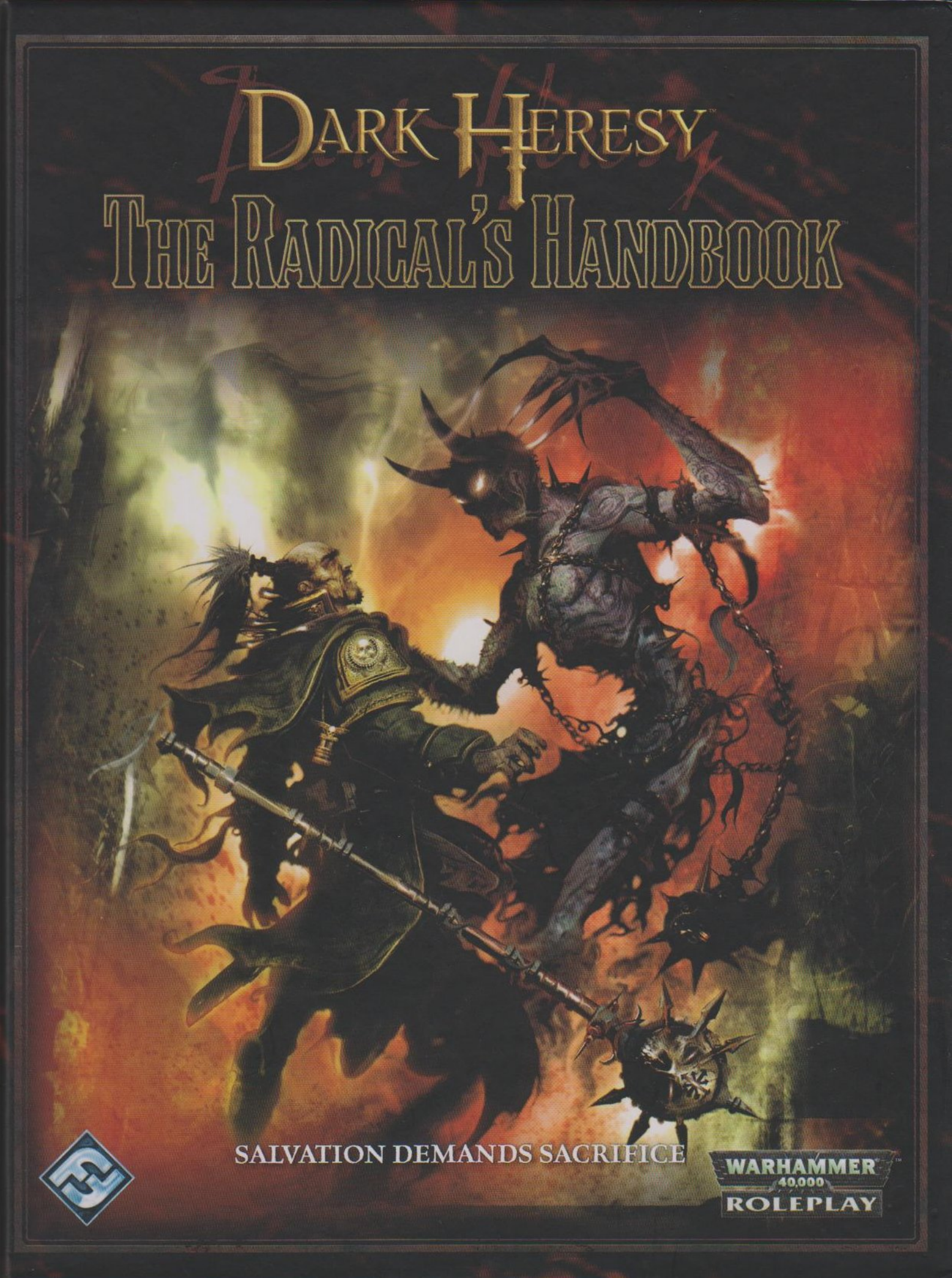
Dark Heresy

The Radical's Handbook



SALVATION DEMANDS SACRIFICE

WARHAMMER 40,000 ROLEPLAY

Imperator mos reservo nos totus ~ Magnus ornamentum nunquam defessus
Pacis est tussor somnium
Permissum flamma exsisto sentio ~ Veritas
Forward
Beatus est mens ut est quoque pegrantis bubito
Tibes
THE HALO STARS
Pulsars
PEARL FRONTIER
SUBSECTOR SWALFEN
SUBSECTOR SEPHERIS SECUNDUS
Gant Mission
Scarus Sector
Fenris - Feral World
Kaal
Gant Mission - Frontier
Gant Mission - Frontier World
Lavanide
Lavanide - Hive World
Secundus
Secundus - Agri World
Secundus - Agri World
Orbi Quill
Orbi Quill - Agri World
Dusk
Dusk - Feral World
Malfi
Malfi - Hive World
Landfinder
Landfinder - Mining World
The Lathes
The Lathes - Forge Worlds
Settlement 228
Settlement 228 - Frontier World
Cintilla
Cintilla - Sector Capital
Tranch
Tranch - Hive World
Specteris
Specteris - Quota World
Sentinel
Sentinel - Subs World
DRUSUS MARCHES
Tanst
To the Great Cloud
The Calixis Sector
Tempestus Obscurus
I
Spire Mission

Astronimicon vadum rector nos per [illegible] Deus-Imperator misericordia
Fides non Alienus, Haereticum, Venefícus
Coreward
Morior in Suus numeris est scio eternus vita
Totus laus immortalis Imperator super suus rutilus per ~ Rex pro eblinio
Ixania Sector
Josian Reach
Fenksworld
Hive World
Zillmann's Domain
Death Lk.
Markaan Marches
Hecd
Wybo
Dead World
Ionanthus
Gulgen Reac
Actaeg
Jungle - Feral World
Path of the Misericord
Grangold
Agri-World - Dead World
41 Pry
Hive - Spire Station
Woe
Death - Dead World
Lehyde Ten
Agri-World - Dead World
Grantis Nebula
Regulus
Agri-World - Agri-world
Cloister
Forge - Forge World
Baraspine
Hive World
Hazeroth Abyss
Meridiana Saturus



Dark Heresy

The Radical's Handbook



ROLEPLAYING IN THE GRIM
DARKNESS OF THE 41ST MILLENNIUM

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INTRODUCTION

Agents of the Inquisition must go to great lengths to defend the Imperium from the many foes that threaten it. Over time, it becomes easier and easier for an Acolyte to justify using questionable means to accomplish the daunting tasks before him. Eventually, that road leads either to outright heresy—or the path of the Radical. Radicals are those agents of the Golden Throne who turn to methods, tools, and ideologies forbidden by the Imperial creed, choosing instead to turn the darkness against itself. This proves to be a slippery slope indeed, and thus Radicals tread where many others fear to follow, imperiling their very souls in the quest to find salvation for a million worlds.

WHAT'S IN THIS BOOK?

The Radical's Handbook is a sourcebook for both Game Masters and players, containing a broad range of new player character options, including new origins, alternate career ranks, and other interesting ways to expand the available choices. The focus of this book is the Radical's path, where salvation demands sacrifice; and often, the first thing an Acolyte gives up is his conviction in the Imperial creed.

Weapons from bizarre alien species, items crafted using the daemonic power of the warp, and heretical teachings all lie between these covers. You have been warned! Only the bold should continue, for the path of the Radical leads deeper into the darkness...all the better to fight against it, of course.

CHAPTER I: DARKNESS VISIBLE

In Chapter I, mysteries and discord within the heart of the Inquisition are revealed in these fragments relating to the missions of a deadly assassin in the service of a Radical Inquisitor.

CHAPTER II: FALLING FROM GRACE

Chapter II begins with how Radicals are made; some begin pure and turn to the Radical's path, whilst others were certain of their twisted ideals from the start. The later sections of this chapter provides players of **DARK HERESY** with radical origins, background packages, alternate career ranks and elite advances.

CHAPTER III: FACTIONS

Chapter III includes several different groups of Radicals, including many native to the Calixis Sector; each has their own preferred methodology.

CHAPTER IV: THE SHADOW WAR

Chapter IV focuses on the tools and methodologies used by those who fight their battles in secret using subtle methods and the resources of the unclean.

CHAPTER V: THE DARK ARTS

Chapter V discusses sorcery and the lure of daemon weapons, powerful resources to the Radical who is willing to risk his soul to take advantage of them. It also delves into the mysteries of dark technology that radicals may seek to wield.

CHAPTER VI: THE LURE OF THE ALIEN

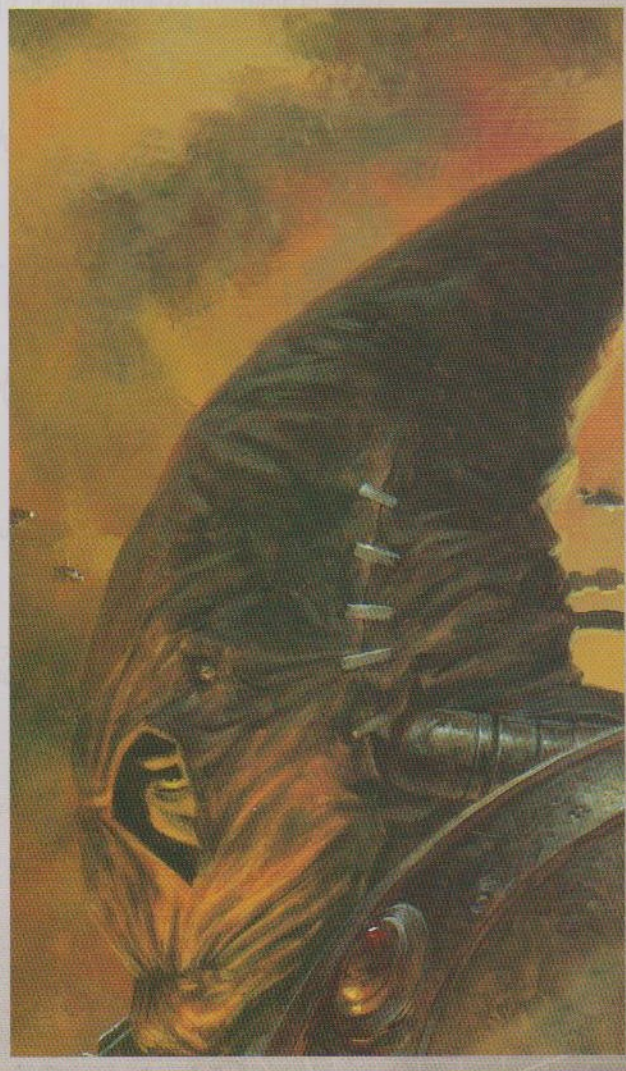
Chapter VI showcases the advanced technologies and strange outlooks of alien species. Radicals often resort to such allies in defiance of the Imperial creed.

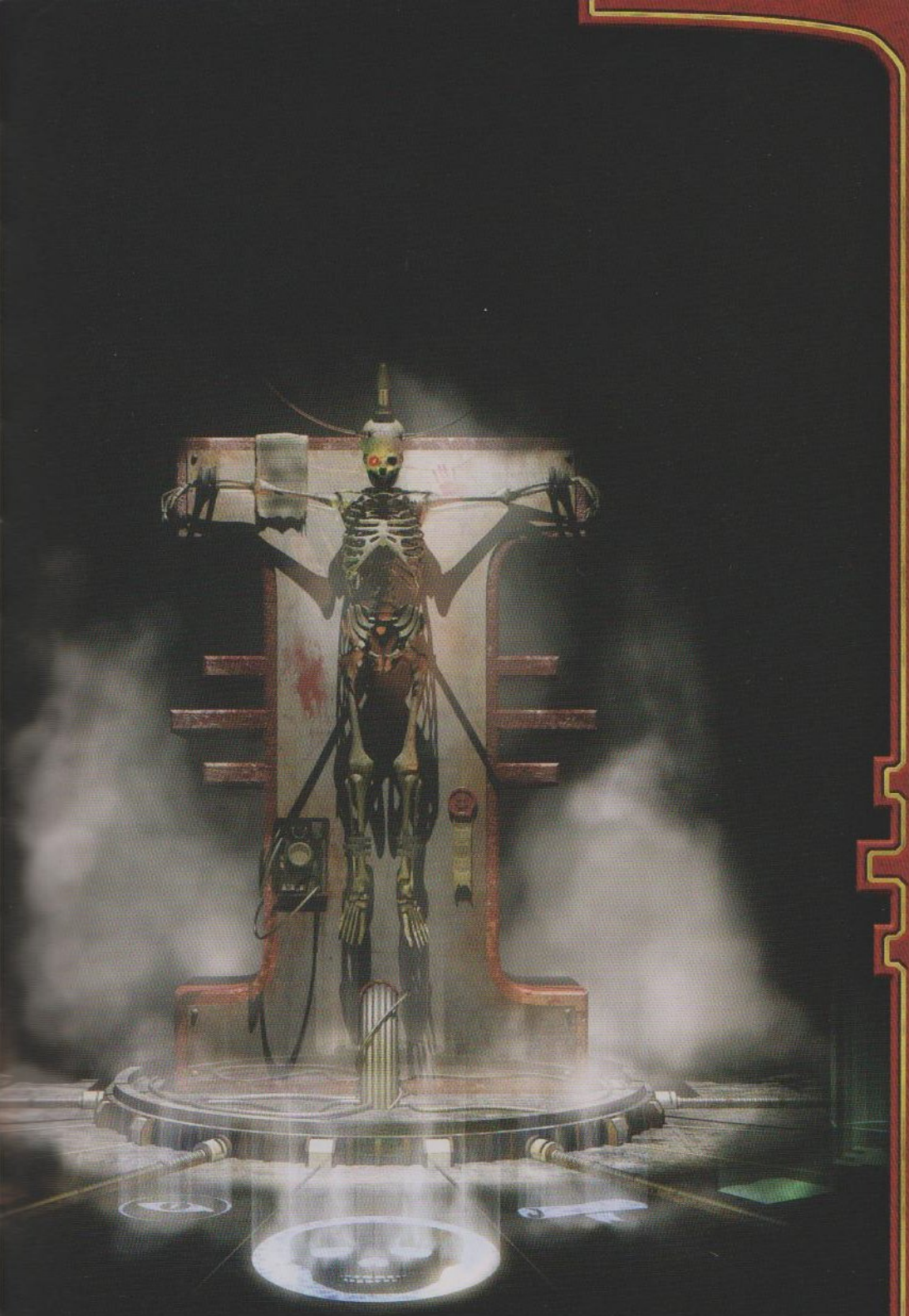
CHAPTER VII: THE RADICAL CAMPAIGN

Chapter VII provides a framework that a Game Master can use to bring Radicals and Radicalism to centre stage in his campaign, and how to begin a campaign with Radical characters or serving a Radical Inquisitor.

CHAPTER VIII: CALIXIAN RADICALS

Chapter VIII centres around the profiles of some of the most dangerous and infamous individuals in the Calixis Sector, Radicals for whom there is no going back.





I

Darkness Visible

The Assassin's Tale

•

The Fate of Saldon

•

Misery IX

+++EXTRACT ARCHIVE – COLLEGIUM AUTHORISATION RRK/090022+++
Subject: KXK-99 (nomen: Nwana Zhankis)
Status: Active
Handler: [DELETED]
Holding: Facility 9k/Archaos
Dissemination: Limited/Tenebrae Collegium Sub Cell 7/Sleeper Alpha-Omega
+++BEGIN TRANSCRIPT+++
Handler: [UNDECIPHERABLE] …afford another failure. Deactivating psyoccular loop. Feedback stabilising…stand by.
Subject: [UNDECIPHERABLE]…[SCREAMING: 17 MINUTES, 45 SECONDS]
Handler: Do you hear me?
Subject: I…
Handler: Answer me, girl. Do you hear me?
Subject: I…hear.
Handler: Who are you?
Subject: I…I am…I am what you order. My…lord.
Handler: Good. You are Nwana Zhankis, Reaper of the Seventh Tier. Do you remember now?
Subject: I am Nwana Zhankis. I am Reaper. I am Moritat.
Handler: Good [PAUSE: 2 MINUTES, 28 SECONDS] Who am I, girl?
Subject: You? You are…my master. That is all I know.
Handler: Good. That is all you need recall.
+++END TRANSCRIPT+++
Commit to file YXX/Tenab/23873030/xn

Lord Inquisitor Zerbe,

These files and dataslates were unearthed in the Tricorn's sealed vault, number 454-Alpha. My Lord, this data requires your immediate attention.

Adept Saldon
Artifex Aenigmatum

Subject: KXK-99 Subfile Delta 7

Nwana Zhankis was born of bloodshed. At age 12 she witnessed an older, male sibling come into psychic powers in a violent fashion, calling into being a beast of the abyss during a tribal feast. The fiend possessed her sibling, altering his form into that of an abomination of tooth and claw before slaughtering the household of the tribal chief and feasting on the remains. How Zhankis survived the massacre is a mystery, but when Inquisition agents arrived, they found her in the ruins of the tribe's great hall, smothered in the congealed blood of her own clan. There was no sign of the beast, though a significant psi-aura remained. Every settlement for twenty kilometres was razed, and the child passed into the care of a bonded Moritat cell.

Zhankis has served the Collegium on many assignments. Following each activation, her experiences are extracted by way of mental probe, and then she is subjected to a deep scan/meta-cleansing ritual. This retrieves a full description of the mission, including the entire range of subjective and objective sensory inputs. These form the basis of the mission archives attached to this archive.

MISSION EXTRACT:

Engaged three resurrected H-grade combat servitors at Sabriel facility. Two were terminated by exsanguination, the third by terminal excision of prefrontal cortex. All evidence of mission removed by detachment of docking unit.

MISSION EXTRACT:

Terminated rogue psyker "The Lady of Quitus" after seven-month dormancy in a sub-zero, null-enviro cargo distribution unit aboard Adeptus Mechanicus mass conveyance *Fire of the Forge*. Kill was only achieved after the termination of approximately 27 dominated minions.

MISSION EXTRACT:

Terminated entire C Company of the recently tithed 122nd Vaxanide Dragoons while the unit was receiving adverse environment training at Solomon. Achieved by way of falsifying of the company's orders, leading the Dragoons into a region of acid marshes for which their protective gear was entirely inappropriate. The company had been earmarked to serve under Inquisitor Halk's troublesome Section 88 detachment, and its termination is believed to have put our enemies' agenda back three decades.

MISSION EXTRACT:

Infiltrated Xeiros Prime cordon to recover the remains of certain individuals linked to the Collegium. Whilst searching the ruins atop hill 9921, Zhankis discovered a kill-cell apparently searching for the same remains. The identities of these enemies were never proven, though it is my own belief that they were former agents of Lady [DELETED] who had reneged on their oaths and were acting against our interests. Zhankis engaged in an extended counter/prey scenario, terminating each of the enemy one individual at a time. Each was a highly skilled foe, and several exhibited significant psychic potential. Though the mission overran by three weeks, the enemies were defeated, their remains brought back to Facility 9K along with those she had originally been dispatched to recover.

