise (as it fights against some restraints) and once freed to perform its task it will lift the shield and begin replacing the fuel rods. Of course this will cause the Genatorium Daemons to attack if they have not already.

BAD INJURY

If the Acolytes are badly wounded, the Medicae Facility in the Moderati Quarters is now fully operational. Drawing on the power and databanks of the Pax Macharia allows it to repair additional damage and provide drugs to help shrug off pain. It cannot cure Critical Wounds but through a combination of bonecrete and liquid skin, the Acolytes can have all other wounds healed.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

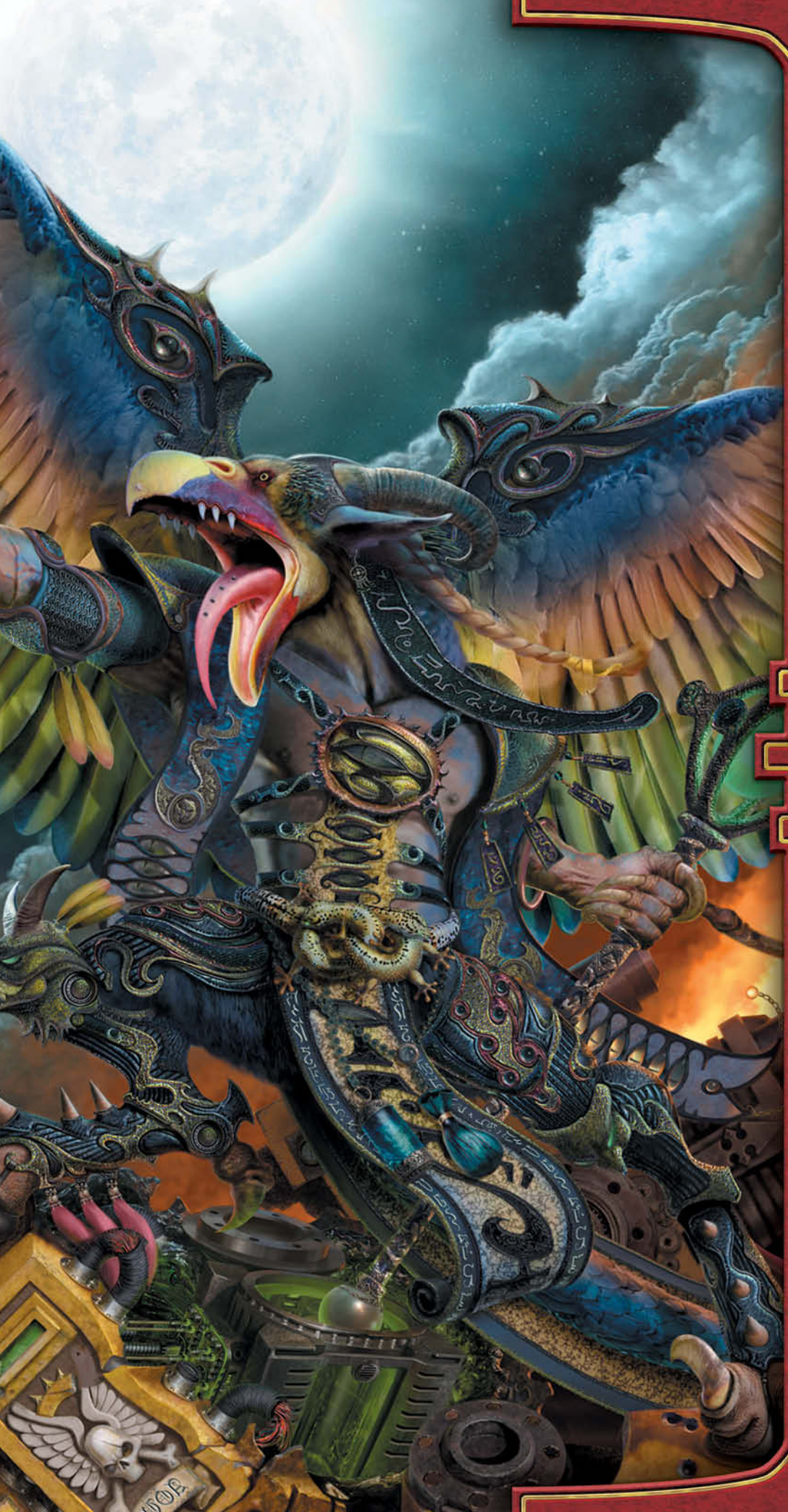
The Acolytes should be at least Rank 3 by this time. If it seems realistic, the GM may allow Acolytes who gain a new Weapon Training talent to search the Armoury of the Pax Macharia for such a weapon and a single reload of ammunition.

Experience earned: Each player should earn at least 300 xp by the conclusion of this chapter. If you are using the detail-based experience method, use the following.

Experience Earned:

- Base: 100 xp
- Defeated the Genatorium Daemons: 50 xp
- Found the body of Barabus Zanatov: 75 xp
- Restored Power to the Pax Macharia: 75 xp





BEHOLD THE DEI-PHAGE

THE LIBRARIUM NOX

•

THE QUAKE CANNON

•

UPON WINGS
OF MADNESS

CHAPTER IV: BEHOLD THE DEI-PHAGE

"I have borne witness to it! It had wings like a crow that shifted amongst the colours that cannot be seen without madness taking hold. It was dead, or dying. Its wings moulted and rotting away. It needed strength. It needed the will. It would have it, it would take it from us."

—Mallica Hekate

The final part of The Black Sepulchre pits the Acolytes directly against the Dei-Phage. By now they should have had this confrontation thoroughly foreshadowed by the mad writings of the cathedrals occupants and by the eerie events that have followed them throughout the investigation.

The Dei-Phage first turns the Haematite Cathedral into a psychological gauntlet. The Acolytes are subjected to merciless mental Tests. Once they have passed or failed these, and perhaps suffered accordingly, they can reach the Nave and face the Dei-Phage in combat. Such a powerful daemonic entity is likely beyond the Acolyte's ability to confront directly. The Pax Macharia, however, has one trick left. The Quake Cannon in the Nave is in bad shape, but it can still fire one last time. The Acolytes must fire the cannon while the Dei-Phage is distracted in its battle with the Pax Macharia, wounding it severely enough that they can defeat it.

As the Pax Macharia approaches Kephistrion Altis, the Dei-Phage makes its final, desperate attempt to stop the Titan from uncovering the Black Sepulchre. It manifests fully into the material world, which gives it the power to interfere directly with the links between the machine-spirit and the Titan's systems.