MISSION DXK/12A

TARGET: Astropath Adept Krahankha Njax

Njax is an Astropath of nigh on a century's experience and leads a chorum of the Hive Sibellus Choir on Scintilla. It is my belief that he has accompanied a number of special circumstance missions in a capacity detrimental to our objectives. Although I have no hard evidence, I suspect Njax is working within the extended network of Inquisitor Halk. I came to this conclusion following investigations into Halk's ill-conceived purging of the Cult Epicurean offshoot on Kinog 17 years ago, wherein Njax evidently played a central role in decoding the cult's unorthodox battle cant.

Following that initial mission, Njax soon appeared again, this time accompanying one of Halk's inner circle cells on a mission to Prol IV. This particular venture appears linked to the workings of the distant Dagma-Lupin Bureau of Revision. It is apparent that Njax's talents were to be used to transmit readings of otherwise sealed archives from directly under the noses of the Decalogues. Exactly what data this cell aimed to purloin was never discovered, for our own operatives intercepted Halk's team before the reading could be transmitted. Njax and most of the cell escaped, though we claimed the scalp of Interrogator Anrai that day, our excuriators repaying him tenfold for his lies at the Seventh Denunciation of Lord Grantis.

For the next decade or so, Njax appears to have concentrated his efforts on his duties in the Scintilla Choir, attaining senior rank in a short time. Despite the fact that my agents never conclusively or directly linked him with Halk, he did appear to make a number of voyages to out-sector locations, several of which coincided with sightings of other individuals linked to our enemies. This fact alone was sufficient reason to maintain a close watch upon his movements. The wisdom of this action has now proven itself.

Three months ago Njax participated in a special circumstance mission, ordered by Inquisitor Halk, aimed at infiltrating our own network. My operation become aware of the attempt following a remote prognostication reading, and this was confirmed by three separate tarot readings. Forewarned, my agents were able to set a trap for Halk's cell as its members undertook their infiltration. A firefight ensued in the main terminus of the Saint Jowkin facility, in which three of Halk's senior Acolytes, including the Prime, were killed. Though Njax escaped, I now judge the time is right to terminate him, and that none would dare raise objection for fear of unmasking their own complicity in previous actions. To that end, I have ordered the activation of agent KXK-99 to undertake a level-four termination mission.

MISSION ARCHIVAL EXTRACT—RETRIEVE AND PURGE
Agent KXK-99 to be activated as per Protocol D33.
Exfiltration of Facility 9K via secure route into Archaos primary hub.
Bonded/secure transportation

My lords, I have to report that the termination of Krahankha Njax is accomplished. Zhankis achieved her mission with minimal complication, and at this time it appears that no complications have arisen.

Zhankis infiltrated Hive Sibellus as planned, working her way from the bonded transport to the periphery of the Sibellus Choir by way of the route engrams implanted during activation. This route took her through a circuit of disused ducts, within which she encountered and terminated a number of extra-mission enemies. These were largely criminal elements hiding out in the ducts, including several Imperial Guard deserters.

The first group, evidently a criminal gang attempting to smuggle narcotics uphive, was terminated with 100 percent success, nine individuals being dispatched within 27 seconds using a variety of blade, blunt trauma, and exsanguination techniques.

The second group encountered appeared, by their tribal markings and unit insignia, to have been Imperial Guard veterans of the Mkak Suppressions. It was my belief—shared by many among the sub-cell, that all survivors of those missions had been isolated, but apparently we are in error. Zhankis dispatched this group with relative ease, though she did take recourse in ranged weaponry to ensure the last of the veterans did not escape. This action took almost nine minutes, and so did not put the mission outside of its Limit of Action.

The remainder of the infiltration saw a number of smaller incidents, all of which were safely within mission parameters and merely served to whet the agent's appetite for the termination of her target.

Entry into the Choir facility was achieved by way of a chem waste outflow vent. The vent's alignment did not match the data provided, and although Zhankis achieved entry nonetheless, this incident alone could have served to scupper the mission. Data source to be terminated (erroneous or compromised).

Seventeen minutes into this phase of the mission, Zhankis perceived that she was being tracked. She looped back upon her course and set an ambush, detecting an enemy approaching. Soon the enemy knew he was compromised, and Zhankis launched her attack. It is not apparent who this foe was [SEE ATTACHED SUBFILE DY/87303 FOR CEREBRAL TISSUE SAMPLE], but he proved well-schooled in the assassin's arts. The close confines of the chem waste vent made for a desperate and close-fought struggle, but Zhankis was able to overcome her foe and turn his blade in his hand and penetrate his left eye socket (retrieving tissue sample in the process). This action had cost the mission time, however, and the Limit of Action was now perilously close.

In order to reach the target's sanctum within mission parameters, Zhankis used a secondary route, one that took her through a network of cloistered access galleries used by the Choir's menials. She encountered a number of servitors, but each was mono-tasked and did not note or respond to her passing. This phase of the mission passed without incident, and the sanctum was reached three minutes short of the allotted time.

Entry to the sanctum was due to be achieved using codes provided by the source, but Zhankis decided this method was unreliable in light of the information relating to the duct outflow. She instead used backup implanted sub-code overrides. This course of action was risky but proved wise, as in so doing she discovered that the original codes were indeed outdated and an attempt to use them would have resulted in a level-three alert being sounded.

Once inside the sanctum, Zhankis proceeded with extreme caution to the target location. There she discovered Njax about his ablutions. Despite the inviting nature of the target's disposition, Zhankis delayed her attack, sensing something amiss. As she watched from the shadows, the presence of a second tracker, similar to the type encountered in the duct, became known to her.

Zhankis now knew that her mission was likely to be compromised, but made the decision not to abort. Instead, she remained in her hiding place in the shadows and awaited an opportunity to attack. That opportunity came when the target completed is ablutions and commenced preparations to enter the trance-sleep state all of his type must undergo in order to cleanse themselves of any taint picked up during the course of their duties in the Choir. At that moment, the tracker made to alter his position in the sanctum, in so doing turning his back upon Zhankis.

Knowing that another opportunity might not present itself, Zhankis leapt from the shadows, drawing two blades, one in each hand. With her left blade, she inflicted a non-lethal wound to Njax's jugular, causing her target to stagger backwards, unable to call for help, and to attempt to stem the flow of blood with both hands. Simultaneously, she decapitated the tracker with her right hand blade.

As Zkankis made to dispatch Njax in the proscribed manner, he was able to launch a desperate, unfocussed psychic assault. Zhankis was shielded however, and well disciplined in resisting such attacks. The resulting feedback stunned Zhankis, but inflicted a fatal etheric cerebral intrusion upon Njax. Though not carried out exactly according to plan, the termination was a clean one.

Zhankis exfiltrated according to mission template, monitoring the Choir's augur net as she did so. Analysis shows that no alarm was raised until well after she had cleared the Choir perimeter.

Subsequent phases went entirely to plan, and Zhankis is once again held in Facility 9-K.

I submit to the sub-cell that our agenda has been advanced significantly by the termination of Krahankha Njax, and that we should proceed immediately to the next phase.

The bared blade cuts both ways...
-A. H.

+++EXTRACT ARCHIVE – COLLEGIUM AUTHORISATION RRK/090022+++
Subject: KXK-99 (nomen: Nwana Zhankis)
Status: Active
Handler: [DELETED]
Holding: Facility 9k/Archaos
Dissemination: Limited/Tenebrae Collegium Sub Cell 7/Sleeper Alpha-Omega
+++BEGIN TRANSCRIPT+++
Handler: Agent KXK-99. Do you hear me?
Subject: [SCREAMING: 29 MINUTES, 02 SECONDS]
Handler: I repeat, Agent KXK-99. Do you hear me?
Subject: I…I hear you.
Handler: Who am I?
Subject: Who…who are you? I…I don't remember…
Handler: I am your master. Do you recall now, girl?
Subject: You are my master. I remember…
Handler: And who are you?
Subject: I am what ever you say I am…my lord.
Handler: That is correct, girl. You are Nwana Zhankis, Reaper of the Seventh Tier. Do you recall now?
Subject: I am Nwana Zhankis. I am Reaper. I am Moritat.
Handler: Good. Now heed my orders, Reaper…
+++END TRANSCRIPT+++
Commit to file YXX/Tenab/238eu389/dd

Dispatch Agent 22-B to Vault 454-Alpha at once, Code Green. Tell her I want Saldon dealt with.

—Z

EXCOMMUNICATE TRAITORIS

MISSION DWQ/28Q

Target: Over-consul Designate Maxim Denn

Maxim Denn has served the Administratum for some 150 years, at least 75 of these within the Calixis Sector. Of his career before he arrived on Scintilla, very little is certain. However, I came to believe some decades ago that he had participated in at least two sub-consular delegations to Terra, and so implemented a series of Epsilon Doctrine vigilance routines, limited exclusively to bonded TerraNet metaprobes.

For years, the Epsilon routines returned only limited signals of intelligence, amounting to little more than background noise. And then, three months ago, the returns increased exponentially. I ordered a cypher-con audit, back-tracing the metaprobes to within a tolerance of seven generations. Though the process was costly in resources and chanced detection, I believe it was worthwhile, for it established firm connections between Maxim Denn and at least a dozen of our most bitter rivals within the Ordos Calixis. At this stage, even in a transmission I know to be secure and untraceable, I hesitate to name these rivals. We have all seen the results of such breaches in protocol, and I need not reiterate the lessons we have all learned.

The single most pertinent item of interest to the sub-cell is the mission on which the subject is now engaged. Maxim Denn has been assigned to an extra-consular mission to Iocanthos with specific orders to circumvent the Administratum presence at Port Suffering and to seek an audience—not, as one would expect, with King Skull, but with a rival warlord, if such a term is applicable, known as Seth the Voice.

It is my belief that those with whom Denn is undoubtedly aligned wish to subvert the mission of the Voice to their own ends. What those ends might be we have no way of knowing, but I consider such an overt play to justify an equally overt response from the sub-cell. To this end, I intend to activate agent KXK-99 with the aim of executing a level-six termination mission.

THE MOURNER

The task of eliminating Maxim Denn will be extremely challenging, for the Over-Consul Designate is attended at all times by a Psykana Templar Calix who goes by the title "the Mourner." I have little pertinent information on this individual, but the very fact of his assignment to protect Denn speaks of a hidden and powerful influence at work. It concerns me all the more that I can establish little in the way of solid evidence linking Denn to our enemies, and I have no information on who may have sponsored or ordered the Mourner to protect him. The Mourner is, unsurprisingly, highly skilled in the warrior's arts, and is a Telekinetic of fearful prowess, possibly approaching upper Gamma-class levels. What few solid reports I can find state that he served for three years as part of Army Group 13's High Command close-protection detachment and undertook a number of tactical assignments during that period. These included service as a battle psyker during Operation Umbrage. In this incident, he fought the rebels at the Defence of Falcon Ridge, earning honorary membership of the Scintillan 99th Staff Cadre by way of recognition. The Mourner presents a high-level threat to the clean execution of the mission.

MISSION ARCHIVAL EXTRACT—RETRIEVE AND PURGE

Agent KXK-99 to be activated as per Protocol D33 (22.3 recension).
Exfiltration of Facility 9k via secure tertiary route into Archaos primary hub.
Collegium 'Vouchsafe Omega' transportation.

Zhankis' transportation to Iocanthos was achieved by way of secure berth on the *Wrote for Luck*, a naval vessel whose master has served the Collegium faithfully in such a capacity for well over a decade. The transit was uneventful. Zhankis was secreted in a type-D12 cargo unit and made planetfall at the world's only serviceable interface facility in Port Suffering.

The cargo unit was delivered, as per sealed orders, to a bonded longshore facility adjacent to the port's Counting House. Operational restrictions dictated that handling should be carried out exclusively by servitors, and all indications are that this stage of the mission was completed without incident.

Zhankis remained hidden in the cargo unit for 48 hours, as per her orders, observing her immediate surroundings for signs of mission compromise. Having determined that all was well, she escalated the operation to the next phase just prior to dawn on the third day after arrival. Zhankis had two choices to complete her exfiltration of Port Suffering: the main gate or the bastion walls. The walls being 20 metres high and equipped with numerous sentry positions, Zhankis determined to utilise the low light levels and slip out through the gate, timing her manoeuvre with the exit of a merchant land crawler heading out into the wastes. This she achieved by grappling the underside of the vehicle and securing herself beneath its primary superstructure.

The journey across the wastes was taxing but still within the agent's capabilities. The land crawler travelled north for 100 kilometres in the general direction of the horde's last known location. It was only when the crawler reached a junction on the track that Zhankis was forced to take a hand in events. The vehicle took not the western path but the northeastern one, away from the horde's location. Unhitching herself from her position beneath the vehicle, Zhankis climbed up and entered the vehicle's main cargo area by way of a side hatch. Within, she encountered seven armed crew members, which she dispatched within five seconds. The bodies were thrown clear of the land crawler; they would not draw suspicion on a world as war-torn as Iocanthos.

Passing forwards through the crawler's crew bays, Zhankis encountered and dispatched another three crew members before she entered the bridge. The captain at the wheel was terminated by way of the pinpoint application of a power stiletto to the cervical vertebrae, allowing the agent to take control of the vehicle as the captain died.

Having gained control of the land crawler, Zhankis now proceeded to navigate to the location in which the horde was believed to be mustering. Doing so was a challenging task, which necessitated Zhankis remain at the wheel for a further 50 hours. Upon reaching the coordinates, Zhankis found that the horde had moved on. I recommend the source that provided this low-grade intelligence be liquidated. Fortunately, Zhankis was able to follow the horde's trail on foot, abandoning the crawler once the barbarians came into view.

This next stage of the mission I confess I had apprehensions about, for I had no way of knowing how the members of the horde would react to a stranger in their midst. There was no way of making a stealthy approach, so Zhankis made her way with caution, looking for the opportunity to disguise herself in the garb of one of Seth's followers should the need arise.

As it transpired, the followers made no comment whatsoever as Zhankis moved about. This afforded the agent ample opportunity to observe Seth's followers at close quarters, and she gained a large amount of intelligence that may prove of great value in future operations (see sub-file KJL/993–44). To summarise, the followers of Seth the Voice appeared a varied mix, ranging from hardy ex-mercenaries to a great many shabby followers who clearly had no experience in handling a weapon at all. It was noticeable to Zhankis that the more professional of the ex-mercenaries gave her a wide birth, even if they did not acknowledge her presence in any other way, while the lowly followers entirely failed to note her presence or the threat she might present to them.

Following the general milling of the horde, Zhankis moved slowly and cautiously towards its epicentre. She observed a great many traders of all types moving through it too, but especially arms dealers. It is noted that most of the weapons being offered were of substandard, unsanctioned manufacture and of scant value on most worlds in the sector.

After three hours, Zhankis closed on the horde's centre of mass, noting that the general quality and upkeep of the thousands of vehicles all around increased, with many appearing to be have been liberated from the stocks of various planetary defence forces. As she approached the central mass of the horde, Zhankis noted that the air was filled by a constant and increasingly loud sermon broadcast, undoubtably given by Seth himself. The denser the crowd, the louder the sound of the sermon, as many of the followers appeared to be carrying vox-units through which the addresses were being relayed.

Then, as the crowd closed in all around her, Zhankis caught sight of Vai Seth—the so-called 'Voice,' Prophet of the Emperor. Seth was atop his personal vehicle, an armoured scout with the superstructure built up to form a pulpit, from which he was preaching a sermon. As per previous reports submitted to the Collegium, it appears that Seth is on the surface an unimpressive orator, yet nevertheless appears able to hold sway over a large congregation. This subject deserves further investigation, but is beyond the scope of this report. With the congregation's attentions fixed upon Seth, Zhankis took the opportunity to move around the crowd, making her way behind the pulpit. There, she located a large group of Seth's inner guard, a cadre of warriors calling themselves "Seth's Saints," and among them Maxim Denn, attended closely by the Mourner.

Her target located, Zhankis initiated the close reconnaissance phase of the mission, gathering information on Denn's activities, movements and levels of protection. It was immediately apparent that a direct attack would be impossible at that time, and she would have to track her target for a protracted period before settling on a suitable course of action.

The agent tracked Denn and his guardian for the remainder of the day and well into the night, the Voice preaching his sermon to the assembled horde all the while. Around midnight, Denn and the Mourner made to leave the scene, retiring towards a large armoured vehicle that appeared to be built from the remains of a wrecked Gorgon assault transport.

Zhankis followed the target and now felt able to close with him thanks to the darkness. It was at this point that the mission took an unexpected turn. It appears that the Mourner is not only a powerful Telekinetic, but has also mastered a number of secondary powers allowing him to sense danger and discern immediate threats to his master.

As the agent approached the Gorgon, time suddenly slowed to a crawl. The Mourner turned and looked straight into the eyes of Agent Zhankis, and the crowd milling about nearby appeared to part.

Zhankis reacted in an instant, drawing a power stiletto and diving to her right into the crowd. A moment later a torrent of psychic force passed through the followers, shredding a dozen and wounding scores more. Zhankis had avoided the blast and now worked her way through the panicking mob, using the confusion as cover to outflank her target.

Meanwhile, there was a serious possibility that the primary target would escape. Realising this, Zhankis determined to deal with the Mourner in the most direct way possible. Before the crowd could disperse, Zhankis vaulted high into the air, descending upon the Mourner from an entirely unexpected quarter. Despite the surprise she had no doubt inflicted, the Mourner anticipated the attack and turned to face her. As Zhankis descended through the air, stiletto in hand ready to strike, the Mourner summoned a fearsome assault of focused psychic power. The blast caught Zhankis with a glancing blow across the left side of her body, yet the momentum of her manoeuvre was unstoppable. An instant later, Zhankis was upon the Mourner and in a single strike plunged the power stiletto into his left ear, the blade protruding from his right.

The Mourner was immediately terminated, but Zhankis was seriously wounded. She fell to the ground beside the body of Denn's guardian, and turning her head saw the Over-Consul Designate boarding the Gorgon by way of its frontal assault ramp. Feeling her wounds threatening to overcome her, the agent glanded a powerful concoction of combat stimulants This allowed her to regain optimum combat efficiency and continue pursuit.

By now the crowd of followers had fled, but the first of a number of Seth's Saints were arriving on the scene. These opened fire as Zhankis rushed for the Gorgon's assault ramp, but she avoided the fire with preternatural agility.

Denn had activated the ramp, which was rising as Zhankis ran towards it. With a single leap, she passed through the rapidly closing gap and as the hatch sealed behind found herself in the vehicle's assault bay, face to face with Maxim Denn.

Then the Over-Consul addressed Zhankis. He stated that he had expected an attempt to be made on his life, and then listed five names of those he believed might sanction such an act. My name was amongst them, as were two other members of the Collegium. Zhankis glanded another dose of combat stims, but as she approached Denn, he produced a device of unknown manufacture. Despite concerted efforts, I have not been able to identify the providence of the article, but its effect was obvious. Depressing a control stud, Denn was immediately surrounded by some manner of aetheric manifestation, a swirling mass of gibbering, leering faces racing around his form.