Unlike previous portions of this adventure, the battle with

the Dei-Phage is more linear. The Acolytes are assailed by the daemon and must resist his powers while desperately attempting to reach the Quake Cannon in the Nave.

As this is the climax to the adventure, it is an entire chapter of its own. The Acolytes must deal with a series of encounters to finally fell the beast... if only temporarily.

If the Acolytes do not know that they need to head to the Nave, then the Pax Macharia will urge the Acolytes to rush to the main Quake Cannon, repeating the phrase "Crewmen, man the cannons."



WHERE THE ACOLYTE CAN INTERFERE WITH THE DEI-PHAGE

Upon defeating the Dei-Phage, the Acolytes have managed to do what the Pax Macharia can claim to have accomplished: they have faced a daemon in mortal combat and emerged victorious. The Pax Macharia, who survives this challenge, can claim to have done the same.

In addition, they show that they have the Talent: Into The Breach.

NEW TALENT: INTO THE BREACH

The Acolyte can trust the bonds of loyalty forged when facing the worst the warp has to offer. When confronted by Daemonic foes with the Fear trait, the acolyte treats the Fear Rating as 1 less (to a minimum of 1) if he is accompanied by at least two other characters with this talent.

AREA 1: LIBRARIUM NOX

Where before the central Gear Chamber stood, now there soars a towering Librarium wreathed in flame. Endless bookcases reach up to the impossibly high ceiling, containing thousands upon thousands of books. The entrance behind you is gone, replaced by another bookcase that, like most of the bafflingly vast Librarium, is on fire. Blue and pink flames ripple across the floor and the surfaces of the bookshelves. Scraps of burning paper fall in a smouldering rain and the air is almost too hot to breathe.

Someone stumbles through the flames towards you, blazing from head to toe.

"Speak its name!" the burning figure gasps. "Speak its name and... and..." With that the figure falls to the ground, a guttering, charred remnant.

The flames coalesce in the heart of the Librarium to form a vast winged figure composed of multicoloured fire floating in the centre of the room. It reaches out a claw, and a bolt of flame, like a comet, hurtles towards you.

This hellish scene is the result of the Dei-Phage attempting to use its dark magic upon the Titan. The Acolytes have, temporarily, stepped into the mind of the Daemon, able to learn crucial secrets. So startling is the transition that each Acolyte must succeed in a Challenging (+0) Willpower Test or gain 1d5 Insanity and Corruption Points (roll once and apply the result to both).

At the start of every round, the Librarium defender (part of the Dei-Phage's own mind) hurls a firebolt at a random Acolyte, with a Ballistic Skill of 40. This bolt can be dodged normally. Any Acolyte hit is wreathed in fire must pass a Difficult (-10) Toughness Test or pass out from the pain. Acolytes who pass out have failed the challenge of the Librarium Nox and collapse to the floor like the guttering corpse who met them. Their minds are full of profane words, mad prophecies, and the threats of fates too hideous for a human tongue to speak. Those who pass take the pain and the flames die away, but they may be hit again in subsequent Combat Rounds.

Finding out the daemon's name is the key to success during this challenge. An Easy (+30) Forbidden Lore (Daemonology) Test or a Challenging (+0) Scholastic Knowledge (Occult) Test causes an Acolyte to recall that a daemon has many names, and that one, its true name, gives power over it.

The daemon's name is written in one of the many books in the Librarium. Four successful Challenging (+0) Search Tests are required to hunt it down. The first successful Test finds the section of the Librarium that contains information on forbidden subjects, including tomes describing heretical cults and the collected writings of warp-prophets. The second Test finds a shelf holding catalogues of daemons, their names, and their deeds. The third locates a particular book entitled 'Ye Monstres of Feather and Claw', which has an illustration on the cover of a robed daemon with decaying wings and vicious talons. The fourth Test locates the page on which the Dei-Phage is described.

Written below the illustration is an impossibly convoluted sequence of letters. This is a part of the Dei-Phage's true name, and uttering it aloud will banish this manifestation and cause the remaining Acolytes to pass this Test. The human tongue rebels against such an unholy pronouncement, and the Acolyte reading out the true name fragment must pass a Challenging (+0) Willpower Test to force the sound out. If he fails he may not utter it, but he or another Acolyte may try again next turn (assuming any of them are left after the next firebolt).

When the true name fragment is uttered, the fire is extinguished by a freezing gale that blows through the Librarium. Thousands of sheets of parchment are caught on the wind and the Acolytes are all but smothered by a tide of ancient pages that fly into their faces. When the papers blow away, the Acolytes find they are lying on the landing between the Haematite Cathedral's various chambers.

Some characters may choose to instead fight the daemon head on. He cannot be reached on foot, although a clever Acolyte may try to climb the book shelves and drop down on top of him. Ranged weapons can distract him although it should be made clear that no real damage is being dealt. Instead the Dei-Phage targets the Acolyte who dealt the most damage to him in the previous round. In this way Tough characters can support their researching companions.

If the Acolytes do not immediately understand that the way out of this hellscape is to defeat speak the Daemons true name then every round additional flaming corpses can emerge from behind book cases and give them clues before combusting.

Acolytes who are struck down by the fire bolts during the Challenge of the Librarium Nox must make a Challenging (+0) Willpower Test. If they pass this Test, they acquire 1 Corruption Point from the torrent of unholy knowledge that coursed through them. If they fail, they instead acquire 1d5 Corruption Points. Any Acolyte not rendered unconscious by the flames hurled by the Librarium's defender do not suffer any additional corruption at the end of the challenge.

Once this Test is completed or failed, reality snaps into view, read the following:

The Pax Macharia sways with unsteady steps, the floor tilting drunkenly beneath you. The massive grinding gears replacing the inferno of the twisted Librarium within the Dei-Phage's mind.

The obvious way up is to climb the spinal shaft that you came down through, bringing you directly into the Nave where the Quake Cannon is housed. The way out of the Titan's lower floors and up the Spinal Maintenance Shaft is clear enough, albeit made more shocking by the Titan's motion, alarm klaxons, and warning lights. The cogs in the Gear Housing jerk and spin at an alarming rate, but now a small lift is operational. Climbing the shaft is likewise less challenging as the machine-spirit is able to extrude narrow metal steps from the shaft walls to form a cramped spiral staircase.

AREA 2: QUAKE CANNON

With the movement of the Pax Macharia it has become clear why the pews in the vast main hall were bolted to the floor. Debris tumbles through the broken glass of the windows with every step of the machines, powerful legs. Below, the ocean has disappeared, replaced by the dunes of the Barsapine desert as the Titan strides towards Kephistrion Altis and the Black Sepulchre.