Zhankis attacked, showing no hesitation in the execution of her mission. She threw herself forward, diving through the manifestation. Even as she did so she felt her soul being torn at by creatures from that place we dare not describe. Breaking through the swirling mass, she was upon her target, and even as the creatures assailed her both physically and spiritually, she dispatched her target and destroyed the device he had activated. The instant she did so, the manifestation blinked out of existence and silence descended upon the assault bay.

At that point, Zhankis felt her injuries overtake her, and she knew that to gland any more stimulants would be to inflict a grievous strain upon her system. Nevertheless, she did so, and before making good her escape, she conducted a hurried search of the Over-Consul Designate's body, recovering a document case.

The remainder of the mission is of little import to this report, but suffice it to say the badly wounded Agent Zhankis exfiltrated the horde. She then embarked on a 17-day trek on foot back to Port Suffering, avoiding Seth's followers who had taken it upon themselves to pursue her. Three weeks later, Zhankis returned to Facility 9-K.

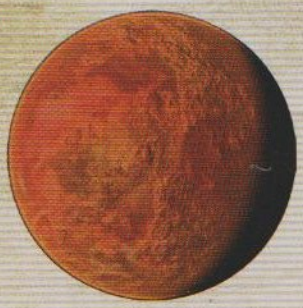
I trust the sub-cell shares my conclusions following this mission. Not only did Maxim Denn know of the involvement of myself and several others, but the documents recovered from his body appear to have amounted to a message to Vai Seth from a number of prominent Recongregators amongst the Ordos Calixis. It is my believe that these individuals, one of which is undoubtedly our old enemy Inquisitor Halk, seek Seth's co-alignment in some undertaking as yet unknown to us. Furthermore, the mention of a number of prominent Oblationists in the document leads me to believe that these Recongregators are on the verge of some great undertaking. I have no clue as to what this may be, but the evidence of the documents suggests that it is to be advanced significantly upon the twelfth moon of the world of Misery Nine, three days beyond Vaxanide into the Periphery.

It is my intention to dispatch Agent Zhankis and three other Reapers to Misery Nine. Whatever the Recongregators have planned there cannot be allowed to happen, for the good of the entire Collegium.

The Cabal will pay for their heresy! –P.W.



Subject: KXK-99 (nomen: Nwana Zhankis)
Status: Active
Handler: [DELETED]
Holding: Facility 9k/Archaos
Dissemination: Limited/Tenebrae Collegium Sub Cell 7/Sleeper Alpha-Omega
+++BEGIN TRANSCRIPT+++
Handler: Agent KXK-99?
Subject: [SILENCE: 12 MINS/13 SECS]
Handler: Agent KXK-99? Do you hear me?
Subject: I…see it, I see it coming…
Handler: See what coming agent?
Subject: It brings the end…it knows me…
Handler: Do you know, girl who you are?
Subject: I…I do know, my master. I am.
Handler: And who are you?
Subject: I am Nwana Zhankis. I am Reaper. I am Moritat.
[PAUSE: 1 MIN/48 SECS]
Handler: How do you know this?
Subject: It told me…it knows my name…it will not let me forget…
+++END TRANSCRIPT+++
Commit to file YXX/Tenab/238bdi733/hy



PLANETARY DATA: MISERY IX
Population: 12,500
Tithe Grade: Exactus Non
Geography: Volcanic plains dominated by sulphuric acid-filled impact craters.
Government: Colonial council.
Planetary Governor: High Councillor Janghis Rak.
Adept Presence: Very low.
Military: Colonial Militia (equiv. 5 companies.)
Trade: Minimal.

The Misery IX colony has existed for eight centuries, originally being established as an offshoot of a Machenko Dynasty enterprise in the subsector that ultimately failed to produce any profits. The colony is to all intents and purposes independent, and the High Councillor of its ruling body is treated, if not formally recognised, as an Imperial Commander by subsector authorities.

The colony exists at little more than subsistence level and has precious few exports of any value to the subsector. None choose to live there, and most would leave if they had the means.

MISSION DTT/99W

Target: Unknown

The word is given. The Collegium is under direct threat from an unknown foe, and I intend to ensure that we, not our enemies, dictate the time and place of the coming battle. I have dispatched a Reaper cell to the twelfth moon of Misery Nine. I do no know what they will find there, nor what affect the outcome of the mission may have on our continued existence. We can only pray the Emperor looks upon our enterprise kindly.

Addendum: My sources inform me that none other than Inquisitor Halk has recently set out for Misery Nine. I have updated the mission profile to make it clear to the Reaper cell that should this individual be encountered, he is to be terminated as matter of extreme urgency.

MISSION ARCHIVAL EXTRACT—RETRIEVE AND PURGE

I can scarcely comprehend what has apparently come to pass on Misery Nine. Zhankis has returned to Facility 9k. She is in a fearful state, and in all likelihood lost to us as a useful operative. The remainder of the Reaper cell failed to return.

The agent's mind appears blasted. I have been able to retrieve only fragments of the mission. Yet, these fragments are of such import to the mission of the Collegium that I must describe them in detail.

FRAGMENT 1

The interface terminal at the Misery Nine colony hub. The facility appears rundown and ill maintained. The entire terminal is in half-light, and the cargo handlers have fled to the shadows.

FRAGMENT 2

A crowd has gathered somewhere in the service district. Approximately 100 people are looking up towards the sky, their hands clamped over their ears.

FRAGMENT 3

Inquisitor Halk. I could scarcely believe my eyes when I retrieved this fragment. Halk is surrounded by a group of Tech-Priests, many of whom are taking readings from a vast array of instruments pointed up towards the sky.

FRAGMENT 4

<VIDEO ARCHIVE SEQUESTERED>

FRAGMENT 5

The aftermath of the visitation of the Tyrant Star. The colonists have been sent into some form of atavistic rage. They tear into their fellows with tooth and nail, ripping each another apart with their bare hands. The Tech-Priests are all dead, a number of them having suffered cranial implosion at the moment of the visitation. Halk is nowhere to be seen, nor is there any evidence of his fate.

If Halk has survived. then every other member of the Tenebrae Collegium will be seeking him out. We have no way of knowing what his mental state is right now, but we cannot afford to take the risk that he has somehow clung on to his sanity and has evidence of the Reaper cell's attack upon him. We, the Oblationists, represent the only true way, and we must make our move now. We must arise, all of us, and take this possibly final opportunity to destroy our foes. I am certain that our foes within the Collegium will be intent upon the search for Inquisitor Halk and therefore not watching their backs as carefully as they might.

I say now is our time—let us arise and purge the Ordos Calixis once and for all!

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II

Falling From Grace

- Defining Radicalism
- Denunciations and High Conclaves
- Dark Beginnings: Radical Origins
- Histories of Infamy: Radical Background Packages
- Paths into Shadow: Radical Career Ranks
- Radical Elite Advance Packages
- Alternative Corruption Rules

Drifting biolumes cast flickering shadows about the chamber, the dark vaults above lost beyond clouds of drifting incense. Into a circle of sickly light stepped a power-armoured figure, the tread of iron-shod boots filling the chamber.

The figure halted in the centre of the light. He raised his head to take in the tiered galleries before him.

'I come to this place of my own volition. I would hear of what crimes I am accused.'

The words echoed around the chamber, before a voice from the highest gallery answered.

'You stand accused of consorting with the daemon, with taking up the weapons of the cursed, and of self-aggrandisement. You will answer these charges, to the satisfaction of your peers, and you will submit yourself to whatever censure is apportioned.'

The silence that followed was laced with tension. The figure drew himself to his full height and scanned the darkened galleries, as if looking not just into the shadows, but into the very souls of those bearing down upon him.

'I see here none with the authority to judge me.'

A ripple of disapproval spread throughout the galleries.

'Order! I will have silence this instant!'

The accused turned to face the shadow that was the speaker. 'I know you. Garrak. Lord Garrak, no less. So, this is your doing, eh? Payment for Fenksworld? Still bruised after Luggnum?' Silence was his only answer. 'Klybo. That's it, isn't it?'

'What you retrieved at Klybo should have been destroyed!' The angry shout filled the chamber, drawing a wry smile across the face of the accused. 'Now, you will make amends for your arrogance, or you will face the consequences.'

'And if I will not? What then, Garrak? What if I refuse to submit to the petty vengeance of this... conclave?'

'Then, you will pay for your folly, Radical, and be cast out, beyond the light of the Emperor, for all time.'

'And what,' the accused asked, 'if I do not recognise the right of this conclave to excommunicate me thus?'

'Then, you will not leave this place. The choice is yours.'



Chapter II: Falling From Grace

"What right have you to judge me? You who have yet to stare into the abyss, and know that it in turn stares back at you."

–Inquisitor Lord Presumptive Okonawk at his final Denunciation.

To bear the Inquisitorial rosette is to carry the most terrible of burdens. The lives of millions, even billions often hang on an Inquisitor's judgment. The fate of Humanity itself might turn on the actions of but a single Inquisitor. Little wonder, then, that the servants of the Holy Ordos of the Emperor's Inquisition turn to a myriad of philosophies, credos and doctrines to guide them in their duties. When beliefs take root and become dogma, when ideologies are passed from teacher to pupil, when individuals gather and are united not only in rank but in conviction, then a new faction is created.

Over the millennia, hundreds, if not thousands of factions have risen to prominence or become extinct with the passing of their members. Some have held true for but a generation, passing out of memory and record with the shifting tides of history. Only the greatest have endured, and these hold sway in the hearts and minds of Inquisitors and their Acolytes across the length and breadth of the Emperor's domains.

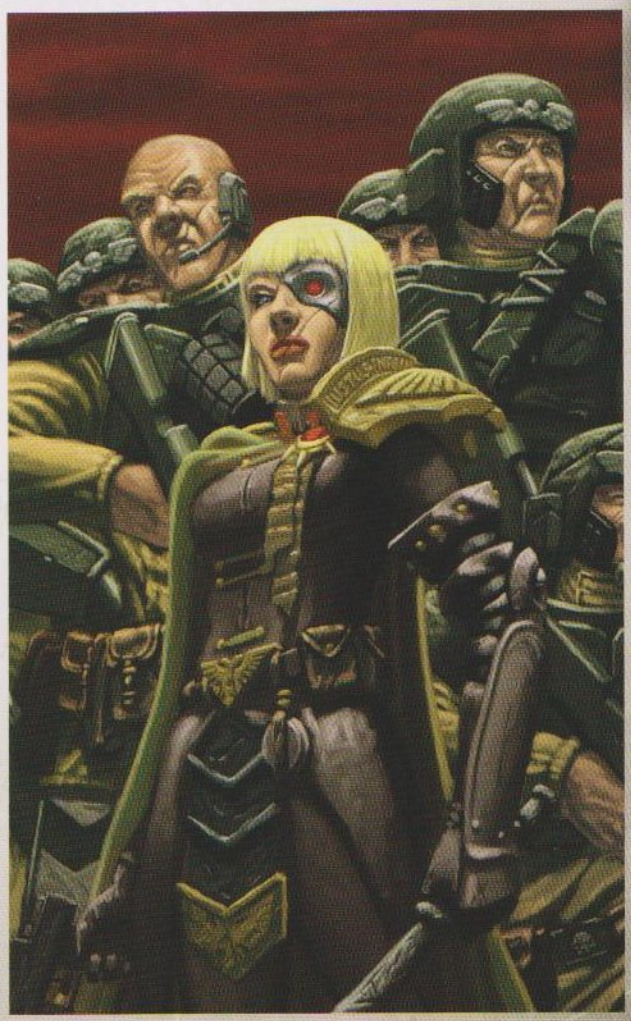
It is inevitable that with the creation of a faction and the distillation of its beliefs comes the rejection of the beliefs of other factions. It is perhaps unavoidable that to adhere to one view of the universe is to denounce all others. And so the many and varied factions extant within the Inquisition have become separated into one of two broad churches - the Puritan, and the Radical.

For the Puritan, the mission of the Inquisition and the manner in which it is to be prosecuted is simple and unsullied by doubt. They view the universe in terms of right and wrong, enemy and ally, believer and heretic. So it is particularly amongst those newly come to the rosette, for the shining light of the youth's zeal dispels the shadows and casts all in such absolute terms.

But for others, those who walk a different path and come to be labelled Radical, the universe is not a place of stark, absolute truths. Over centuries of service, many find that to illuminate the recesses of the universe is not to cast out the shadows, but to understand what truly resides in the dark corners. These men and women have seen what festers within the soul of Man, what multiplies in the cold void of interstellar space, what slavers beyond reality at the very edges of perception. They have seen such things, and they have been touched. Gone are the absolutes of the teachings of the Ecclesiarchy. Gone is the conviction that Humanity was born to manifest destiny. Gone is the optimism of blind zeal. In place of all these things comes the horrible certainty that to defeat the evils that beset the Imperium one must embrace them, one must use them, one must turn one's enemy into the tool of his own destruction, by any means necessary.

The Peers of the Imperium

As with Imperial Commanders, Rogue Traders, Adeptus Astartes Chapter Masters and a dozen other classes, Inquisitors stand aloof, above the teeming multitudes of servile Humanity. These are the peers of the Imperium, and none might judge them but their own. To those unschooled in the ways of the Inquisition, those labelled Radical might also be called heretic, blasphemer, outcast, or enemy of the Emperor. Yet such is not the case within the ranks of Inquisitors. For who will judge a man, lest he too be judged? Factionalism is at once the greatest strength of the Inquisition, and its most vulnerable weakness. The ranks of the Inquisition are united in common purpose, yet the methods by which that purpose is executed are legion. No single article of faith can hold such power as to dominate, no doctrine can pull the power of the Inquisition to the centre and use that power against the whole. Yet the factions continually vie for dominance, and such power plays have, on many tragic occasions, spilled blood.



Defining Radicalism

The path of the Radical is rarely one set upon with deliberate intent. Rather, the terrors that Inquisitors witness over the course of their duties may lead them to make certain choices, responding to the needs of the moment. Little by little, step-by-step, an Inquisitor's methods and outlook might change. Perhaps a minor, doctrinal compromise is made, the letter of the law interpreted by supposed intent, a course of action undertaken, a forbidden text consulted, the babblings of a condemned criminal heeded. Before they are even aware of the path they are walking, some Inquisitors are shunned by previously loyal fellows, whispered of in sealed chambers, and ultimately, branded Radical.

Such individually insignificant transgressions take many and varied forms, and some Inquisitors labelled Radical by their peers might believe themselves realists, relativists, or possessors of truths others refuse to comprehend. Common to all such individuals is the unbending belief that what they do, they do for the good of the Imperium. They know, as no others possibly can, that it is not only their right, but their God-Emperor-given duty to use whatever resources they can in the endless battle against the enemies of Humanity.

If individual Inquisitors cannot, or will not recognise when they have become a Radical, then who is it that imparts such a label? To the Puritans, those for whom only the strictest adherence to dogma is acceptable, any who deviate from their rigid philosophies are suspect. Others know that the true nature of the universe casts such issues not in black and white but infinite and murky shades of grey.

RISKS AND REWARDS

"If there is one lesson a wise man would learn from the universe, it is that a brittle mind will break before it turns."

–Seventh Credo of the Heretic Archivist of the Gethsemane Reclusium

At some point in all Inquisitors' service, they will be faced with a course of action that they know to be questionable. For many, such a realisation comes long after their peers have seen the rot set in, but at that moment, the Inquisitor sees for the first time the full import of the choice about to be made. Some are afforded by circumstance the luxury of time, to consider the paths ahead. Many find their own counsel as much a burden as a blessing, for the knowledge of what they will soon do weighs heavy upon their soul. Others must make their decision in an instant, perhaps in the very heat of battle, with little or no forewarning or time to reflect. In either case, the decision is made and the first step taken along a path which can never be retraced.

In every case, the course of action inevitably draws some immediate benefit. Perhaps a heretic long since escaped from justice is discovered once more, thanks to a minor lenience paid to a captured partner in crime. Perhaps a cult is uncovered by recourse to a long-since sealed archive of forbidden knowledge. In the immediate aftermath of a successful mission, an Inquisitor may feel relief and consolation that the compromise was worth it, no harm was done. But deep within their souls all such individuals will know, as only a devoted servant of the Emperor ever can, the error of their judgement.

A great many actions might lead an Inquisitor towards the path of the Radical. Although there are few specific injunctions, for the Inquisition grants its members such freedoms of action that few if any laws could be said to apply to them, there exists a wealth of more generalised injunctions, the contravention of which is widely viewed as unwise.

THOU SHALT NOT… CONSULT THE DISMAL TEXTS

The war that the Inquisition wages against the forces that would tear down the mighty edifice of the Imperium has spanned ten millennia, and many and horrific are the secrets that have been unearthed throughout the ages. Much knowledge has been written down, in some cases by the agents of the Inquisition and in many more by their enemies. Contained within ancient tomes can be found, for those prepared to pay the price for looking, a staggering wealth of knowledge. Some texts contain the secrets of long-extinct xenos races, charting their rise and fall before man even escaped the cradle of prehistoric Terra. Others describe modes of thought entirely foreign to the Imperial Truth, espousing such perilous philosophies as freedom from the interference of the state. Some contain histories long since purged from the Imperium's archives, detailing ancient treacheries at the very birth of the Imperium. Most dangerous of all the Dismal Texts are those that describe the beasts of the warp, naming them and imparting the rituals by which they might be summoned. These last positively radiate fell power, and whisper vile untruths to those who open their pages, almost as if possessed of some malefic intelligence. Even to touch such a tome is to court damnation.

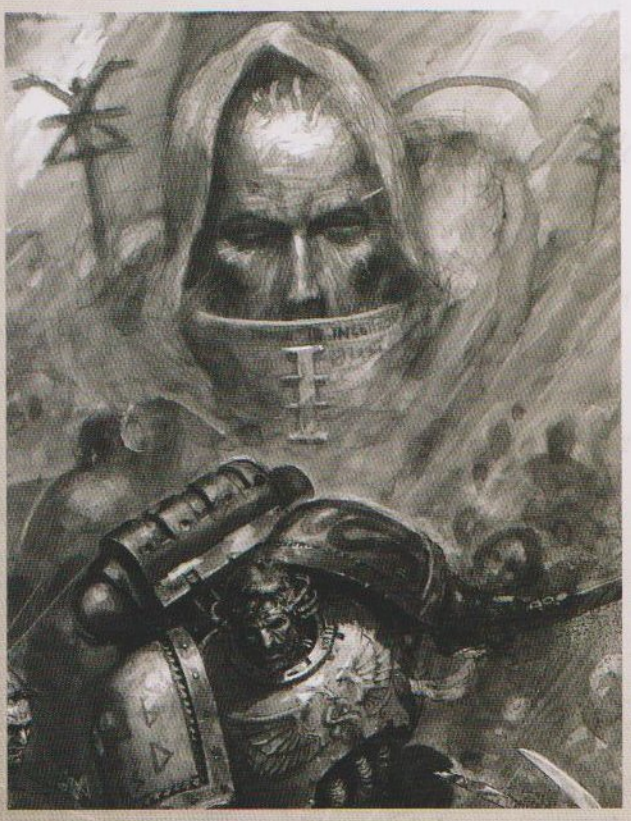
A great many texts are declared heretical, too dangerous to exist. These are burned and anyone who has read them is executed. Others are deemed of potential use to the Inquisition and locked away in one of the many archive vaults that exist deep within the Inquisition's fortresses throughout the Imperium. Only those most trusted few are allowed access to such places, and the vaults are protected against intrusion by a myriad of terrible defences. The archivists that staff such places are frequently mind-wiped, lest a trace of something from beyond lodge itself in a susceptible consciousness and create a portal through which untold horrors might emerge. In some archives the staff are fitted with Soul Wards, arcane devices implanted within their bodies that will detonate upon detecting such a presence, and immolate not only the archivist but, in the direst of circumstances, the entire library.

To be granted access to the Dismal Texts, an agent of the Inquisition, be he Inquisitor or senior Acolyte, must pass the scrutiny of a Gatekeeper. Though no two Gatekeepers are alike, every one holds a unique position within the Inquisition. Gatekeepers wield the ultimate power to allow—or disallow—access to the archive, and though none hold the rank of Inquisitor, it is a long-held tradition that their word is law. Thus, the Inquisition is protected from itself and its secrets kept safe from those who would use them for ill.

Consulting these texts is not in itself cause to be branded Radical, for even the most Puritanical of Inquisitors knows that some secrets must be kept. Rather, it is the use to which an Inquisitor puts such knowledge that can lead him down the path of the Radical. Perhaps he has come into possession of such a text and has kept its existence secret from his peers, even convincing himself that only he can be trusted with the terrible knowledge held within its pages. Perhaps he has abused his rights of access to an archive and retrieved information outside the remit of his mission. Worse still are those instances where forbidden knowledge has been acted upon, where proscribed incantations have been spoken, where the names of those that must not be named have been invoked.

THOU SHALT NOT… SUCCOUR THE CRIMINAL

At the heart of the Inquisition's mission is to bring to justice the enemies of the Emperor. Once they enter the Inquisition's dungeons, few—whether guilty or innocent—are seen again. Before justice is visited upon the guilty, they are thoroughly interrogated by an entire cadre of agents entirely devoted to the task, and it is in such tasks that aspirant Inquisitors first cut their teeth in the methods of the Inquisition.



As a result of such interrogations, the Inquisition comes into possession of a great amount of information, with which many more criminals may be tracked down and apprehended. So long as the relationship between prisoner and interrogator remains as it should be, then all is well. However, particularly cunning or desperate criminals have been known to attempt negotiation with their captors. Inquisitors are trained and experienced, and rarely fall foul of such pitfalls, but on rare occasions an individual may allow himself to enter into such a bargain, affording the accused a degree of leniency in return for further information.

Others who have trod the path of the Radical have found themselves entering into outright alliances with entire criminal organisations. Perhaps such a turn of events comes about during an investigation in which the Inquisitor finds himself working undercover with one set of criminals against another, taking common cause with them. Though many Inquisitors are adept at such calculated duplicity, some may become enamoured of it, preferring the company of criminals to their own.

THOU SHALT NOT… SUFFER THE PRESENCE OF THE XENOS

The Imperial creed holds that the alien is inherently inferior, a creature denied the perfect form granted Humanity by the almighty God-Emperor. No matter the particulars of local doctrine, every church preaches that mankind holds the unalienable right to the galaxy. Yet, the Imperium is spread thin across the void, and vast gulfs of Wilderness Space separate many sectors. Within these 'black spaces on the map' lurk entire alien empires and horrors unimaginable.

A few aliens are tolerated to some degree, such as the Eldar with whom the Imperium's highest officials will treat when circumstance dictates. Other aliens move amongst the peoples of frontier worlds with little or no strife, far from the eyes of the Imperial Church.

For the common subject however, the alien is anathema. Most citizens are kept in blessed ignorance of the galaxy at large, only dimly aware that other forms of intelligent life exist, out there, in the darkness of space. They are taught from an early age to despise that which is different, and on many worlds the alien is invoked as a figure of folklore, the succubus that comes in the night, the abductor of the unwary.

Whilst about the course of their duties, some Inquisitors will come into contact with the alien. In most cases the contact will be brief, and usually lethal for one party or the other. Yet, as is the case with the Eldar, there are times when Man and xenos must work together for some form of common good. Such might be the case when an Ork Waaagh! threatens to overwhelm both the worlds of the Imperium and those claimed by the Eldar, for example, and only a united stand will turn the greenskins aside.

However, there are some who seek out the alien, looking to prosper from knowledge only it can impart. Others use the unique talents some races exhibit as they would the talents of an Acolyte. Such individuals may come to rely more on their alien allies than on their fellows, and these may be considered to have strayed from the way of Humanity and court censure, or worse.

THOU SHALT NOT… SUMMON THE DAEMON

Of all the crimes an Inquisitor or Acolyte might commit, to summon or converse with the daemon is amongst the most heinous in the eyes of the bulk of his peers. To so much as seek out the knowledge of how to summon such a creature is beyond the means of most, and a great many safeguards exist to ensure that none may do so. Yet, in the course of his duties an Inquisitor may have to face such creatures, and some come to the conclusion that to combat them, they must seek knowledge of their foe.

There are some for whom the daemon becomes another tool to be used against the enemies of mankind. These Inquisitors seek to use the daemon's words against it, to entrap and bind it to their service. The most hideous way in which this is achieved is by the deliberate possession of a living victim, accomplished by way of a forbidden ritual that creates what is known as a daemonhost. The creation of such an abomination is achieved at the cost of the vessel's soul, bringing into existence a being that writhes with the barely contained power of the warp and utters an unending stream of blasphemous invective. From amongst the lies and profanities, the daemonologist seeks to divine the truth and use the creature's powers to his own ends. For those who have strayed so far from the Imperial creed there lies little more than total rejection by his peers—and for many, Excommunication is their only reward.

THOU SHALT NOT… TURN YOUR HAND UPON YOUR BROTHER

It is a sad truth that the factionalism that so pervades the Inquisition spills over so often into bloodshed. Though comparatively rare, Inquisitors sometimes find themselves set against one of their fellows. Perhaps the two are working towards the same goal, but employing such divergent methods that each sees the other as an obstacle that must be overcome before the mission can be completed. In other instances particular Inquisitors develop a deep-seated loathing of one another, and both will take any opportunity they can to finally rid themselves of their troublesome rival.

More frequent than Inquisitors coming to blows is conflict between their operatives. Acolytes are, after all, disposable and will never be missed. On countless occasions two senior and much-respected Inquisitors have sat cordially next to one another in High Conclave, or shared a stately meal, whilst their agents murdered one another behind the scenes.

Acolytes only being party to but a small portion of their master's business, it can come as a shock to be dragged into an internecine struggle they know next to nothing about. Few Inquisitors prepare their servants for such events, many preferring instead to use the struggles as a form of natural selection, the result of which is a cell of Acolytes hardened and ready for whatever the universe can throw at them.

Despite this backdrop of bitter conflict, it is generally accepted that there is a line over which one does not cross. The archives are replete with instances where a private disagreement between Inquisitors or cell of Acolytes has spilled over into outright war. When this happens, Inquisitors might use their unique powers to mobilise the resources of entire planets to further their ends, and what began as a feud might foment a sector-wide war. Many believe it far preferable to dispatch a clandestine kill-cell to eliminate those who would misuse their Inquisitorial powers, but if the target gets wind of the mission, the result could be a war not easily won by either side.

THOU SHALT NOT… GAINSAY THE ORDER OF YOUR SUPERIOR

Within the Inquisition there exists a labyrinthine web of feudal power, expressed through impossibly convoluted ties of fealty, intrigue and responsibility. Yet, very few Inquisitors occupy a position of formal rank that grants superiority within the institution. Those few that do hold rank are known as Inquisitor Lords. The word of an Inquisitor Lord is taken as authority by most Inquisitors, and by all Acolytes, for he often holds the power to mobilise the Chambers Militant in the execution of his duties.

To go against the will of an Inquisitor Lord is to court disaster, for one who does so will soon find himself ostracised by former compatriots and beyond the structures that support and maintain him as an Inquisitor. Such a fate is unfortunate for an Inquisitor, but may prove fatal for his servants and agents unless he makes arrangements to put them beyond harm's way.

THOU SHALT NOT… TAKE UP THE TOOL OF THE DAMNED

The Inquisition is blessed to possess a plethora of weaponry with which to combat its foes, from those that are mundane, if rare within the wider Imperium, such as the power sword, to the rare and exotic, such as the force weapons wielded by powerful psykers. Yet, there exist countless examples of weaponry manufactured not by Man, but by other races, both extinct and living, and many of these find their way into the service of the Inquisition. Bearing a weapon of alien manufacture is no crime in itself, not at least for those such as



Inquisitors, Rogue Traders, and others of such rank. For the common citizen it is of course a crime, often punishable by death. Such items as the digital weapons manufactured by the apelike Jokaero are highly prized amongst those who have need of such easily concealed 'hold-out' weaponry, and they command a high price when offered for sale.

Many other items are considered too dangerous to be carried openly, even by servants of the Inquisition, in particular those tools of uncertain provenance or recovered from alien races deliberately purged from the galaxy.

Even worse are those weapons tainted by the Ruinous Powers, for to wield such is to enter into a bargain for one's very soul. No Inquisitor would openly carry one of these daemon weapons and not expect the censure of his peers, for each contains the essence of a bound warp creature, with which one must enter into a pact in order to wield the blade without it turning on its bearer. Such weapons demand a terrible cost, exacted in the form of the very souls of those they slay, or, if no such offering are forthcoming, that of the wielder.

What all of these transgressions have in common is that they offer something that established doctrine, for whatever reason, cannot. Ultimately, what they offer is power—of the sort that cannot be obtained through obeying the dictates of the narrow, constraining dogma that is the Imperial creed.

Denunciations and High Conclaves

Every agent of the Inquisition that treads the path of the Radical will one day have to face the judgement of his peers. Often disapproval will be slow to materialise, taking the form of hushed conversations as the glaciers of feudal politics slowly align against him. Sometimes opinions will surface in the heat of the moment, a bitter disagreement erupting across the conference table at council. Most serious of all though, and often a sure sign that real trouble is ahead, is the formal Denunciation.

A Denunciation occurs when an Inquisitor has, or believes he has, evidence that proves that a fellow Inquisitor has passed beyond the pale, delving into forbidden regions of thought, word, and deed. Such an accusation is never made lightly, for doing so is a great gamble for the accuser. The Denunciation must take place at a High Conclave, a gathering of Inquisitors called on the authority of one or more Inquisitor Lords, and the accuser must have obtained the sponsorship of one or more highly placed individuals in order to bring such a conclave about.

When the call to High Conclave is made, none can predict who may heed it and attend, for the Inquisitors may be scattered through a sector or more of space. For this reason, plenty of time is allowed for extra-luminary travel and the effects it may have on time keeping. In general, notice of a High Conclave is given several months ahead of time. The basic details of the Denunciation are communicated along with the summons, so that the accused may have time to prepare a defence. On a number of occasions, the period of notice affords the accused sufficient time to settle the matter in a far less formal manner, the accuser being murdered by the assassin's hand long before the High Conclave is convened. In such instances the matter is considered closed, until such time as another accuser dares raise a charge.

When a High Conclave is successfully convened and all the Inquisitors able to travel to it are in attendance, an Inquisitor Lord will assume the role of Presidor. This individual will call forth the accuser and demand that he justify the charge he has made. Although no two High Conclaves follow an exact format, a wealth of convoluted ceremony has grown out of such events. Invariably, the accuser will have prepared a long and detailed attack upon his target's reputation, for to come ill prepared to a High Conclave is foolhardy indeed and the risks of failure terrible. The accusation may take many days to deliver; the shortest on record in the Calixis Sector is just three minutes, and the longest is twenty-seven years. The accusation delivered, the accused will then begin his rebuttal, which may take as much, or as little time to deliver as the accusation itself.

At the end of this process every Inquisitor present will retire to chambers, where they will debate the matter until

something approaching accordance is reached. Whilst this jury is retired, the accused is free to go about his business, though to abscond at this point in the proceedings would amount to nothing less than an admission of guilt. The amount of time the jury may spend in debating the matter can vary as much as the previous phases. Although it rarely takes more than a few days, the Denunciation of Inquisitor Ghalakenkast was debated so long that the Presidor passed away in the meantime, and was replaced by an Inquisitor who had been a newly recruited Interrogator when the trial was first convened.

When finally the matter is agreed, the Presidor has the duty of delivering the verdict. This is a moment of high tension, for either way, someone will lose out. If the accused is found innocent of the charges levelled against him, he may leave and seek redress against his accuser, who will have lost out greatly in the feudal game of the Inquisition's internal politics. At the very least, the accuser will lose prestige and influence as a result of an unsuccessful Denunciation. At the worst, he will not leave the High Conclave alive.

Should the jury find in favour of the accuser, then the Presidor will issue not only the verdict, but what he considers to be just punishment. Whatever the punishment decreed, it is the responsibility of the Inquisitors present and their agents to enforce it, for none outside of the institution may legally take action against an Inquisitor, even one formally denounced. The punishment delivered may range from withdrawal of resources and support, to Excommunication, or even the ultimate sanction of summary execution. The latter is invariably pronounced in the absence of the accused, for none have ever submitted to such a punishment willingly, the subject having fled the High Conclave one step ahead of the delivery of the verdict.

SINS OF THE FATHERS

The Inquisition being a mighty, sprawling institution consisting not only of Inquisitors and Inquisitor Lords, but many times their number in Acolytes, minions, and contacts, the taint of Radicalism can manifest itself in many different places. Once established, Radicalism can spread far, either by deliberate contamination or by more subtle, insidious means.

When an Inquisitor sets himself upon the path to Radicalism, the consequences may be transmitted far and wide, within the many tiers of the Inquisition, and through the intricate web of power that stretches outwards into the wider Imperium. Should an Inquisitor be of a Radical bent, he may issue instructions to his agents that lead them down the same path, and they themselves may not perceive the far-reaching consequences of their actions until it is far too late. Of course, only the most trusted of an Inquisitor's senior Acolytes will have any inkling of their master's doctrinal stance, for few Radicals openly display their allegiances, particularly to their servants. Thus, a cell of Acolytes may serve a master faithfully for many years, only to discover that its actions have furthered a cause utterly anathema to the members' own principles. Worse still, a cell may find itself in direct conflict with other Inquisitorial agents, perhaps without even knowing why. The worst possible case for a cell is when a master is Denounced, Excommunicated, or even executed without its members' knowledge—in such a circumstance the cell is likely to share the guilt of its former master, and ultimately, his fate.

Such cells are sometimes referred to as 'orphans' and the term is an appropriate one. Acolytes thus severed from their master find themselves cast adrift in an already hostile galaxy made suddenly lethal. The agents of their erstwhile master's enemies lurk around every corner, and no contact can be trusted. An orphan cell will be faced with an immediate dilemma—its members might turn themselves in and trust that they can persuade their master's accusers that they themselves are innocent. Few choose this path, and of those that do, fewer still find anything other than a termination cell as their reward. Another immediate response is to flee, but the practicality of this depends greatly on the cell's whereabouts when it learns its fate. A cell suddenly orphaned on a highly populated world such as Scintilla or Sepheris Secundus might do well to simply fade into the seething mass of humanity, hiding as best it can amongst the great, anonymous masses. Escape from such worlds is difficult in the extreme, for enemies will be watching every exit terminus. At the other extreme are those cells operating far from the centres of power, on the very frontiers of the Calixis sector. These will find that they stand out in stark contrast to the peoples they move amongst—yet the same is true of their hunters.

THE ROOTS OF HERESY

On occasion, the taint of Radicalism takes root first within a cell of Acolytes, and from there spreads outwards. This might be the case when an Inquisitor has granted a trusted cell a degree of freedom in its actions. The manner in which an Inquisitor controls his agents can vary greatly from one master to the next, with some allowing them wide remit in their investigations, while others maintain a tight leash on their servants. Many cells operate far from their master, and come into contact with all manner of foes, any number of which could contaminate them in some way. Often, Acolytes will be forced to make decisions in the course of their actions that may lead them towards Radicalism—without the immediate guidance of their master, it is all too easy to embark upon the wrong course of action.

At some point, the cell's actions will be noted. This might be by either its master, or perhaps by another Inquisitor or a cell of his own agents. At that moment the fate of the cell will hang in the balance. If the cell is acting contrary to the doctrines espoused by its master then it may very well find itself immediately cut off from him, or worse. Should the cell's master espouse a more Puritan philosophy, then a cell leaning towards the Radical may be purged, by the Inquisitor himself or by other, perhaps previously unknown cells working for him. In such an instance the cell may find itself being hunted down by former colleagues and friends, or by other cells it had no idea existed. Indeed, many Inquisitors construct intricate webs within their networks of agents, tasking each with watching others for such signs. The fate of a cell thus disowned by its master might be every bit as terminal as those formally serving a Denounced master, for the Inquisitor will move fast and hard to expunge the taint from his network lest

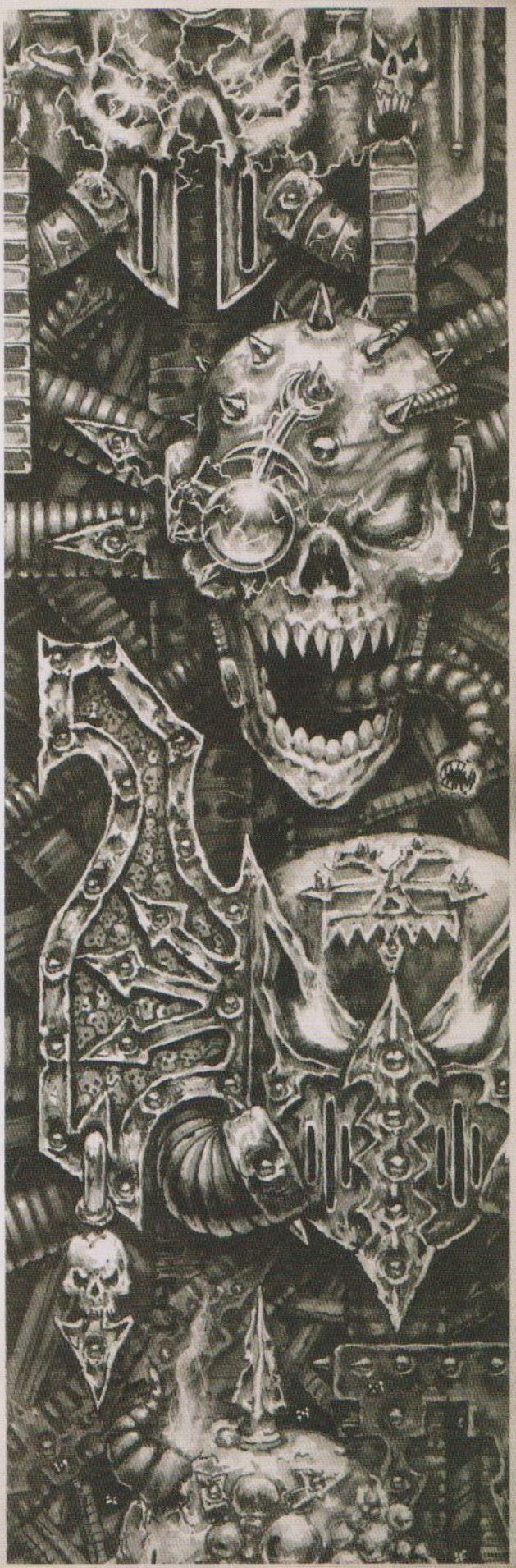
he himself be found guilty by association by his own peers.