Keeping pace with the Titan is the physical form of the Dei-Phage. Hovering below the windows of the Nave in front of the Bridge, the tattered wings sweep back in forth with the each step of the Pax Macharia. The Daemon shrieks unintelligible words that can be heard even over the sirens.

Directly below it is a swirling whirlpool of colour and flame. Glimpses of foul warp beasts can be seen flickering momentarily across the surface of this breach into the Immaterium.

Due to the incredible noise, the Acolytes have to shout while near each other just to be heard. This can make the job at hand more difficult.

A Challenging (+0) Psyniscience or Forbidden Lore (Warp) Test (or another Test the GM feels is appropriate such as Daemonology) lets the Acolyte know that the Dei-Phage is attempting to enact a sorcerous spell. Two or more degrees of Success lets the Acolytes know that this spell will allow the Dei-Phage to possess the body of the Pax Macharia, something it could not do while trapped inside. If it is allowed to continue the entire planet is likely doomed.

The warp rift is a side effect of the powerful sorcery the Dei-Phage is attempting to call and from it daemonic Furies are pressing their way into reality.

To fire the Cannon requires three steps, none of which will be easy while under constant attack from the furies. In the first round, a Fury flies from the portal and attacks the Acolytes. Every round after that another Fury flies through the portal on a 1d10 result of 7 or higher and attacks the Acolytes. If they dispatch the one they are fighting they may have a few moments to complete their task, although they will probably attempt to fire the cannon while fighting off beasts.

First the cannon must be prepared. Because it is so ancient and in such disrepair, it must first have its barrel cleared of debris. The Acolytes must succeed in three Very Hard (+30) Strength Tests to get large chunks of stonework from the barrel. Characters may provide assistance as described on page 185 of Dark Heresy; there is no limit, however, to the number of characters allowed to help.

Next the final loading sequence must be accomplished. This requires a Very Hard (+30) Intelligence Test or a Challenging (+0) Tech-Use Test. Any character who begins this process will become the main target of the Furies, who will dive to attack him. A character under attack suffers a -20 penalty to any Tests to perform this function, so Acolytes will want to grapple or kill any remaining Furies to make this Test as easy as possible.

Lastly the weapon must be fired, requiring a Ballistic Skill Test as if firing a weapon. Acolytes will most likely suffer a negative for not being trained in the use of a Quake Cannon. The shell in the Quake Cannon is old and the explosion from

the barrel is not the launching of a massive explosive but instead a torrent of fire and shell shrapnel. Read the following:

There is a brief moment as nothing happens. Despair is replaced with fear as the weapon tears itself apart. Its low angle ripping the weapon from its moorings and shattering the stone floor beneath it. You are each cast aside into the pews and against the walls as the explosion smashes through the Nave.

A torrent of fire and shrapnel blast forth from the Quake Cannon barrel even as the weapon itself is destroyed. The shell was long deteriorated and rendered useless by the ravages of time, and it fires now as something more reminiscent of an enormous shotgun than the holy siege weapon it was meant to be.

The flames and force of the blast consume the Daemon and the portal beneath him. As the sand and glass forged by the heat settle, there is a moment of pure silence, no screeching or alarms sound. The quite is short lived.

With a screech, a charred figure, its feathered wings still smouldering, hurls itself up from the scar. Its clawed feet gripping into the cracked stone as it lands. Easily three men high, the beast tosses the remaining slag of the cannon through the decimated wall of the cathedral.

If the Acolytes hit the beast then the Furies are now gone, banished along with their portal. The weapon has greatly damaged the Daemon but the players as well. If the Ballistic Skill Test was passed then the explosion merely knocked them about the room. If it was failed, they each take 1d10 Impact damage reduced by armour and Toughness as normal. When the Furies are defeated, the Dei-Phage strikes as described in "On Wings of Madness" on page 59.

FURIES

Furies are found on page 352 of Dark Heresy and are reprinted here for easy of use.

Bestial predators in the service of no single power, these twisted and disfigured hunting Daemons are grim and winged in the manner of nightmarish gargoyles.



Furies								
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
45	25	45	40	40	20	45	40	10

Movement: 4/8/12/24

Wounds: 15

Skills: Awareness (Per), Psyniscience (Per), Speak Language (any one) (Int).

Talents: Furious Assault.

Traits: Daemonic (TB 8), Dark Sight, Daemonic Presence[†], Fear 3, Flyer 8, From Beyond, Natural Weapon (Teeth or Claws), Warp Instability.

[†]**Daemonic Presence:** All creatures within 20 metres take a -10 penalty to Willpower Tests.

Weapons: Claws and teeth (1d10+4 R; Primitive, Tearing).

AREA 3: UPON WINGS OF MADNESS

The Dei-Phage's wings are still ablaze, making flight difficult for the monster. While immensely powerful, the Dei-Phage has been weakened by the attempt to possess the Pax Macharia and gravely wounded by the blast from the Quake Cannon. It intends to destroy the Acolytes and then perform the ritual of Possession again.

In chopped speech that seems to defy space and time, the Dei-Phage calls a name that is at once familiar and completely alien. It points one of its long taloned fingers as its wings, still ablaze, fan out behind it, silhouetting the beast against its own flaming pinions. All of its wounds are fresh, save one... its left arm is missing and long ago the wound healed, a twisting scar at the end of a stump of muscle and feather.

When the Dei-Phage is defeated, it lets out a terrible howling scream and sinks to the floor.

The Dei-Phage's feathers begin to shed from its wings, a soft wind catching them and swirling them in all directions. When finally all the feathers are stripped away, all that remains are the Dei-Phage's filthy robes in a heap on the cathedral floor. The air in the cathedral feels clean, the dry desert air still carries a hint of brine and salt from the Barsapine Sea. The beast has been laid low... for now.

The Acolytes need do no more to defeat the Dei-Phage and exorcise the Titan. The Pax Macharia now strides purposefully towards Kephistrion Altis.



THE DEI-PHAGE

The Dei-Phage is an evil and cunning creature of the warp, summoned by the Maledictor's Hand to destroy Barsapine and ensure that their secret could never be revealed. It is a thing of utter corruption, as evidenced by its influencing of the Hekate dynasty towards madness and evil. For most of **THE BLACK SEPULCHRE**, the Dei-Phage is in the background, commanding its lesser daemons and warping the reality of the Haematite Cathedral, but it is always present and watching, and it is well aware of what the Acolytes are doing. Though it has been sealed within the Pax Macharia, infesting the structure of the cathedral through daemoniac sorceries, in its physical form it is a deadly foe indeed.