In other instances, the Radicalisation of a cell may actually spread upwards to the master. This is far from common, but could come about in a range of situations. Perhaps during the course of a mission an Acolyte retrieved a forbidden text from an enemy, and presented this to his master. The Inquisitor might then, against his better judgement, delve into the knowledge held within and come to accept truths he would not otherwise have countenanced. It may be the case that an Inquisitor comes into possession of tainted xenos artefacts as a result of a cell's investigations, and takes them up in the pursuance of his own agenda. Before he even realises it, the Inquisitor as taken the first steps along the path of the Radical, and damnation is the inevitable conclusion.

EXCOMMUNICATION, AND WORSE...

Though many will embrace Radicalism, few will ultimately prevail. Truly it is said that the wages of sin are death, and this is never truer than in the case of one who takes such a path to its extreme. In the short term, many Radicals find themselves in the possession of great power they would not otherwise have come into. Those who hold every secret of their foes can scarce comprehend why such knowledge should have been forbidden. Even worse, they soon come to regard their peers as deluded fools, and such hubris often leads to outright war between Inquisitors. Ultimately, a Radical will become anathema to his peers, a mockery of all that the Holy Ordos of the Emperor's Inquisition stands for, a sick parody of the vows each Inquisitor swears upon taking up the Rosette. Thus it becomes clear that the sin of the Radical is not defined simply by the transgression of law or doctrine. Rather, it is a spiritual malaise, a sickness from which none recover and there can be no cure.

For Inquisitors Denounced by their peers, for Acolytes orphaned or cast adrift by their masters, only one fate awaits—Excommunication. Theirs is to be hunted with every step they take, to be despised by all who know of them, to be placed beyond the ranks of those they once served. For a servants of the Imperium, even one benighted by Radicalism, there can be no more cruel a fate than this.



Dark Beginnings: Radical Origins

"The so called purity of the Imperium is a notion worthy of a capering fool. Lurking under every stone there is some glorious eyeless thing, some dark secret of corruption, something branded with darkness."

–Attributed to Tobias Belasco

The Character Creation Chapter in the **Dark Heresy** rulebook and the extra origins presented in **The Inquisitor's Handbook** cover a huge range of possible life histories and backgrounds for the Acolytes, but the Calixis Sector (let alone the Imperium) is a vast and diverse place filled with wonders and terrors uncounted. The following section details a number of unique variations on existing origins and worlds that allow players to create characters with dark and damned origins.

In order to create a character using one of these worlds, use the Home World section of the character creation process as normal but apply the modifications as detailed in the unique Home World entry. This usually means swapping out one or more of the Home World's usual Traits for those listed in the specific world entry. In the case of granted Talents, disregard the prerequisites, as they are bred in the bone rather than developed through training. Obviously, players need not roll during the Past stage to determine what type of world they are from.

Example

Paul has decided to take Noble Born as a starting Home World for his character. The GM tells Paul that he will be part of a cadre of Acolytes serving a radical Inquisitor of the Recongregator faction. Given the radical nature of the Inquisitor his character will serve Paul looks through the Radical Origins and he decides he wants his character to come from a noble line with Tainted Blood of Malfi. He applies the modifiers as shown of the Tainted Blood entry, swapping the usual Noble Born Trait Etiquette for the Traits Fiendish Mind and Monstrous Lineage, which are added to his character along with the remaining Traits listed in the Noble Born entry (Supremely Connected and Wealth). With these four Traits and their effects noted, he carries on with character generation as normal.

Blighted Schola (Schola Progenium)

"They took the brightest and the best and twisted them into the seeds of some nightmare future. Were it not for their other crimes, I would say that this act alone was enough to earn them Excommunication and death."

–Inquisitor Glavius Wroth at the Denouncement of the Golgenna Coven, 812.M41

The Blighted Schola were created by the power of Radical Inquisitors called the Golgenna Coven. In a heretical aping of the traditions of the Schola Progenium, the Blighted Schola took carefully selected orphans of loyal servants of the Imperium and schooled them to create individuals of iron will, profane knowledge, and terrible potential. Using psychic, surgical, and noetic methods, the 'progena' of these secret institutions were generations of highly capable men and women reared to excel in the service of a Radical master: highly resourceful, possessed of forbidden knowledge, and capable of murdering without hesitation or qualm. Were it

The Excommunication of the Golgenna Coven

The Golgenna Coven were a group of Inquisitors and powerful members of other Imperial bodies who, as one of several other abominable projects, subverted the sacred work of the Schola Progenium within the Calixis sector to create the Blighted Schola. It is known that at least four Inquisitors (Simion, Nihul, Estarz and Alhain) were members of the Golgenna Coven. They also counted amongst their members Olius Lupus, Prefect Maximus of Scintilla, and Gornian Sans, at that time Admiral of Battlefleet Calixis. Evidence gathered by other members of the Holy Ordos indicate that the Coven where rearing a generation suited not for service to the Emperor but to serve their own radical ideals. The Golgenna Coven was also engaged in removing or crippling the power bases of several important individuals within the various wings of the Adeptus. The discovery of the existence of the Coven was made quite by chance when Acolytes in the service of Glavius Wroth broke an agent of the Coven who revealed the existence of the Blighted Schola. Two years later in 812.M41, Wroth denounced Simion, Nihul, Estarz, and Alhain in front of a High Conclave of the Ordos Calixis, citing over twenty-six acts to be considered as evidence. All the accused were excommunicated and immediately executed; Prefect Maximus Lupus and Admiral Sans were subjected to arco-flagellation. The central design of the Coven has never been ascertained, though it was noted by Wroth that all the Inquisitors involved were once close associates, or pupils, of the late Inquisitor Cassilda Cognos. This fact prompted to Wroth to remark that he would have "denounced her as complicit were she not dead."

not for the nature of their curriculum and the methods they used to create their cursed progena, the achievements of these Blighted Schola might be applauded.

Concealed in the very heart of the sector, on the worlds of Scintilla, Sepheris Secundus, and Valon Urr, the Blighted Schola were set up as secret institutions concealed by elaborate cover stories and manipulation of administrative records. Following the pattern of their more legitimate equivalents, these facilities were fed a steady stream of orphans of loyal Imperial servants. These pupils were carefully selected by agents of the Golgenna Coven within the true Schola Progenium. Once selected, a pupil would be separated from the normal flow of orphans to Schola Progenium facilities and records altered to indicate their death from illness, or substituted for another's so that their disappearance would not be discovered. So effective were the methods employed by the Golgenna Coven that their twisted and Blighted Schola functioned without discovery for over a century.

The Blighted Schola of Calixis Sector are a shameful secret known only to members of the Calixian Conclave and a few senior members of the Adeptus. The conspiracy which created and maintained the Blight Schola was discovered by chance when an agent of the Golgenna Coven within the Administratum was investigated for suspected involvement in a heretical cult (a charge he was in fact innocent of). The Blighted Schola were purged, the radical creators denounced and their former pupils hunted down and executed by teams of Acolytes loyal to Puritan Inquisitors. The tragedy, in the eyes of those who know of the works of the Golgenna Coven, is that it succeeded and did so for many decades. Though many false progena produced by the Blighted Schola were tracked down in the wake of the Excommunication of the Golgenna Coven, the identities of some were never recovered. Many may have fled or gone to ground, but it is feared by some within the Calixian Conclave that some pupils of the Blighted Schola still serve within the ranks of the Inquisition itself.

Blighted Schola PCs

You are a creation of careful nurturing in matters devious and profane. You were taught to cleave to no restriction in method or knowledge in pursuit of your ends, or the ends of your masters. You are a subtle weapon in body, mind and intent and you will do what you were raised to do: follow your will.

Creating Blighted Schola Characters

Use the Schola Progenium Home World template (see pages 15 to 17 of The Inquisitor's Handbook) and replace the Schola Education and Sheltered Upbringing Traits with the ones detailed here.

Tutored in the Profane

While true progena are tutored in the many skills and areas of knowledge that will make them useful servants of the Imperium, the products of the Blighted Schola were equipped with knowledge of things that should not be known.

Effects: The Acolyte gains the Forbidden Lore (Cults, Daemonology, Heresy, Psykers, and Warp) Skills as Basic Skills and begins play with 1d5+5 Corruption Points.

Conditioned Mind

The Acolyte's mind has been broken and rebuilt by means psychic, noetic, and surgical to create a fractured but powerful tool.

Effect: The Acolyte begins play with +5 Intelligence and the Resistance (Psychic Powers), Strong Minded, and Foresight Talents (ignore the normal prerequisites). He also gains 1d10 Insanity Points.



DARKHOLDER (VOID BORN)

"Have you ever seen blood in zero-gravity my friend? It lives, it is a serpent, glorious and delightful, and how it twists and coils like a lover around your blade. It is the only thing hot enough to quench the cold, and I'm so very, very cold now my friend, so very cold..."

–Ezra Morbius, Void Reclaimator

Just as with some worlds, there are certain spacefaring vessels both great and small with a dark reputation. Although all starships have their own histories, not all of them pleasant, and many have dark secrets and half-abandoned depths where things best left unseen sometimes crawl, certain vessels hold an infamy all their own. These ships, some of them ancient and legendary in their own right, ply the dark void between the stars but often hold a deeper darkness within, couched in stories of dire curses, ill-omens, bleak fortunes, baleful massacres, cannibalism, hauntings and worse. The void born call such ships darkholds, and those that hail from them or can find a berth nowhere else have an equally shadowed reputation, shunned and considered to be unlucky and ill-fated by their eccentric kind. Although such distinctions are often lost on those outsiders who cannot tell the difference from one 'spook' void born and another, those that spend much of their lives sealed between the hulls of a great ship fear the darkholds, mistrust those that call them home, and hold their protective talismans tight when they draw close. The darkholders are a breed apart to those with the wisdom to see it, lean and hungry, with the cold black dancing in their eyes.

The Calixis sector has several notorious darkholds of its own, from the gargantuan and blood-drenched *Bountiful Beast*, to the blackly storied far trader *Blinded Saint* whose seven-year course takes it out into the reaches of the Hazeroth Abyss, to the sinister grand mausoleum barge *Pale Sepulchre* and the infamous naval battlecruiser *Chalice of Fire*, recovered empty and adrift centuries ago and taken back into service, said still to be haunted by the thousands of souls of her former crew, disappeared without trace.

Darkholder PCs

You cannot escape what you are, no matter how far you travel, no matter that you put solid ground beneath your feet and endless free air above you, no matter how fervently you pray to the God-Emperor you can't escape it. The cold black, the fathomless dark, calling to you, whispering like a shadow

The Bountiful Beast

Livestock and Victual Mass Conveyance Provender *Bountiful Beast*, to give it its proper title, or the Reek as it has been known for centuries, has since the Calixis sector's founding plied the cold void carrying a cargo of live flesh and dead meat to assuage the hunger of the masses. A vast patchwork relic of ancient days, the *Bountiful Beast* rivals the largest warships in size and takes the form of an irregular fat cylinder nearly sixteen kilometres long from stem to stern; its hull is heat-blackened and corroded, pitted with ancient scars and haloed with debris and vented vapour mist that shrouds its passage.

The *Bountiful Beast*'s origins are lost to antiquity, but it seems certain it first came to the nascent sector as part of the forces of the Angevin Crusade as a long-range supply vessel, though the ship's prior history no doubts predates this by at least several millennia and perhaps longer. In the aftermath of the crusade's success it seems the ship's master became one of the earliest Chartist Captains, and this independence and license has never been given up by any of the D'Rais family line since.

The *Bountiful Beast* follows an erratic path around the fringes and backwaters of the Calixis sector from the Periphery to the edges of the Threnos Zone. Garnering livestock for transport and meat for rendering at feral and feudal worlds in return for manufactured goods, before transporting its processed cargo to isolated mining colonies and frontier planets, the *Bountiful Beast*'s appearance can mean the difference between starvation and plenty for the inhabitants. But to the other Chartist captains and the void born it is a bloody and ill-omened thing.

The *Bountiful Beast* is no silent, steel coffin sailing the darkness; it is a mobile, steaming, bustling, stench-ridden and blood soaked industry unto itself. At once a cattle-wagon, breeding pen, abattoir and freighter, it is crewed by thousands of victualers, cooks, coldbloods, slaughtermen, beast-handlers and skinners in addition to the thousands of ratings and crewman needed to run a starship of this size, and they in turn are dwarfed in numbers by the potential tens of thousands of creatures, live or dead, in the *Bountiful Beast*'s holds. As with most large interstellar vessels, many of those who serve aboard are void born, or more accurately darkholders, a particularly notorious strain of the type and likely the latest generation of their families in an unbroken chain down the centuries on this single ship. In the Bountiful Beast's case many more of its crew are taken on during its many stops as volunteers and hired muscle.

The ship's industries are arduous and ceaseless, and it has a rapacious desire for new blood, so it is that each time the *Bountiful Beast* makes port it has need for scores of new crew members; losses caused by desertions are one culprit, and a great many die onboard either through accident, brawling or factional fighting. Many more simply disappear mid-voyage. More than enough tales of its vast slaughter-chambers, lakes of rendered fat, and red-dewed corridors have been spoken by those that have left this iron abattoir to have painted pictures as close to hell as any could wish for to those that listen to the tales told in star ports and way stations across the sector.

in your veins. Perhaps it isn't all bad though, in a universe fraught with monsters, being a monster yourself is perhaps no bad thing....

Creating Characters from the Darkholds

In order to create characters with a Darkholder lineage, use the Void Born template but remove the Charmed Trait and replace it with those listed here.

Darkholder Skills

Those raised in the sinister atmosphere of a Darkhold vessel begin with the Skills Speak Language (Int) (Ship Cant) and treat Forbidden Lore (Warp) (Int) as a Basic Skill.

Ghillam Blood

Some say the darkholder's blood is tainted, that they are descended from half-human pale things that coil in the dark shadows on the deep nightmare holds, that secretly they all crave human blood and have the souls of daemons. They may be right.

Effect: The character adds +5 to his starting Toughness and Willpower Characteristics, and gains the Jaded and Paranoia Talents.

Cold-Souled and Hungry

There is something ineffably sinister about darkholders, and none feel it more than the other Void Born.

Effect: The character receives –5 to his starting Fellowship and Intelligence Characteristics and begins the game with 1d5+1 Corruption Points. Darkholders also suffer with a further –5 penalty on peaceful social interaction Tests.

HIVE MUTANT (HIVE WORLD)

"As I am so once were all. As I am so will all be again."

–Ancient Terran dedication

Hive mutants are the result of a hive population's exposure to radiation, pollutants, carcinogens, and diseases that are circulated though a hive's food, air and water supplies. Mutation is common in the largest hives, and relatively minor mutations are tolerated by the main population in most hives within the Calixis Sector, though the more refined circles of hive nobility are not so forgiving. A degree of mutation within a hive population is tolerated in the most part out of of necessity. A hive exists on the toil of its population, and the labour of a mutant is as good as that of any other. Indeed, in many hives where slight mutation not tolerated, the industry and wealth of the hive could not be sustained. This tolerance is, of course, not universal or without bounds; mutation, after all, is commonly regarded as a sign of sin and corruption. In many hives gross mutation is not only shunned but rooted out and purged by law. Many hive mutants flee down into the deeper parts of a hive where they can exist out of the reach of persecution.

As one descends through a hive, the levels of pollution and toxicity increase until one reaches the deep places of a hive where no true law reigns. Variously called the underhive, low hive, or waste zones, here the rates of mutation are high and it is common to find established populations of mutants. It is only in these broken margins of the hive that mutants can exist without being indentured to labour, persecuted, or killed by the rest of the hive population. These clans and tribes may have existed for as long as the hive has stood and their mutation may have stabilised, resulting in consistent mutation such as has produced the scaled ones of Magnagorsk or the twist brutes of the Tranch Soot Warrens. Deeper still are the most polluted areas of hives, sometimes referred to as the hive sump, hive bottom, or deep dark. These ancient areas are so toxic that only the most disturbing creatures and fearful mutants exist here: strange pale things with orb-like eyes and soft flesh. Few of these deep-hive mutants are ever seen by any, and those who do rarely live to tell of what dwells in the deepest places of a hive.

While most hive mutants are doomed to dwell forever in the polluted dark, a few succeed in leaving to make a life amongst the stars. Almost all of these bold 'hive twists' exist on the shadowy margins of the Imperium. Some become affiliated with criminal organisations such as the notorious Beast House, or are bound to a heretical organisation such as the Pale Throng that was born in the Soot Warrens of Tranch. A few ply their trade as hired killers or muscle and, in fact, a certain proportion of the feared Bloodsworn bounty hunters are twists from Malfian underhives. A rare few hive mutants may come to the notice of an Inquisitor who values the hardness of soul and determination that a mutant needs to survive in a galaxy that loathes him.

Hive Mutant PCs

You are shunned and hated by those not of your kind, those who are willing to kill you for your twisted flesh and cripple your kind with merciless toil. You, however, have found favour in the eyes of a great peer of the Imperium, one who has eyes to see the strength of your soul and has the power to raise you to do great service to the God Emperor.

Creating Hive Mutant Characters

Use the Hive World Home World template but replace the Accustomed to Crowds Trait with the ones detailed here.



Twist

The Acolyte's body has been mutated and his genes twisted by the polluted water and air of the underhive.

Effects: During character creation the player may select one of the following two options:

- Choose two different Minor Mutations (see **Table 12–3: Minor Mutations** on page 334 of the **Dark Heresy** Rulebook). The player may not choose result 100 (which allows a roll on the Major Mutation Table).
- The Acolyte has one Minor Mutation determined by rolling on the Minor Mutations Table Mutations (see **Table 12–3: Minor Mutations** on page 334 of the **Dark Heresy** Rulebook) and one Major Mutation determined by rolling on the Major Mutations Table (see **Table 12–4: Major Mutations** on page 335 of the **Dark Heresy** Rulebook). The Acolyte reduces his initial Fate Points by 1.