The Dei-Phage does not have a personality as humans understand it, being composed of the raw madness of the warp. It appears, however, to be a sardonic and mocking creature, its attacks punctuated by baffling or infuriating statements about the inevitability of the warp's victory over reality and the meaninglessness of the Acolytes' existence. Even in combat it remains inscrutable, even calm, the only evidence of its intelligence the rasping cries that issue from its beak beneath its rot-stained hood. It prefers to destroy enemies from afar with its psychic powers or tear them apart with its talons, reserving its Possession ability for large prey.

In appearance the Dei-Phage is a tall, hunched figure in robes charred black from the flame, long taloned fingers with pale blue flesh and a pair of vast smouldering wings that constantly drop burning feathers are the mark of its passing. The very presence of the Dei-Phage is an affront to reality and sanity, and its manifestation is a thing of otherworldly horror with the capacity to wound the soul as badly as the body.

The Wounded Dei-Phage

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
39	49	49	59	49	29	49	69	39

Movement: 6/12/18/36

Wounds: 29

Skills: Awareness (Per), Deceive (Fel) +20, Forbidden Lore (Cults, Daemonology, the Warp) (Int) +20, Intimidate (S) +20, Literacy (Int), Logic (Int) +20, Scrutiny (Per) +10, Speak Language (High Gothic, Low Gothic, Secret Tongue (Razored Wing)) (Int).

Talents: Swift Attack, Psy Rating 4.

Traits: Daemonic (TB 10), Dark Sight, Daemonic Presence, Fear 4, Flyer 6, From Beyond, Gift of the Change God, Natural Weapons (Talons), Size (Enormous), The Stuff Of Nightmares, Unnatural Strength, Possession.

Gift of Tzeentch: The Dei-Phage does not suffer from the Perils of the Warp.

Psychic Powers (Psy Rating 4): All Minor Psychic Powers plus Fire Storm, Psychic Crush, Mind Scan, and Terrify Major Psychic Powers.

Note: If the Acolytes succeeded in the test of the Librarium Nox, lower the Dei-Phage's Fear Rating by 1. If the Acolytes hit the Dei-Phage with the Quake Cannon, reduce its Fear Rating by 1 as well.

AFTERMATH

With the defeat of the Dei-Phage, the Pax Macharia completes the journey to the outskirts of Kephistrion Altis. It stops, tilting backwards a few degrees as if looking upon the night sky. A voice booms from below. "Here warriors. Here is the Black Sepulchre built by DeVayne so long ago. It is here that you must bear witness."

Clinging to the shattered remnants of the Pax Macharias's cathedral, you peer over the massive slope of the Titan at the buildings of Kephistrion Altis spread out beneath you. You can hear the sounds of sirens and alarms below you, as the city panics with the Titan's arrival. In your wake, smoke and tiny flickers of flame dot the ground, the destruction wrought by the Pax Macharias's footsteps.

The Macharias's torso turns slowly, and then powerful stab-lights in the behemoth's torso ignite, transfixing the Gilded Cathedral in their blinding, blue white glare. The golden edifice that once appeared so monumental and awe-inspiring seems little more than a toy next to the bulk of the god machine. In the square between the Macharias and the cathedral you can just make out crowds gathering as the Arbites vainly try to disperse them.

Suddenly, the Titan's siege sirens blare and you stagger, hands clasped over your ears in a vain attempt to protect against the deafening noise. Below you, you can see brief glints and flashes as the windows in the surrounding buildings shatter. The siege sirens blare again, twice, and the crowd panics, fleeing the square and the Titan looming over it. As your hearing slowly returns, you can make out the distant screams of the crowd, and something else. A humming noise, slowly building in intensity.

You search for the sound, as your hair begins to stand on end and the stench of ozone fills the air. Finally, leaning out over the Pax Macharias's left shoulder, you spot the charge coils on the massive plasma annihilator that is the Titan's left arm glowing as electricity crackles around them.

There is no time to descend to the Titan's head to stop the machine. Even as you watch, the weapon fires. A blue-white flash sears your eyes and the howling fury of a star's wrath knocks you off your feet.

Slowly, you stand, your ears bleeding, your clothes and hair singed, and your eyes still filled with retinal after-images. Carefully, you peer over the balcony.

The Gilded Cathedral is destroyed, the building's core vaporised by a direct hit as every building surrounding the square shakes furiously from the weapon's blast. Even as you watch, the golden walls of the cathedral twist and deform from the furious heat, collapsing into lakes of molten metal that spread across the blackened wasteland that used to be the cathedral square.

All that remains at the epicentre of the devastation is a stone building surrounded by solemn robed statues standing silent vigil. A single, massive defence laser protrusion has been re-purposed into a telescope, pointing at the horizon of Barsapines eternal night sky.

The path from the Nave to the Black Sepulchre below is clear, and the Pax Macharia aids you in scaling to the ground. A spotlight illuminates the rubble of the cathedral where the Black Sepulchre lies. A shimmering void shield fails out of existence allowing the players to enter the newly revealed machine. Give players a moment to react to the devastation they have wrought before they move into the Sepulchre.

Through the cogs, pistons, and astronomical devices you can see the Pax Macharia above you. A beam of light shines down through the mechanism as the device achieves its purpose, deciphering an ancient pict-file using a cypher congealed from the night sky above Barsapine.

The players have completed the adventure and should now be given the pict-file handout on page 71. The adventure ends with the Acolytes witnessing the pict-file and the revelations it holds.

WHAT'S ON THE VID-FILE?

Game Masters might wish to use The Black Sepulchre to send their Acolytes off on a different adventure that diverges from The Apostasy Gambit trilogy. The pict-file they find at the end of The Black Sepulchre creates the perfect hook to send them in whatever direction the Game Master wishes. Examples of other subjects for the hidden pict-file might include:

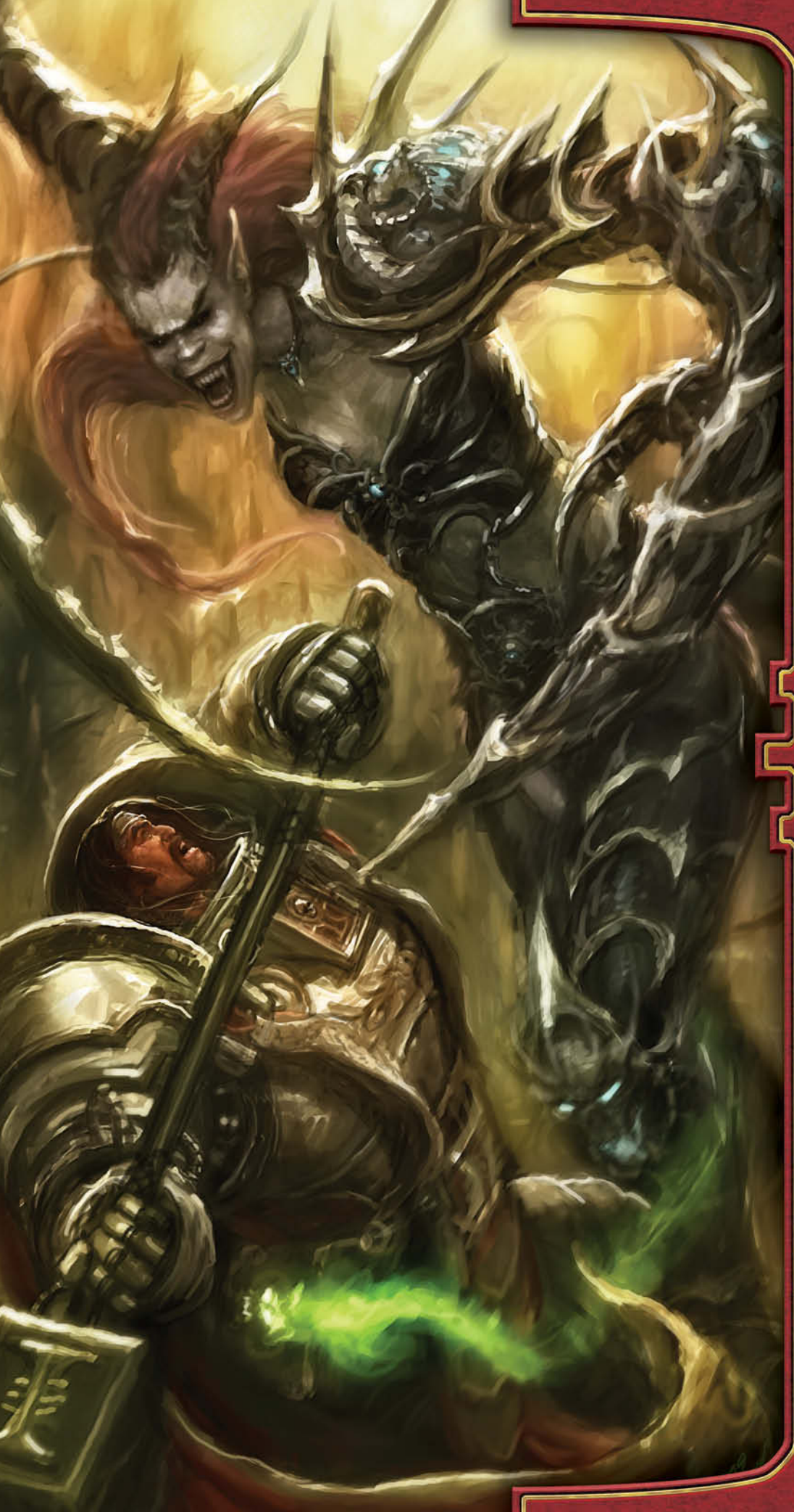
- A ritual in which another Inquisitor of the Calixian Conclave is shown being implanted with a xenos creature, something like a many-jointed worm, which writhes its way into the back of his skull.
- An image from a deep-space monitoring station, which shows realspace tearing open and a whole planet emerging from the warp. The file is very old, and the planet in question is now a heavily settled Imperial world.
- A pict-file of a woman giving birth in a plush private medicae suite. The midwife attending her picks up the baby only to see that it is a horrible, mutated thing with two heads, eight arms, and a nest of writhing tentacles in place of legs. On one wall is the coat of arms of Sector Commander Hax's dynasty, and the mother in the pict-file can be identified as Hax's own mother.

The Acolytes' patron Inquisitor is likely to now send the Acolytes to investigate Ignato who, being a summoner of daemons and a conspirator against the Imperium, is no doubt a moral threat who must be expunged and his plots exposed. However, that is a matter for another adventure, and indeed the investigation into Arch-Cardinal Ignato forms the next installment in the Apostasy Gambit series. The Inquisition might not dispatch the Acolytes on this mission straight away, however, and there is plenty of time for them to engage in other Dark Heresy adventures until their patron decides the time is right to send them after Ignato and the Maledictor's Hand.

Either way, the Inquisition is now on a collision course with the conspirators within the highest echelons of the Ecclesiarchy. The scene is set for a conflict that will drag the whole of the Calixis Sector into its terrible coils, a conflict that threatens to shake the sector to its knees.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

The Acolytes have defeated a major threat to the Calixis sector. Each Acolyte should earn at least 500 XP by the conclusion of this chapter. Games using the detailed system for experience should still award 500 XP for defeating the Dei-Phage and uncovering such a dangerous conspiracy.



APPENDIX

INQUISITOR'S ORDERS #1

•

THRUNGG'S PALACE &
JOURNAL HANDOUTS

•

INQUISITOR'S ORDERS #2

•

EXERPTS FROM
THE LIBRARIUM OF
REFLECTION

•

HAEMATITE CATHEDRAL
MAP AND HANDOUTS

•

DEVAYNE'S EVIDENCE



Thought for the day:
He who hesitates is damned.

Priority Inquisitorial Communique

Dest. Scintilla
Adeptus Astra Telepathica

Instruments of my Inquisitorial will,

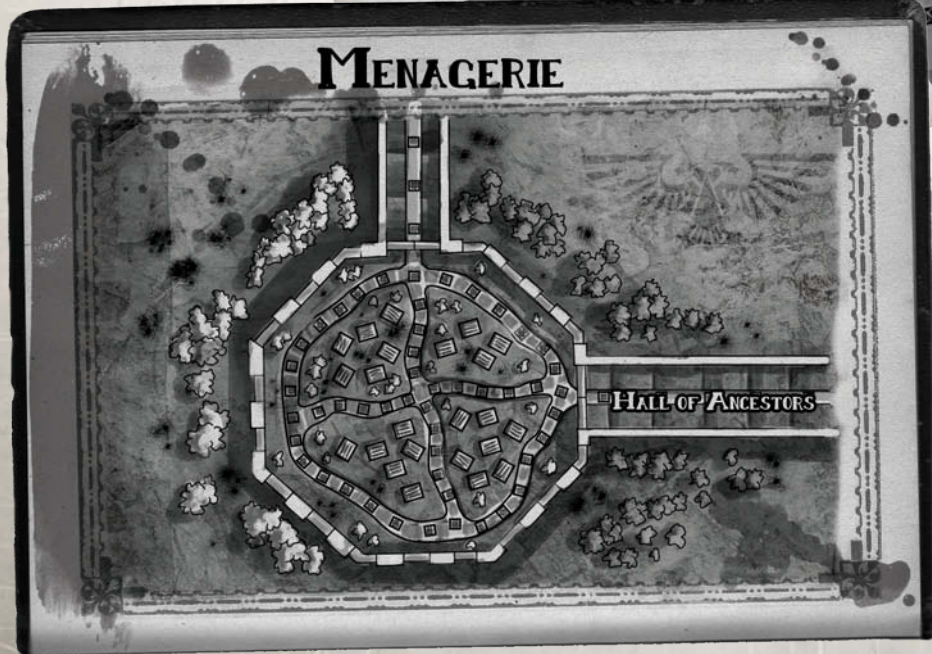
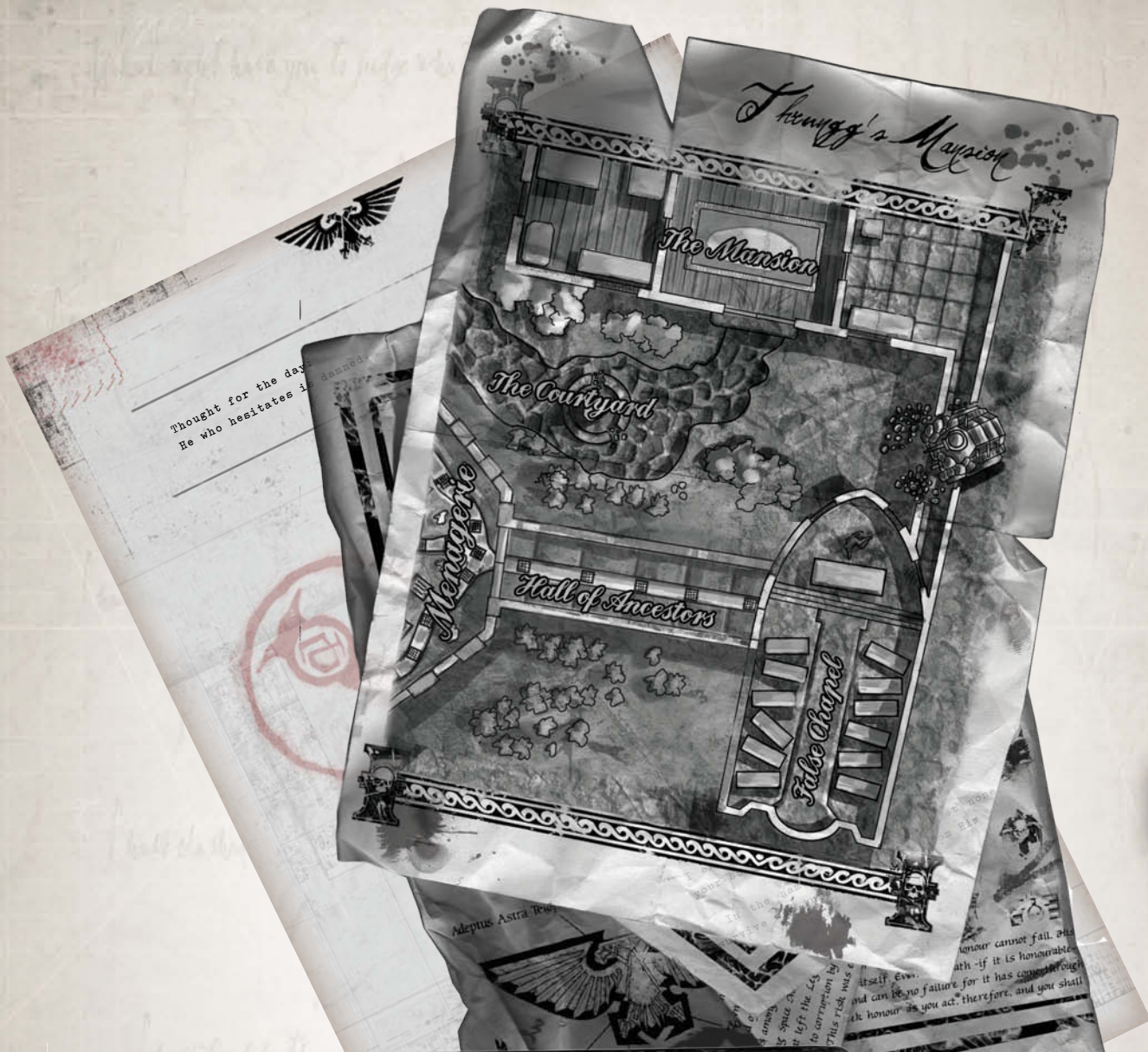
It pleases me that the heretic Bulagor Thrung should be brought to justice. His apostasy is assured, his agents have purchased a planted "artefact" that I had inserted into the Scintillan black market. He is certainly the man behind the so called Museum of Apostasy. It is without a doubt hidden somewhere within his ancestral home.

To this end I have requisitioned the use of a Valkyrie and forces from the Army of the Scintillan Protectorate. They will strike the mansion building while you, my Acolytes, will deploy into the mansion's apostate chapel, there to hold the location until the main building can be captured. Intelligence suggests the chapel will be poorly defended and deploying there will protect you from both troops on the ground and aircraft bane weapons rumoured to be present among the estate's tombs.

Your purpose is to acquire evidence of Thrung's possession of forbidden items, and to assist in his capture if necessary. I expect to soon take solace in news of your success.

In the name of the Emperor, let none survive who turn their faces from Him.





indeed I dare say she was quite mad after the experience. If one were to attempt to put into words the majesty of what the three of us saw within the hand they would surely fail. I have dined with poets, Navigators and Astropaths and none have described in words what the soul knows when it bears witness to it. Through the hand we three touched the mind of a god, horrific to comprehend and impossible to ignore.

Day 72

My compatriots have been dealt with. Poor Skrivus was so shaken by the truth of things, by the unbridled knowledge thrust into us, that he fell to petty worship again. He certainly would have confessed his sins had he been given time. My pets made quick work of any evidence, perhaps I should be concerned that they are developing a taste for more refined meals.

Day 76

The confluence of signs, invisible to the unaware, is almost nigh. My communion with the hand will see the true birthright of the Thrungg dynasty thrust into the stars. The meek will bow, I will be recognised the seer of seers. The stars above Gunmetal City wink and twinkle in an almost unperceptable pattern. They speak to me, a voice from beyond the percieveable. They call in a language so ancient that none can pronounce it, but all is understood. Taste upon me thy words, touch within me thy message.

Day 78

Without traversing the body from the museum, the mind has crossed the ocean of the warp to my tutors realm. I now know the glorious destiny set forth for me, carved by chance. Teeth like blades, scales like the sky, a single spine that hooks behind. Perfect in its creation, surely a child of my tutor.