Strength through Adversity

The Acolyte's mutant status means that most people shun him, and he has little chance of being easily accepted by most within the Imperium. He is, however, physically tougher than the general hive populace, as the weak never survive in the underhive.

Effects: When generating Characteristics (see pages 22 and 23 of **Chapter I: Character Creation** in the **Dark Heresy** Rulebook) the character's Home World modifier for Toughness and Fellowship are swapped, so that starting Toughness will be 2d10+25 and starting Fellowship will be 2d10+15.

Those allowed to read this already know of the myriad perils facing mankind. Unclean aliens plague our manifest rule of this galaxy, the unholy denizens of the Immaterium strive to befoul our realm, and, most insidiously, mankind itself may become corrupted and twisted against our Emperor's holy rule. It is the vileness of mutation I write of, this ruination of the body and soul. It is the duty of my own Ordo Hereticus to control, contain, and eliminate the mutant, for they are a menace to all subjects of the Emperor.

But what is a mutation? To know this threat, you must first recognize the physical change is only part of the corruption. The decay of the soul is the true transgression. The body rejecting its holy form is a sad matter, but the spirit rejecting the Emperor's Light is an unforgivable sin. I have heard many debates about which occurs first—does the soul turn its back on the Emperor and the body follows, or does the ruin of the corpus drive the befoulment of the essence? I know there are many settings where mutation is common; warzones, badly maintained voidships, and polluted underhives. This seems to indicate physical causes for mutation. But I also know that there are many who live in such conditions that never develop mutations, and some who live in the most pristine of spires who become the foulest of mutants. I personally have been exposed to the worst horrors of the malefic and emerged unscathed, and posit that an unwavering faith may keep one free from mutation.

Mutation is sadly a fact of our existence and must be dealt with accordingly. However, even the most rabid beast can be employed as a useful weapon as long as its master takes the correct precautions. It is not unknown for a properly prepared and loyal servant of the Imperium to use these creatures to the betterment of the Imperium. For example, we rely on astropaths and navigators to maintain the bonds between our worlds, and our valiant Imperial Guard makes good use of stable mutants known as abhumans. So too can His holy servants use mutants against His foes, for the mutant can offer hideous strength, unnatural resiliency, and a host of other abilities useful in our virtuous struggle.

In such cases, one should think of the mutant as a tool. Using the correct abomination in the correct manner is as important as selecting the correct ammunition for your bolter. While mutants may appear similar, careful study reveals a host of differences ranging from a variety of misshapen body parts to a range of bizarre powers. These mutants may prove valuable assets in the right situation.

Another thing a mutant can offer is access to other mutants, in the form of mutant sanctuaries and other, similar places. Despite their best efforts, too often my own agents are exposed; it would seem that the mutant can distinguish a fellow mutant from an imposter, possibly by the smell of the corrupted soul. Too often, haphazard discovery of such lairs results in the mutants scattering like roaches when exposed. By using mutant insiders to ensure the proper timing, a successful purging is more likely.

Always be watchful of your monsters, keep them on a short leash, and have a loaded weapon ready. I learned long ago, never make use of that which cannot be put down. Always stand ready to eliminate any mutant operatives at any moment, for to become dependent on the mutant is to give away your control over the mutant. Nothing could be more disgraceful in the Emperor's gaze.

Beware most of all the mutant who accepts and delights in his deformity. Such a fiend begs the Dark Gods for further twisting, and often becomes a servant of the Ruinous Powers. Any mutants you deal with should at all times be aware of their wretched state no matter how slight their physical deformity, and forever be aspiring to return to grace. The wisest mutants know their salvation, however unlikely, is only possible when dying in the Emperor's service. They should be humbled and grateful to be offered an opportunity. Anything less should be viewed as signs that the mutant has trodden too far down the path towards eternal sin.

There is more that could be said on this matter than any single book could hold; indeed you should already be well versed in some of the appropriate tomes available to the agents of the Holy Ordos. In parting, I charge you to be both steadfast in your faith and implacable in your duty to your Emperor. Keep His light shining brightly in your soul at all times, for to waver is the first step in the dimming of that holy radiance. From that diminishment comes the darkness of Chaos, leading only to mutation and damnation.

–Inquisitor Elena Vilhelmina Kholettis, Ordo Hereticus

THE TAINTED BLOOD OF MALFI (NOBLE BORN)

"Madness dances in their eyes, and they can spill your blood and laugh as easily as they can show the most tender compassion. At each turn it as if a coin is cast for their nature: on one side the monster, on the other the saint."

–Cardinal Glabruis on the infamous House Koba of Malfi

The Noble lineages of the Imperium can produce lines of great and noble servants of the God Emperor who uphold the fine traditions of their ancestors, and in which the blood of the just and true runs thick. There are, however, lineages which have become so twisted and tainted that they spawn generation upon generation of monsters. Nowhere is more true than on Malfi, a world of intrigue and lies where the profusion of noble houses constantly vie for power, influence, and prestige and a thousand secret cults and societies are spawned, struggle, and are extinguished with the passing of every generation. In such an environment those of the tainted bloodlines flourish. The noble houses of Malfi are thick with secrets and hidden horrors, and a number of noble lineages have become noted for the cruelty and fevered madness of their scions. Capricious, ruthless and wicked, the worst of these tainted lines display a cruel intelligence and single-minded strength that drives them to survive and perpetrate their sins and those of their ancestors into another generation.



What the source is of the tainted noble blood of Malfi is a mystery. So many lines have intermingled through marriage that the genealogies of the Malfian nobility are a tangled web stretching back for centuries to the founding of the sector. If one also considers the introduction of blood ties with noble lineages from other worlds, including great Scintilla, pinpointing the sire of the rot is an impossible task. Some consider that there is no single source of the tainted blood and see Malfi's prodigious production of monsters as a consequence of circumstances in which the vicious and deceptive prosper. Some within the Holy Ordos see the madness behind the mask of many Malfian Nobles as being the product of the planet's history of infamous heresies. A few might point out that the taint seems too persistent in those of particular lineages to be simply a product of random breeding or circumstance. They point to how the rot seems to spread to other houses that have blood ties with the tainted dynasties of Malfi: the notorious Sinderfell clan of Scintilla, for example, produced the infamous Myrchella Sinderfell, and had ties with house Belasco of Malfi.

The taint persists in many noble lineages both on Malfi and beyond. In some cases it lies dormant for generations before coming to light, while in others the tainted are the run of their family's dark course. For some the nature of their line is something to be fought; the madness that runs within their veins is a beast to be tamed. For others to be a monster is their true nature, one that is embraced with joy and relish.

Tainted Blood PCs

The blood that flows in your veins is like a snare that you cannot escape. At every moment it lures you to actions and thoughts that are both magnificent and terrible. You have great potential—but can you trust yourself not to become a monster?

Creating Tainted Blood of Malfi Characters

Use the Noble Born Home World template (see pages 15 to 17 of The Inquisitor's Handbook) and replace the Etiquette Trait with the ones detailed here.

Fiendish Mind

The minds of those of the tainted Malfian nobility are prone to incredible intelligence, inclined to lies, and strangely numb to fears.

Effects: The Acolyte increases his Intelligence by +10. He also begins play with the Talented (Deceive) and Resistant (Fear) Talent.

Monstrous Lineage

The sins of the character's bloodline mean that he has teetered on the edge of madness and abomination from the moment he was born.

Effect: The Acolyte begins play with 1d10 Corruption Points and 2d10 Insanity Points.

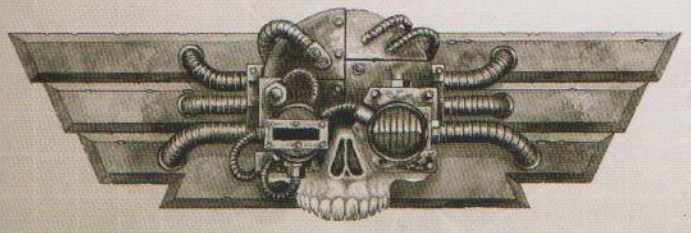
Histories of Infamy: Radical Background Packages

"I did terrible things, things that I will never speak of to you or anyone between here and the Golden Throne. I did those things and they are my shackles from which I will never be free."

–Junt Yaeger, from a private confession to Inquisitor Herrod

The following section details a variety of optional Background Packages for **Dark Heresy** characters. These backgrounds offer the Acolytes an extra level of detail by 'filling in' more of their pasts and experiences before joining the Inquisition, providing the characters with a 'story' of their own, with hooks to help players and GMs form a basis for their personality, beliefs, and goals, not to mention the reason why they serve a Radical or of Radical inclination themselves. All the Background Packages outlined in this section are in some way tainted or touched by darkness such that they will frame the character as suitable for service to a Radical branch of the Holy Ordos. Depending on the character's career, the Background Package may take the form of a dark discovery made in the past, a terrible secret kept for years, or a dark deed perpetrated in secret. Regardless, this event marks a pivotal moment in any character's development.

As well as providing characters with a history, each Background Package also comes with an Effect, in terms of particular Skills, Talents, or Traits (some of them quite unique) for Acolytes to have developed as a result of their past. In many cases, these packages also feature some fairly serious drawbacks, either in the shape of some deficiency of ability, or perhaps even in terms of Insanity or Corruption Points; the 41st millennium is a dark place after all, and all knowledge has its price.



Using Background Packages

Background Packages provide a suite of Characteristic adjustments, Skills, Talents, and, in some cases, Traits. Any adjustments to a character by selecting a Background Package does not count as an Advance for the purpose of increasing in rank, nor do increases or reductions count toward the improvement of a Characteristics through normal means.

To select a Background Package, the Acolyte must meet its requirements. Some packages are restricted to one Career Path, while others are available when creating characters from several different Career Paths. Many Background Packages also include a Home World or origin requirement, which must also be met. Finally, Background Packages all have an xp cost, which must be paid from the character's starting experience during character creation. The price covers the whole Background Package; players can't spend less for parts of it. It's all or nothing. Likewise, players may find that packages grant Talents not otherwise available due to Characteristic restrictions. The Acolyte does not have to meet the requirements of any listed Talent gained from the package since the benefits are undoubtedly hard earned!

Players may only acquire a Background Package at the start of character creation. A player cannot go back and select a package later in your character's career, nor can he ever have more than one package. Background Packages are entirely optional and a player should always get his GM's permission before selecting one for his character.

Example

Emma has rolled up an Imperial World Adept character and wants to take a Background Package so that she can make her character fit in with the Radical campaign that her GM is running. She looks up those available to her career and settles on Thy Name I Keep and having received the go-ahead from her GM, she applies the package effects to her character. She adds the additional Skills and Talents listed under effects to her character sheet and rolls 1d5+5 Corruption Points and 1d10 Insanity Points knowing a part of a daemon's true name. She also marks off 400 xp (the package's cost) from her starting xp and goes on to spend the rest of the starting xp given by the GM.

Players can, of course, vary the 'story' within the package to suit their own tastes and ideas—and indeed they are encouraged to do so—so long as the effects and cost are the same of those listed. It's also recommended that no two player characters in a group use the same package for the sake of variety, unless of course the group's GM has a fiendish plan in mind....

Denounced and Condemned

Career: Adepta Sororitas
Cost: 400 xp

Amongst the Sisters of Battle, there are a rare few who have been blessed, or cursed, with a strange gift: the ability to see into people's hearts and divine the tides that flow in their soul. Such individuals protest they are no heretic, that their faith in the God-Emperor is pure and strong. However, they are denounced by your sisters as a heretic and a witch. The Adepta Sororitas is not forgiving or understanding, and the slightest hint of psyker witchery must be purged, even at the expense of one of their own.

Those unlucky enough to have their secret known (or foolish enough to confess their 'blessing' to their sisters) are branded witches and accused of consorting with the unclean. They are subjected to endless days of questioning and torment in dank cells until their entire existence is consumed by madness and pain.

Most die in darkness. A very few, however, are noticed by powers beyond the authority of their former order, such as a member of the Inquisition. An Inquisitior may see the divine truth in the ability of this fallen sister, and raise her to do holy service, but she can never again count herself among the sisters of the Adepta Sororitas.

Effects

Apply all of the following changes to the character.

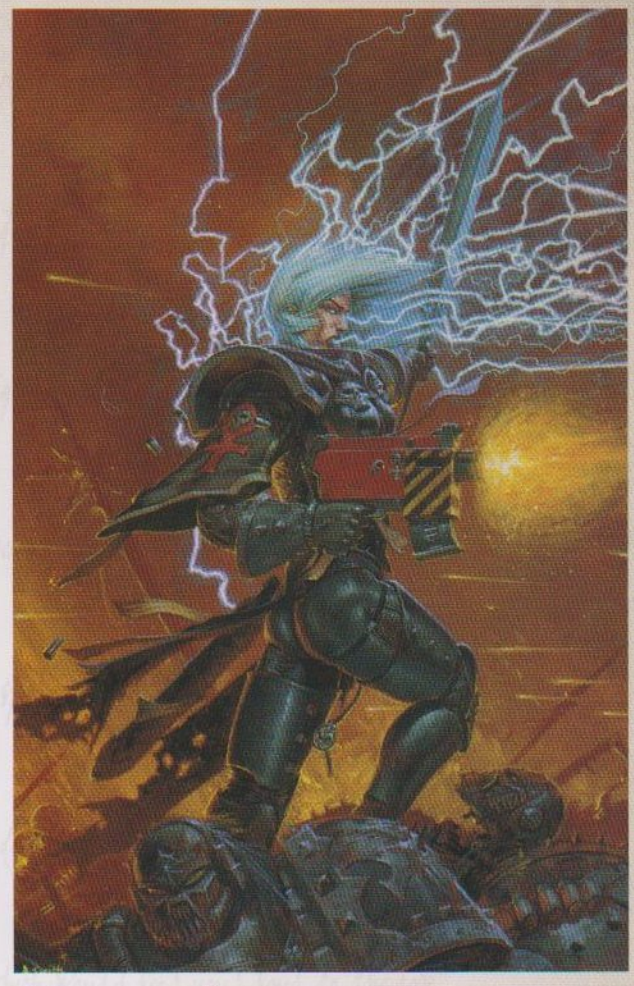
Fate Point: You are fated to greater ends than you dream and so begin play with one additional Fate Point.

Insanity Points: The methods of question and confinement you endured have scarred your mind. You start the game with 2d10 Insanity Points.

Condemned as a Heretic: Although you now serve the Holy Ordos, you can never return to the fellowship of your sisters nor be seen as anything but contemptible by the Ecclesiarchy. You may never gain the following Talents: Peer (The Ecclesiarchy) or Good Reputation (The Ecclesiarchy). You may also never draw on the resources or good will of the Ecclesiarchy or Adepta Sororitas by dint of being a member of the sisterhood.

Witch Sight: You are gifted with a strange gift that shows you glimpses of peoples' true nature as if their lies were stripped bare before your eyes. You may spend a Fate Point to discern the nature of someone's soul. This functions in exactly the same way as the Soul Sight psychic power (see page 173 of the **Dark Heresy** Rulebook) except it works automatically and does not evoke any psychic phenomena. Rather than Testing using the Psyniscience Skill as indicated by the power, you make a Perception Test and apply the results indicated for your degrees of success.

Note: The Witch Sight ability does not mean that you are considered a psyker, and the effects of the power are not affected by rules that affect psychic powers.



Heretical Sect

Career: Cleric
Cost: 200 xp

The Imperial creed is a faith divided by a thousand different interpretations and traditions sacred across thousands of planets. While sects of the Imperial creed may differ in particulars of ritual and the method in which their faith is expressed, all these traditions are bound together by their faith in the divinity of the God Emperor of mankind. On occasion, however, the beliefs of a sect slip beyond the bounds of the Ecclesiarchy's tolerance, and the sect becomes condemned as heretical. The sect's adherents may be forced to renounce their heretical faith or simply be executed while their leaders are burnt and their places of devotion cast down. Some sects, however, live on within the preachers, confessors and priests of the Ecclesiarchy. These hidden heretics keep alive the traditions and creed of their heretical sect while wearing a mask of piety and purity. To an Inquisitor of broader tolerance than the Ecclesiarchy, the discovery and employ of such a heretic can be highly useful as they often have access to hidden knowledge and secret networks of information.

Effects

Apply all of the following changes to your character.

Skills: Forbidden Lore (Heresy) (Int) and Forbidden Lore (Cults) (Int).

Talents: You start the game with Peer (your sect).

Justice, Not Law

Career: Arbitrator
Cost: 200 xp
To some enforcers of law the greater end always justifies the means. These corrupt guardians of justice see unsanctioned punishments, illegal executions and obtaining information by bribery or torture as tools of the trade. The half darkness of criminality that these arbiters and enforcers exist in is one where it would difficult to tell the recidivist and lawmen apart–were it not for the fact that one carries a badge and carries on his work in the name of the Imperium. Though an arbitrator may slide into criminality and mundane corruption, most are not corrupt in a deeper sense, and though they will murder, beat and accept the coin of criminals, they often see themselves as simply fighting scum and villains in a manner they deserve and treating with them in a manner that gets results. Such flexible morality and resourcefulness is much prized by Inquisitors who do not concern themselves with the 'lesser points of law.' Far from condemning such a dubious lawgiver, they save them from punishment and raise them to serve in a greater war.

Effects

Apply all of the following changes to your character.
Skills: Deceive (Fel) and Intimidate (Str).
Talents: You start the game with Peer (Underworld).

Penitent

Career: All
Cost: 200 xp
There are rare few in the service of some Radical Inquisitors were once themselves vile heretics, adorers of daemons, recidivists and witches who once scorned the purity of the Emperor for either their own gain, pleasure or spite. When discovered by servants of the Holy Ordos, all that these damned souls may hope for is a swift death that is rarely given. Many are wracked, flayed and branded for many days, weeks or months before they are granted the peace of death. Some, in this time of pain and question, find in themselves an understanding of what they have done and what they have become. Some beg for forgiveness; few receive it. A very few find that their pleas have been heard by one who is willing to give them a second life: a life as a penitent in the service of the God Emperor of mankind. These penitent servants have only the life that is given to them by their master and are fanatical in their devotion both to that master and to the chance of earning forgiveness for what they once were.

Effects

Apply all of the following changes to your character.
Skills: Forbidden Lore (pick two) (Int).
Talents: You start the game with Dark Soul, Insanely Faithful, and Flagellant.
Corruption: Your experiences have left you with 10+1d10 Corruption Points and the character automatically begins play with one Malignancy (roll on **Table 8-8: Malignancies** on page 239 of the **Dark Heresy** Rulebook).

Thy Name I Keep

Career: Adept
Cost: 400 xp
For those who covet forbidden knowledge, few prizes are greater than the true name of one of the daemons that exist in the warp. To possess a daemon's name is to be able to command it, to bridle it and have it do one's bidding. Few are lucky or insane enough to learn such a great secret, for daemons guard the keys to their nature well. A daring soul may, however, learn a fragment or phrase of an entity's name through long study and research into matters malefic and corrupt. To possess even a fragment of a daemon's name is a great prize that can be used to access a portion of the power of the daemon and have to give little in return—besides one's mind and the slow corrosion of one's soul.