I have seen the great conflict. The thousand-fold truth battles against the knight. A standstill, they hold each other, a grapple so implacable that even time stands still in its grip. The Dei-Phage rots in the fist, but the fist cannot move, it must not move.

What have we become? Skrivus was right. It matters not unto... it doesn't. No, Skrivus was a coward. We have traveled too far down this road to turn back. Devotion remains ahead.

Day 80

I have borne witness to the fortress of the eater of gods. The temple of gold with a heart of coal. It stands alone against the darkness, shining for all to see. It is but a marker on the path, but a path to the Dei-Phage is a home to all who have the will to understand. A path to he who will swallow the unworthy god and supplant him. I will be at his side when Hekate's champion rises from the brine!

Day 83

We are one! Glorious to my flesh. Certainly my ascendance is near, for I have touched the hand of the Dei-Phage and it has blessed me as it has no other. I alone have the mastery of this gift, I alone survive its gentle caress.

Day 85

He tells me that doom is coming. That the wings of the warrior angel bear into the flesh the righteous indignation of false gods. Even in my enlightened state there is no deciphering such cryptic promises. Doom for who? Is this the doom I will strike across the stars? Is this my own doom, a warning from my friend so that it can be avoided? I will not risk my destiny on such a chance. The house guard have been resupplied. Watches at all times and no fewer than fifty men on duty. A small pittance to pay for the certainty of





Thought for the day:

In His service one is never
sacrificing, nor shall one ever
sacrifice enough.

Priority Inquisitorial Communique

Dest. Barsapine
Adeptus Astra Telepathica

Instruments of my Inquisitorial will,

Our investigations into the crimes of House Thrunng are now complete. While you have been in transit to the Gilded Cathedral on Barsapine, the holdings and titles of Bulagor Thrunng as well as those of his extended family have been revoked. Service in His name is never complete and it falls to you now to continue the investigations into the source of the most dangerous artefact among those deemed heretical.

The faemonic hand that you reclaimed from the corpse of Thrunng has its roots somewhere on Barsapine. It is my concern that the noble houses there as well may be harboring corruptive influences. Abbot Jurutas has been informed of your arrival and will provide you all the succour and assistance you require while investigating the Gilded Cathedral for clues to point you to the corruptive influence.

Find the source of this object and bring to it the righteous light of He Who Is On Earth. Leave no stone unturned and no thread unravelled in your search.

Awaiting you when you make landfall will be a transport for your use on Barsapine, as well as several devices you may find useful. The Medispex servitor is an old device that should be treated with care, I expect it to be returned in proper order when your mission concludes. Additionally, the armaments you had available in the assault on Thrunng Manor are available here as well. Should you require anything supplementary I leave you to your own devices.

One last note, please be subtle in your efforts. Abbot Jurutas knows your purpose but the others within his parish do not. The Gilded Cathedral is the most holy location on all of Barsapine and I do not wish to disrupt its day to day operations without reason.

In the name of the Emperor, let none survive who turn their faces from Him.



Ecclesiarchal Holding #117, The Chamber of Uplifted Voices located within Kephistron Altis, Clergy in Residence Abbot Vernstehn. His holy hymn ceases not Assigned supplemental clergy upon the feast of St. Drusus, expected pilgrimage requires no fewer than fifty clergy prepared to administer penance.

Ecclesiarchal Holding #118, The Gilded Cathedral located within Kephistron Inferior, Clergy in Residence Abbot Clandis. The Light of the God-Emperor shines upon us all and gives day where there is night. Request Adeptus Mechanicus assistance determining function of Black Sepulchre.

Ecclesiarchal Holding #119, The Chapel of St. Drusus located within Kephistron Altis, Clergy in Residence Cleric Adalmento. The Saint's truth shared with the honest soldiers of the Brontian Longknives, 407th infantry battalion. Re-assign Cleric Adalmento after re-deployment of 407th.

Ecclesiarchal Holding #120, Haematite Cathedral, located upon the Twilight Ridge along eastern coastline, Clergy in Residence None. Assign no clergy to this accursed place. Request Ordo Hereticus investigation into activities of Koronath Hekate, Gustavus Hekate and Nikaea Hekate.

Ecclesiarchal Holding #121, Outpost 408 located Along Western Coastline, Daylight Ridge, Clergy in Residence Missionary Steel. Shining the light of the God-Emperor upon the nomads of the desert wastes.

Ecclesiarchal Holding #122, Bulwark of Sevastian located within Desacryne, Clergy in Residence Drill Abbot Von Marker. Preparing the faithful pupils for purging of possible greenskin infestation.

Ecclesiarchal Holding #123, Outpost 410 located along Twilight Ridge on western coastline, Clergy in Residence Cleric Stednesh. Observing the sea for greenskin threats. Cleric Stednesh has been in solitude for fifteen years, summon to Desacryne for

The Dei-Phage? Aematite Cathedral?

The march of the Titan Legions is a sight like no other. These towering God-Machines stride into battle with unstoppable force, their honour banners inspiring thousands of warriors who mill about their churning feet like tiny insects. The rippling corona of void shields surround the Titans with tinctures of actinic fire, a blazing borealis that shrugs off enemy fire as a mere annoyance. Each thunderous step of a Titan shakes the ground with powerful impacts, and the psychological impact of a Titan's presence is simply impossible to ignore. I have seen vast armies of lesser foes turn tail and flee at the sight of a rampaging Titan of Mars.

What must it be like, to command such a machine? To walk amongst the mightiest army like a god, dispensing death and mercy with but a thought? I am but a humble scribe, but my dearest wish is that I could have joined those men and women, the princeps and moderati who serve upon a Titan's bridge and direct the God-Machine's actions on the battlefield.

The Tech-Priests who venerate these massive war machines accord them all obeisance; to the Machine Cult, Titans are pure expressions of the Omnissiah's wrath, and the Mechanicus will go to any length to recover even the smallest portion of a Titan's sanctified body. I have witnessed the massive open bays where Titans rest upon the mass conveyors as they are transported between the stars; swarms of Tech-adepts bestowing the Omnissiah's blessing upon every cog and switch, chanting litanies of maintenance upon every circuit and relay.

The greatest of these Titans are mountainous in size, able to stride across cities. Among these Titans are the Emperor-class, majestic and colossal. Armed with lasers, cannons, and more esoteric weapons of immense size and power, Emperor-class Titans are one of the ultimate war machines fielded by the Adeptus Mechanicus. There is a legend that one such Emperor-class Titan, the Pax Macharius, fought alone against an entire greenskin Waaagh! during the Angevin Crusade. At the conclusion of the battle, only the Titan remained, surrounded by a burning waste, the air choked with tons of ash made from the flesh of its foes.

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1. THE GROUNDS
2. THE NAVE
3. SKULLERIA
5. THE TROPHY ROOM
6. WARRANT ROOM
7. THE SCHOLARIA
8. CHAMBERS
9. THE BALLROOM
10. LIBRARIUM
11. THE SANITORIUM
12. PLANETARIUM

THE HAEMATITE CATHEDRAL

*through
starlight
enemy for too long
who does not obey the ru
gripped as he is in the equivalent religious ecstasy.*

I fear these are the last words I shall write. Gustavus is rampaging about the house looking for me. I have never been so certain that he has done terrible things, and now he knows my suspicions, surely my death shall soon be among his crimes. I hide here in my chamber, knowing that I cannot ever truly hide from him. This room, I fear, shall become my tomb.

Perhaps these pages will reach someone beyond the Cathedral. I cast them now into the air, knowing the descent from my window to the grounds is too perilous. Would that these words make that journey, and cast upon the winds of Barsapine find sympathetic eyes to read them. If you are such a friend, find my body, punish Gustavus, and uncover that which lurks in this damned place.

Of Gustavus, I become more suspicious by the day. For not but two days ago a clergyman came to visit. Though I witnessed Gustavus leading the gentleman about the Solarium and other places in the house, I did not see him leave, nor did I hear them talking in the evening when I might have expected them to be discussing matters of religion and politics. The next day, while Gustavus and Yorkas were out hunting in the dunes, I risked much to travel to Ephistrom Altis in disguise without his knowing. There I found, from enquiries at the chapels and house of this clergyman, that he has not been seen there since he came to the Cathedral. I greatly fear that some grave fate has befallen him at the hands of the mad Gustavus.

I have resolved to investigate the efforts Gustavus puts forth in his secret study. He believes his room hidden perfectly beneath the skullaria but I have divined that he performs some dark act beneath the great furnace. I must be careful in this not to involve Bellica, for Bellica is both simple of mind and devoted to Gustavus, and he will surely react to any suspicion of hers with the anger of the betrayed. No, it must be my burden alone to discover what he has been doing that has caused so many to go missing after attending this house.

I shall be careful, Gustavus has little love for me and will no doubt move against my every action, perhaps even with violence, should he suspect I am on the brink of turning against him. Might I also disappear? I shall not be missed, I fear, and then surely no one will look for me for none have come to seek any at the Cathedral save perhaps a few that Gustavus has dealt with in turn. I must be vigilant. My old friend shall not have cause to turn on me. He must not.

-Hadria Hekate,
3rd sun of Drusus' Month.

In conclusion, it is this specific alignment, a simultaneous eclipse of the seventh and ninth planets in the Barsapine system, that will create a meta-galactic prophetic space. It is nigh impossible to describe such an event in mundane geoshape concepts.

Indeed the last such confluence happened during the Angevin Crusade, when the great war-machine of the Imperium wrested this planet from the Greenskins. The turmoil of warfare no doubt caused scholars of the day to miss the importance of such an event. Surely if one had taken advantage of the meta-galactic prophetic space then a record would exist someplace within the Imperial archives. I have spent considerable resources looking for such documents and have found none.

Such an event would form the crux upon which future history shall tip and thusly deliver unto us a thousand truths from which shall flow the power that lies beyond the Veil. Surely this must herald an event of no less importance than the coming of St. Drusus, for which the first confluence served as harbinger.

Alas, the next such alignment is not due to take place for another five thousand years. Would that I knew just one of those secrets, that of greatly extended lifespan, so that I might be alive to see such a prophecy enacted in the sky above me! Alas my oculars must serve as the key to my own secrets. So too shall an eclipse of the seventh and ninth planet be the key.

So a legacy must be left behind. If I cannot be there to witness the sacred alignment, I must ensure that my work is continued by the society of Barsapine, though afflicted by cultural poverty it be. To this end my work in curing the mental afflictions of my relatives has been expanded to controlling them in the hope that with the techniques thus perfected I can manipulate the society of this small-minded world to continue on my work when I am gone.

As long as one soul on this planet understands the significance of the double eclipse, then hope for the enlightenment of the human race shall not die.

Koronath Hekate

DEVAYNE'S EVIDENCE

The interior of an ornate chapel, dimly lit by candles flutters into view all around you upon the black stone walls of the sepulchre.

Two dozen or so robed figures gather in the centre of the chapel. One draws back his hood to reveal a man with a thin face, narrow eyes, and an air of authority. He holds up a skull into which are set several rubies, emeralds, and diamonds.

"Brethren," he says. "By this gathering is the Maledictor's Hand founded. Let there be no mistaking our purpose. We are all of the same mind, that the Calixis Sector is a pit of sin and depravity, and that it must be cleansed. Our task is to bring about a religious cataclysm, the fires of which shall burn this sector's corrupt and stagnant worlds, to be replaced with a fresh crop of believers under the rulership of the clergy we place in power."

The thin-faced man holds up the skull and pours a trickle of something viscous and red from its eye sockets, which drips onto his lips. He hands the skull to the robed figure beside him, who drinks from it in the same way before passing it on.

"What is our next step, my lord?" asks one of the robed figures closest to the commander.

"Now we go on our separate ways," replies the leader. "Seek out positions of influence in the Ecclesiarchy. I shall set my sights on the Deaconship of the Cathedral of Illumination. My ascension to the position of cardinal is already all but assured. We shall not meet in this way again, but by certain signs and code words I have distributed among you, members of the Maledictor's Hand shall know one another should our paths cross. To be specific, several of us shall ensure that our members are..."

"My brothers!" cries one of the robed figures. "We are discovered, we are no longer secure!"

"Stop him!" cries another. "Seize him! The spy must be silenced, activate the arco-flagellants, do not let him escape!"

"Kill him! Tear out his eyes!" The leader screams his debased commandment and for the briefest moment his face is painfully clear. Though younger and in better health, it is unmistakable. The man at the head of the Maledictor's Hand is Arch-Cardinal Ignato, the unquestionable authority over the Ecclesiarchy within the Calixis Sector.

Several of the figures turn in the direction of the vidcap recording the pict-file. The image shakes as if someone holding the vidcap moves suddenly. The viewpoint swings as the device is picked up and the person carrying it flees. The image is filled with static, then the images turn black and the file ends.

The Black Sepulchre groans under the weight of ages and an acrid black smoke fills the air. It is clear that whatever stored this data is now lost and the Black Sepulchre ruined in the process. There can be no more witnesses to this atrocity and no proof of what transpired.



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