Scholars of the forbidden who have obtained a fragment of a daemonic name would expect to be purged with fire if discovered by a member of the Inquisition. For some Inquisitors who follow a Radical path, such talented individuals are to be kept and nurtured in the service of the Imperium, where their stolen powers and talents can be turned against the enemies of mankind.

Effects

Apply all of the following changes to your character.
Skills: Forbidden Lore (Daemonology) (Int).
Talents: You start the game with Resistance (Psychic Powers) and Talented (Forbidden Lore [Daemonology]).
Corruption: Your experiences leave you with 1d5+5 Corruption Points.
Insanity Points: You start the game with 1d10 Insanity Points.
Power of the Daemon: You have the effects of one boon of a Dark Pact chosen from pages 242 to 243 of the **Dark Heresy** Rulebook. You may also attempt to call into your presence the daemon of which you know a fragment of its name. This works in exactly the same way as Invoking the Daemon (see page 244 in **Chapter VIII: The Game Master** of the **Dark Heresy** Rulebook).



Untouchable

Career: Any Career, but you may not possess a Psy Rating.
Special: May have no other package, talent, trait or similar that grants psychic, faith or warp-based powers or abilities, both during creation or later development.
Cost: 400 xp.
Untouchables are extraordinarily rare individuals who cast no shadow in the warp. Their mere presence acts to inhibit and disrupt psychic energy to such an extent that even humans with no psychic ability whatsoever grow uncomfortable and fractious around them. People who possess this unique nature are often marginalized and isolated, possessing few or no friends and have suffered a very troubled uprbringing. Many find themselves living on the criminal margins of the Imperium for all their lives to die alone and unmissed. Unsettling and disliked though they may be an untouchables powers are singular and as can be imagined, the Inquisition has many uses for such singular individuals in its wars against the witch and the Daemon, as do certain cults, conspiracies and worse for their own dark purposes.
Special Note: Although untouchables are themselves exceedingly rare and little understood, there are others who share similar traits and variations on their condition both less and savagely more powerful in effect outside the scope of this book. Such nightmarish individuals will be covered in a future release.

The Untouchable and the Profane

An untouchable (thanks to his special nature) is spared some of both the perils of interaction with the Warp and some of its potential powers and benifits. An untouchable may not for example, under any normal circumstances enter into a Dark Pact with a warp entity or receive the benefits of beneficial psychic powers, sorcery or true faith. They may not learn sorcery or take any talents associated with it and may not have faith talents (see pages 50-51 of The Inquisitor's Handbook). A force weapon, daemon weapon, or occult artefact (or the like) in the hands of an untouchable is merely a weapon or object of its type. The untouchable may not unleash or benefit from any of the weapon's special powers or abilities, or (in the case of a daemon weapon) master it. However, the same also applies to such items and weapons used against the untouchable. Other than base damage listed (a sword in the guts is still a sword in the guts after all) any other particular effect such a weapon would normally have on the untouchable is likewise ignored.

Because of their unique place in the universe of Dark Heresy, untouchables in games may bring up odd questions about their nature in the rules and options such characters may take. In all cases it is up to the GM's own good sense and judgment to decide how they are handled.

Effects

Apply all of the following changes to your character.
Characteristics: The character's starting Fellowship Characteristic is reduced by 10 (if the character's Fellowship is 10 or less already, it is reduced to 1) but may later be increased as normal.
Unsettling Presence: An untouchable suffers a –10 penalty to all Interaction Skill Tests.
Psychic Blank: The character may never gain Psychic Powers, Pure Faith, Sorcery or related Talents.
Psychic Invulnerability: An untouchable is completely immune to Psychic Powers, psychic energy and effects directed against them (as well as warp powers, possession, sorcery, Corruption from warp shock, and so forth) Also, he cannot be detected by means of Psyniscience, Sense Presence, or similar abilities—powers of this type directed at their person, even though successfully manifested, simply fail. Powers in whose wider areas he is caught simply fail to affect him—although they may affect other people normally, subject to their disruption effect.
Psychic Disruption: All Psychic Powers and abilities manifested in the character's immediate area (a radius equal to the Untouchable's Willpower Bonus in metres) have their Threshold increased by 10, plus any associated Test by the psyker (such as Willpower Tests) have their Difficulty increased by –20. Additionally, entities subject to Warp Instability will suffer double Damage from its effects while in this area.
Note: It may still be possible to indirectly affect an untouchable with a Psychic Power—for example, a boulder telekinetically dropped from a great height on an untouchable will still flatten them. This is left entirely left to the discretion of the GM.

Warp Touched

Career: Any except Adepta Sororitas.
Cost: 400 xp.
There are places where the barrier between reality and the warp is thin. Across such thinned barriers the influence of the power of the warp can touch those who are near. This is not the touch of the intelligences that form in the tides of that other realm's energy and are called daemons. It is a caressing, violating, warping tendril of the boiling psychic energy that leaks across into reality like an invisible fog or a howling gale; marking and changing all that it touches. On Sleef, the warp whispers in the thunder of the volcanoes and can change the fate of those who hear it. On Mara, it buzzes and scratches, sending men mad, whilst on Dusk, it shivers amongst the swamp trees like the laughter of a hag. Those who are touched by the warp may possess strange powers that they carry in their blood, bone, and mind; making them almost inhuman. So subtle and dangerous are the seeds planted by the warp that almost any servant of the Inquisition would burn one so touched—but a few within the Holy Ordos, such touched individuals are to be embraced and bound to service, if for no other reason than to see what they may become.

Effects

Apply all of the following changes to your character.

Traits: You start the game with the From Beyond Trait (page 330 in the **Dark Heresy** core rulebook).

Corruption: You begin play with 10+1d10 Corruption Points and the character automatically begins play with one Malignancy (roll on **Table 8-8: Malignancies** on page 239 of the **Dark Heresy** Rulebook). You also suffer a –10 penalty on any Test to resist gaining further Corruption Points.

Wyrd

Career: Any except Adepta Sororitas, Imperial Psyker or Tech-Priest.

Cost: 300 xp.

Wyrds are individuals who possess a small spark of psychic ability. These individuals may not even consider themselves psykers but simply gifted, blessed or lucky—but their powers are very real. From the thief who can steal in plain sight and never be remembered, the arbiter who gets a strange feeling that makes him duck a second before the bullet hits the wall above them, to the ganger burnt for being able to heal wounds with a touch, the power of a wyrd can be seen as a vital edge or a mark of damnation. A wyrd's power remains small and stable, and though he will never ascend to the power of even the lesser true psykers, he is nonetheless tempting to the predators that lurk in the warp and hunger for reality and flesh. Many wyrds pass through their whole lives without their power being discovered, but those who are discovered face the same fate as more powerful true psykers: the dark holds of the Black Ships and a life of pain and suffering. A rare few wyrds may come to the notice of an Inquisitor who has use for a skilled individual with a unique edge.

Effects

Apply all of the following changes to your character.

Corruption: You start the game with 1d5 Corruption Points.

Wyrd Power: You have a single psychic power that is randomly generated at the point of character creation (use **Table 5–15: Random Psychic Powers** on page 149 of the **Dark Heresy** Rulebook). You have no psy rating. Instead, you always roll 1d10 and add your Willpower bonus to use the power. You generate Psychic Phenomena as normal, but may re-roll a result of 9 on the power roll. You may never gain additional psychic powers except by metamorphosing into a full nascent psyker (see pages 89-90 in **The Inquistors Handbook**). You are, however, a psyker for the purposes of rules that relate to psykers.



Paths into Shadow: Radical Career Ranks

"You and I are only different in that I make choices that you fear to make. I have the courage to be what the God Emperor, the Imperium and humanity need me to be. You lack that courage and so deny your true purpose."

–Inquisitor Mesmeron to Inquisitor Geheld

The following section details a number of Ranks which may be taken during your character's career progression as alternatives to the normal path of his Career. In many ways these Alternate Ranks change your character's potential abilities and direction but not his fundamental nature: A player won't swap his character's Career Paths, but rather his character's fate simply takes an unusual detour along the way.

These Alternate Career Paths serve two functions: The first is to offer the player an opportunity to personalise his character and make him or her something unique and special. The second is to give characters a very definite place within the Radical conspiracies of the Inquisition in the Calixis Sector.

Taking an Alternate Rank

Alternate ranks are attractive and for good reason. Gaining new powers, Skills, Talents, and giving you more tools to distinguish a character from others of the same path are all excellent reasons for acquiring an Alternate Rank. To select an Alternate Rank, a player must first secure his GM's permission. Several of the Alternate Ranks may complicate matters and be at odds with an existing plotline or campaign. Second, most Alternate Ranks include a one or more prerequisites that a player must fulfill before taking the rank. Finally, Alternate Career Ranks have a minimum level at which they can be taken by the character (and some can be taken by more than one career path). The Rank can be taken at this minimum Rank or at any Rank thereafter.

Once his character meets all the requirements and the GM agrees, a player may select the Alternate Rank. In every case, the Alternate Rank is 'swapped' for the Rank he would otherwise take, and its Advance Scheme is exchanged for the one found in his career's normal path. From this point onward, the character has access to these advances and may spend your xp freely on them. The rank may also indicate some unique ability or Trait that is gained as well—apply this immediately.



As well as offering up a slew of new abilities and potentials, taking an alternate career, 'the path less travelled' so to speak, has its downsides. A character may (and probably will) miss out on certain Skills and Talents, have his maximum ability with certain Skills capped out early or be forced to pay more xp for them. This is simply the price of diversifying your character into a new and specialised area. The GM may allow a player to still pick these up if appropriate, but as Elite Advances (see Elite Advances from Missed Career Ranks) during the player's next career rank.

Because taking an alternate rank complicates the character progression system somewhat, it is recommended for experienced players. Remember though that regardless of how many options a player has, a finite amount of xp caps his progress and this is what determines his character's rank.

Example

Mecucio, a noble-born character of the Scum Career takes the alternate Career Demagogue, exchanging his usual Rank 6: Cutter for Rank 6: Warp Dabbler, and fulfills the requirements listed. He doesn't cease to be a Scum; he is just now a Scum who uses warp-fueled powers to accomplish his goals. Mecucio's player now has access to the Skills and Talents listed under the Warp Dabbler advances at the costs listed there, and may spend xp freely on them from this point forward. However, all the time he spends practicing warp-sorcery means he misses out on certain opportunities from Scum Rank 6: Cutter, when he moves onto Scum Rank: 7. If he wishes still obtain these and has the xp to spent, he must pay for them as Elite Advances.

Moving On

Once a player has accumulated and spent enough xp to advance his character to the next rank, he does so as normally. If his Career Path splits, he must choose one path as he normally would, his alternate career standing in the stead of any previous choice he needed to make. The player must then follow this chosen path normally, although again he may find your tangent has left his character missing certain Skills needed as prerequisites for some of the Advances offered by the new rank and to acquire them, he must obtain them as Elite Advances. More likely, however, he will continue to develop your advances from his alternate career to make up for missed opportunities.

Elite Advances from Missed Career Ranks

Having taken an alternate career means a character has deviated from the regular path experience and training would have taken, and while the character will have gained new and often unique abilities from this extracurricular activity, he misses out on what would have been his regular development. In this case, Talents and Skills can be reasonably obtained by the character (with the GM's approval) as Elite Advances for their listed cost in the missed rank plus 50 xp.

Example

Mecucio the Scum missed out on Scum Rank 6: Cutter having become a Warp Dabbler instead. However the player character nearly died when he was shot by an assassin serving a smuggling ring and so he would like to take Die Hard. This is an advance listed on his missing rank, so the character asks to take this as an Elite Advance. The GM agrees on the condition that the character spend sufficient downtime between adventures hardening himself and allows Mecucio to have the advance for 150 xp (100 for the Talent plus 50 more for the Elite Advance).

Table 2-1: Alternate Career Ranks

Name	Career(s) Required	Rank (+)
Forsaken Priest	Cleric	5
Heretek Savant	Tech-Priest	6
Imperial Diviner	Imperial Psyker, (also see description)	5
Malefic Scholar	Adept	3
Maltek Stalker	Assassin	5
Mortiurge	Arbitrator	5
Penal Legionnaire	Guardsman	1
Saboteur	All except Tech-Priest and Adepta Sororitas	3
Sin Eater	Arbitrator, Assassin, or Guardsman	4
Tainted Psyker	Imperial Psyker	5
Warp Dabbler	All except Adepta Sororitas†	6

†Also any character with the Pure Faith Talent is forbidden from this option.

Forsaken Priest

"Any grace that was mine is gone. I am a priest of a church of bones and all my flock are grinning skulls and ashes. I am no longer a man: I am a thing made of bleak knowledge, squandered purity and regret."

–Confessor Adso, Acolyte in the service of Antonina Mesmeron

A Forsaken Priest is faithful priest of the Ecclesiarchy who has been drawn into the service of an Inquisitor of a Radical creed and has sacrificed himself to the learning of dark knowledge and the forbidden arts of sorcery. The knowledge and use of sorcery are blasphemous acts that eat away at those who acquire and wield such dark arts. Nevertheless, the power of sorcery and daemon lore is a potent weapon against the manifold threats faced by the Imperium, and so it may be wielded by those who know that they are damning themselves but are willing to sacrifice their souls in the defence of humanity.

Forsaken Priests are rare, even in the ranks of the radical factions of the Inquisition, and though exceptions exist, they are almost exclusively found among those who follow either the Xanthite or Oblationist doctrine, often for very different reasons.

The Oblationists: Only the pure and just who sacrifice themselves to damnation in the service of the Oblationist creed may do so; all others are vile heretics who deserve only fire and death. So the Oblationists believe, and the Forsaken Priests are an ultimate expression of this fanatical belief. This is a maxim taken to heart by Oblationists, and when they need a sorcerer in their service, they create them from the purest of sources: the best and most pious of the priests of the Adeptus Ministorum. These clerics are long-serving and trusted Acolytes of an Oblationist who have accepted and embraced the self-annihilating creed of their master or mistress, and so have been charged to become a weapon against the enemies of the Imperium.

The Xanthites: The Xanthite goal is to master and dominate the powers of the Warp and of Chaos and bind them into mankind's service, a deadly pursuit that requires women and men of unfailing will and vision to accomplish. To this end the Xanthites seek out and draw clerics whose faith has been sorely tried or whose own creeds have strayed far from the Ministorum's narrow path into their service, the better to slowly mould and shape to their own ends and to embrace the darkly visionary Xanthite ethos. Raised up in forbidden knowledge, these Forsaken Priests serve the Xanthite cause as trusted Acolytes, exorcists, and daemon-binders whose faith in the God-Emperor, though no less fervent than before, has changed as through a mirror darkly.

The strength of character required to stand with one foot in heaven and the other in hell is a rare thing indeed, and the investiture of a Forsaken Priest is a process of learning and dark transformation. With ritual care the once-pure priest studies and practices the vile skills of warp craft and in so doing is transformed from a priest of unsullied faith to a hollow shell who has nothing left but sacrifice and service. From this point on, a Forsaken Priest will be one of his Inquisitor's most trusted Acolytes, and may in time be raised to the rank of Inquisitor to perpetuate the dark arts to another generation of Inquisitors.

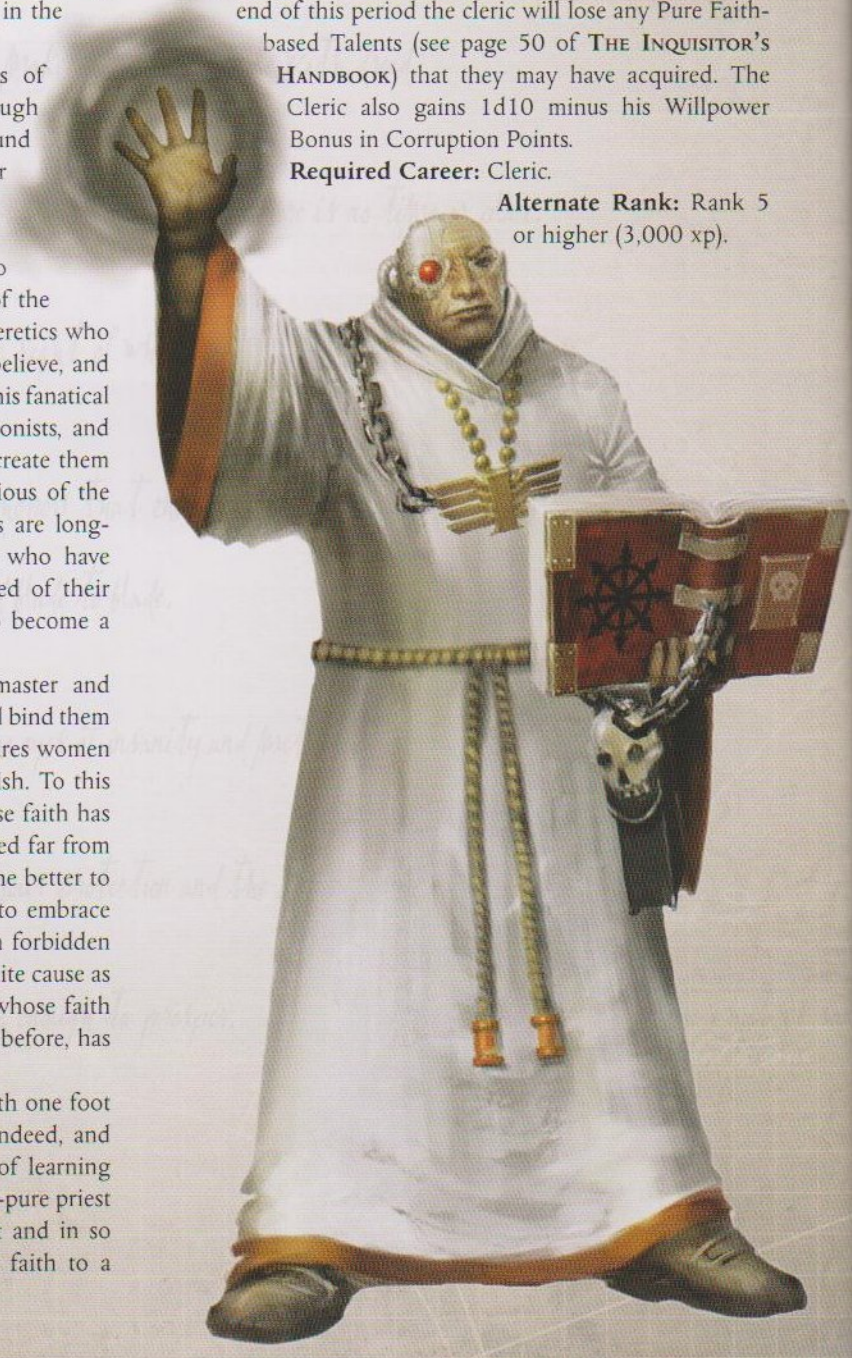
Becoming a Forsaken Priest

Becoming a Forsaken Priest is a profound change for a Cleric Acolyte; he is crossing the line into undeniable Radicalism in how he operates. This Alternative Rank also represents the progression of trust that an Oblationist or Xanthite Inquisitor (for example) has in the Acolyte and is an agreed and conscious choice on the part of both servant and master. Given this, a player should consult closely with his GM before taking this career for his Cleric character.

Once a Cleric has set himself on the path of a Forsaken Priest, he will undergo a period of purification, prayer and fasting alongside his schooling in the malefic arts. At the end of this period the cleric will lose any Pure Faith-based Talents (see page 50 of **The Inquisitor's Handbook**) that they may have acquired. The Cleric also gains 1d10 minus his Willpower Bonus in Corruption Points.

Required Career: Cleric.

Alternate Rank: Rank 5 or higher (3,000 xp).



Advance	Cost	Type	Prerequisites
Armour of Contempt	100	T	Wp 40
Dark Soul	100	T	—
Forbidden Lore (Warp)	100	S	—
Forbidden Lore (Warp) +10	200	S	Forbidden Lore (Warp)
Forbidden Lore (Daemonology)	100	S	—
Forbidden Lore (Daemonology) +10	200	S	Forbidden Lore (Daemonology)
Hatred (Daemons)	100	T	—
Invocation	100	S	—
Invocation +10	200	S	Invocation
Litany of Hate	100	T	Hatred (any)
Psyniscience	100	S	—
Psyniscience +10	200	S	Psyniscience
Scholastic Lore (Occult)	100	S	—
Scholastic Lore (Occult) +10	200	S	Forbidden Lore (Occult)
Scholastic Lore (Occult) +20	300	S	Forbidden Lore (Occult) +10
Sorcerer	200	T	Int 35, Wp 35, Forbidden Lore (Demonology or Warp) +10, Scholastic Lore (Occult) +10
Minor Arcana	200	T	Sorcerer
Minor Arcana	200	T	Sorcerer
Minor Arcana	200	T	Sorcerer
Major Arcana	300	T	Wp 45, Sorcerer
Major Arcana	300	T	Wp 45, Sorcerer
Major Arcana	300	T	Wp 45, Sorcerer
Master Sorcerer	600	T	Int 40, Wp 50, Sorcerer



HERETEK SAVANT

"++No Secutor, you may not move++ Even now conduction filaments are piercing your neural systems and unworthy flesh++ So they sent you to find me, did they?++ To carry out the Omnissiah's judgment on me? ++ Well you found me —or more accurately I found you, foolish puppet of meat and iron ++ Well, now you will dance on my strings not theirs ++ Ah yes, your last paltry defences fall++ In a way I envy you; in a moment you will experience the most exquisite of agonies as I rip apart and overwrite your synapses one-by-one, it should be quite the experience++ Now Secutor, open wide, Here…I… Am."

–Cognitive data-chain forensically recovered from Secutor Rho–456-0, aftermath of the destruction of Forge-Control Lathe-Het Delta-9

The strictures and dictates of the Adeptus Mechanicus are many and harsh; they form a labyrinthine and iron-clad code that defines every aspect of the lives of the Omnissiah's priesthood, their outlook and practices. Their purpose is as simple as it is unwavering: to control and regulate knowledge and its use, stifle innovation, and above all maintain the Machine Cult's stranglehold on the Imperium's technology. To become a Heretek Savant by that phrase's purest definition is to abandon this code, at least in the Tech-Priest's private thoughts. It is to embrace individual innovation, experimentation, and free will and stray from the path ordained by the teachings of the Archmagos Doctrinal. For a Tech-Priest to do so is every bit as rare, as radical and heretical as a Confessor of the Ministorum straying away from the Imperial creed, and the consequences for those that do stray, should their deviation be discovered, is every bit as harsh. Although rather than a pyre, Heretek Savants can look forward to having their implants ripped bodily from them while alive and whatever meat that remains useful recycled into servitor components to pay for their sins.

Heretek Savants can come to their renegade position for a variety of reasons, the most common of which are to do with the simple exercising of their free will away from the structured environments of the Machine God's domains. Such tech-heresy is particularly prevalent among those Tech-Priests who serve in the Explorator cadres or are assigned to the Inquisition's service. The consequences of self-reliance and forced adaptation in the field away from help can affirm the Omnissian faith for some Tech-Priests, but for others it can lead them increasingly to question and to innovate in order to overcome adversity and seek their own answers. Others come to tech-heresy for darker reasons, such as personal ambition and the obsessive quest for power and knowledge which will allow them no respite and lead them to increasingly rail against the narrow confines of the Cult Mechanicus' approved technologies and patterns. Regardless, the path of tech-heresy is a dangerous one and as perilous in its way as tampering



with the powers of the warp. Exposure to the artefacts and lore of the alien and the sins of humanity's ancient past can be every bit as corrupting, both for the body and soul.

Secrecy is as vital for Heretek Savants as for any other whose knowledge and actions would condemn them in the eyes of the Imperium because discovery will lead to sanction and destruction by the power of the Cult Mechanicus. This usually leads to a slow distancing of themselves from their fellows in the Mechanicus and a deep-seated paranoia of discovery. As a result Heretek Savants rapidly gain a merciless and suspicious streak centred on their own self-preservation, increasingly favour implanting (often heretical) weaponry and defensive systems into their own bodies, and will stop at nothing in the service of the quest for knowledge.

Advance	Cost	Type	Prerequisites
Forbidden Lore (Archeotech)	100	S	—
Forbidden Lore (Archeotech) +10	200	S	Forbidden Lore (Archeotech)
Forbidden Lore (Archeotech) +20	300	S	Forbidden Lore (Archeotech) +10
Forbidden Lore (Adeptus Mechanicus)	100	S	—
Forbidden Lore (Adeptus Mechanicus) +10	200	S	Forbidden Lore (Adeptus Mechanicus)
Forbidden Lore (Adeptus Mechanicus) +20	300	S	Forbidden Lore (Adeptus Mechanicus) +10
Forbidden Lore (Warp)	100	S	—
Exotic Weapon Training (choose one)	100	T	—
Exotic Weapon Training (choose one)	100	T	—
Exotic Weapon Training (choose one)	100	T	—
Forbidden Lore (Warp) +10	200	S	Forbidden Lore (Warp)
Forbidden Lore (Warp) +20	300	S	Forbidden Lore (Warp) +10
Forbidden Lore (Psykers)	100	S	—
Forbidden Lore (Psykers) +10	200	S	Forbidden Lore (Psykers)
Forbidden Lore (Psykers) +20	300	S	Forbidden Lore (Psykers) +10
Forbidden Lore (Xenos)	200	S	—
Forbidden Lore (Xenos) +10	200	S	Forbidden Lore (Xenos)
Forbidden Lore (Xenos) +20	300	S	Forbidden Lore (Xenos) +10
Nightmare Field	300	T	Tech-Priest
Anima Aura	400	T	Tech-Priest
Aetheric Resonator	500	T	Tech-Priest

Becoming a Heretek Savant

Becoming a Heretek Savant is a matter of choice and opportunity rather than induction into a secret cult or service to a master, and all that is needed is for the Tech-Priest to turn his back on the sacred doctrines of the Omnissiah and have the will to do so. From this point on, they risk censure and destruction by the Cult Mechanicus if their heresies are discovered, and while there is nothing to stop them furthering their rank and position in the Adeptus Mechanicus, they are forever more false of heart and must remain eternally vigilant.

Breaking from the engramitically reinforced strictures and cortical routines of obedience to the Omnissiah's dictates is a profoundly disturbing experience, and this revelatory shock inflicts 1d5 Insanity Points on the Tech-Priest when this Career Rank is first taken.

Heretek Talents: This career gives access to several additional Tech-Priest only Talents, however the technologies used for them are considered heretical and forbidden by the Cult Mechanicus. Discovery of them by close examination, or their perceived use by other Tech-Priests might well lead to trouble.

Required Career: Tech-Priest.

Alternate Rank: Rank 6 or higher (6,000 xp).

Other Requirements: WP 35+, at least one Forbidden Lore Skill.



Heretek Savant Talents

Anima Aura

Prerequisites: Tech-Priest (Potentia Coil)

You have integrated the forbidden principles of the vile Sarcosan Wave Generator into your augmetic systems, allowing you to generate a field of energy that can keep what remains of your flesh animate even after it has been damaged or necrotised. By spending a Half Action you may activate the Anima Aura. The aura last for a number of Rounds equal 1d10 plus your Toughness Bonus. For as long as the Anima Aura is active, you have the Stuff of Nightmares Trait (see page 332 of the **Dark Heresy** Rulebook). While active, the aura also creates discordant moaning like the keening of damned souls. Each time you use this Talent you gain 1d5 Insanity Points and a level of Fatigue.

Nightmare Field

Prerequisites: Tech-Priest (Potentia Coil/Cranial Circuitry)

You have integrated strange arcane devices into the field generation capabilities of your Potentia Coil and Cranial Circuitry. These proscribed augmentations allow you to produce a mixture of subharmonic and electromagnetic interference patterns that generate a primal terror that you can taste and tune through your Cranial Circuitry. By spending a Half Action, you may produce an effect which is the same as that of the Terrify Psychic Power (see page 180 of the **Dark Heresy** Rulebook) but with no power roll, psychic phenomena or possible Overbleed. The effects of the Nightmare Field are not psychic and so will not be affected by rules which govern psychic powers. When the field is activated, it makes a noise like an unearthly shrieking. Each time you use this Talent you gain 1d5 Insanity Points and a level of Fatigue.

Aetheric Resonator

Prerequisites: Tech-Priest (Potentia Coil/Electoo Conductor)

You can use the power of your Potentia Coil to power a hidden lattice of techno-arcane circuitry wards which create a resonant aetheric disruption field that can bar the passage of the warp energies and blunt psychic force directed against you—but not without risk of dangerous feedback contamination. The field is triggered by passing a **Difficult (–10) Toughness Test** and can be kept active for up to your Toughness Bonus in combat Rounds before it must re-activated again. If the Test is failed, the Tech-Priest suffers a level of Fatigue; if it is passed, the field is successfully charged and the Tech-Priest's body and any armour he is wearing counts as being Hexagramatically Warded (see page 189 of **The Inquisitor's Handbook**). Additionally, at the end of every combat Round the Resonator is active roll 1d10; on a roll of a '9' you suffer 1d5 Corruption Points from the twisting energies of the warp bleeding into your body and mind.

The blazing white of the plasma torch flared out, and he was plunged into momentary blindness as his auto-senses adjusted. As the lock burned through, the cutting servitor staggered slightly as it backed away from the ancient rusted hatch. The radiation levels in the wreckage were appallingly high and its organic components were starting to fail, its dead skin visibly blistering.

"At last!" He hissed aloud into the dead air as he reached out reverently with a metal hand and opened the way to the ship's inner compartments. The hinges protested at first but yielded as he uttered the prayer of unfastening.

Who knew what secrets the wreck would hold? Such a rare find: an ancient star vessel non-compliant or perhaps even pre-Imperial in origin—but obviously human from the design and markings. Truly a prize beyond any price, and well worth the lives of the score of servitors it had taken to unearth it, and the hundred human captives pirated from the pilgrim barge whose bone-marrow he had needed to pay off the Voraxan Dervishes to keep clear.

Warning runes flashed on his optic-scan as he edged further into the ship with excited trepidation. The level of contamination here was extraordinary, even after thirty millennia broken and buried in the chasm where the long range auger-probes had found it.

His artificial lungs whirred and clicked as they strained oxygen from air dead a thousand years and more. He went along fingers outstretched, touching, sensing, recording every detail. The mechadendrites laced into his spine licking out delicately to touch and scan, he groped reverentially along like a blind penitent in a church, whispering prayers of reverence to the ancient machine that surrounded him.

Along his path he found long-blind pict-viewers and silent banks of controls, torn plating and pinpoint blast marks that could have only been caused by high-energy weapon fire. The warnings flashed ever more urgently as he dared to go further. He came upon a body, nothing more than a few bone fragments and dust now, but the ancient vac-suit it had worn was still intact.

'What a supreme relic,' he thought, marvelling at its condition beneath the layer of ancient dust. It was still whole, save for the blast-burn in the side that must have surely spelled the doom of its occupant.

With sudden excitement he detected something still held in the suit's empty gauntlet, a small metal box. Kneeling and muttering incantations of preservation, he retrieved the tiny box with the most sensitive of his mechadendrites. It was a wonder to behold; delicately carved and filigreed in gold, he could see workings of cogs and wheels on its side so blessed and perfect and like the Omnissiah's own symbol it must indeed be a thing beyond price. A tiny handle protruded from the side of the box, and ignoring the increasingly angry warning runes flashing he hovered a moment in awed trepidation, before he delicately turned the handle and a faint tune jangled out.

Behind him, the stillness of the dead ship seethed, and he realised suddenly the warning runes indicated not only the hazard of radiation but of nearby movement.

IMPERIAL DIVINER

"He who stares long into the Abyss should take care, lest the Abyss begin to stare back..."

–Ancient Terran Proverb

Imperial Diviners are Sanctioned Psykers who have focused their powers and abilities on the hazardous and fickle art of prophecy and prediction. This is a dangerous path, fraught not only with the difficulties and inaccuracies of foretelling itself, but also holds great risks to the sanity and soul of the Psyker involved. The rewards however can be great, and for many radical Inquisitors, the chance to detect and purge the guilty before they have the chance to commit their atrocities is more than worth the risk.

The prediction of the future, or to be more accurate the foreshadowing of things that may yet come to pass as might be imagined is a thing of great an interest to many within the Inquisition, just as it is to the Chaos Cult, witch, or indeed any other member of the Imperium's great and powerful who lend credence to the diviner's abilities. Such prognostications are never fully reliable however, and for many who distrust such arts, particularly those in the Puritan factions of the Holy Ordos, one might as well listen to the lies that pour direct from a Daemon's mouth as trust a diviner's visions.

Many of those who have gazed long into the Warp for answers and omens have been changed profoundly and come to know things that no mortal mind should for sanity's sake. Some break and flee in terror from their visions, or succumb to madness, while others endure but come to view their gifts as an agonising curse, and yet one they can neither resist nor escape. A few, despite the assurance of their Imperial sanctioning come to embrace what the Warp shows them, and in doing so may damn their very souls.

Of all the radical Calixian factions, the little understood and highly secretive sect known as the Ocularians are singularly obsessed with foretelling and the casting and fulfilment of Prophecies, and many of Imperial Diviners found within the Inquisition's ranks in the sector count among their number. However, other factions, notably the Xanthites and certain fringe followers of the Istvaanian doctrine, are also known to employ diviners of their own.

Becoming a Imperial Diviner

Becoming an Imperial Diviner simply requires a conscious choice on the part of a character with a suitable divinatory power to hone their psychic perceptions and open their minds more fully to the Empyrean seas beyond. This of course can prove dangerous. When this career choice is first taken, the character must take a **Difficult (–10) Psyniscience Test** to represent the meditative and revelatory processes involved. If this is failed they suffer 2d5 Insanity points. (They may then enter this career option regardless of the result of this roll).

Required Career: Imperial Psyker.

Alternate Rank: Rank 5 Scholar Materium or higher (3,000 XP), and you must also have the Personal Augury Power.

New Equipment: Divination Foci

The diviner's arts are strange and esoteric, even in comparison with many other psychic disciplines, a factor not aided by the tendency of the Psyker's mind to filter the Warp's revelations through convoluted dreamlike visions, allegory, symbolic representation and subconscious imagery. As a result frequent misinterpretation and obscurity are continued risks even for the most potent Psykers. In order to counteract this and attempt to reach a clarity of vision, since ancient times diviners have used special foci to try and give form and constancy to their divinations. In the Imperium the most widespread of these is the Emperor's Tarot, a sacred deck of symbolic pictographic cards with labyrinthine levels of meaning believed by some not only to be blessed but indeed to reveal the God-Emperor's own mind to his chosen people. Aside from the Tarot, there are many other regional and traditional methods, from the carved human knuckle bones favoured on Iocanthos by the Death Singers, to the interpretations of vapour patterns of secret coolant mixes boiling away in frozen zero gravity favoured by many void mystics on the great Chartist vessels.

Whatever their shape a divination foci takes, it can be placed into one of two types, a lesser one which may be hand crafted by the diviner themselves and imbued with resonance or even sold commercially by certain dealers in the esoteric, and those of greater provenance and history, sacred items made either from arcane materials such as the psychoactive Wraithbone of the Eldar or Fra'al night shards, saint's relics or the tools of diviners of legend.

When any divination psychic power is used by the psyker using the special focus (this requires at least a single full action), a bonus is given to Invocation and Perception-based Tests made to interpret the results. For a lesser divination focus, this bonus is +10; for a greater one, the bonus is +20.

Item	Cost	Availability
Divination Foci		
Lesser	200	Rare
Greater	1000+	Very Rare

New Talent

Visons of the Abyss

Prerequisites: Personal Augury Power

To progress as an Imperial Diviner is to have survived gazing into the seething Chaos of the Warp time and again, and the Psyker must become partly inured to its visions or have long since succumbed to madness. Whenever called on to suffer Corruption Points due to Warp Shock (See page 238 of Dark Heresy) or similar circumstances, they reduce the amount taken by –1.

Advance	Cost	Type	Prerequisites
Ciphers (Occult)	100	S	—
Ciphers (Occult) +10	200	S	Ciphers (Occult) +10
Ciphers (Occult) +20	300	S	Ciphers (Occult) +20
Discipline Focus (Divination)	100	T	Psy Rating 3
Forbidden Lore (Warp)	100	T	—
Forbidden Lore (Warp) +10	200	T	Forbidden Lore (Warp)
Forbidden Lore (Warp) +20	300	T	Forbidden Lore (Warp)+10
Invocation +10	100	S	Invocation
Invocation +20	100	S	Invocation +10
Psychic Power	100	T	—
Scholastic Lore (Numerology)	100	T	—
Scholastic Lore (Numerology) +10	200	T	Scholastic Lore (Numerology)
Scholastic Lore (Numerology) +20	300	T	Scholastic Lore (Numerology) +10
Scholastic Lore (Occult)	100	T	—
Scholastic Lore (Occult) +10	200	T	Scholastic Lore (Occult)
Scholastic Lore (Occult) +20	300	T	Scholastic Lore (Occult) +10
Trade (Soothsayer)	100	T	—
Trade (Soothsayer) +10	200	T	Trade (Soothsayer)
Trade (Soothsayer) +20	300	T	Trade (Soothsayer) +10
Minor Arcana	200	T	Sorcerer
Minor Arcana	200	T	Sorcerer
Psychic Power	200	T	—
Psy Rating 3	200	T	Psy Rating 2
Visions of the Abyss	200	T	Personal Augury Power
Major Arcana	300	T	WP 45+, Sorcerer
Sorcerer†	400	T	Int 35, Wp 35, Forbidden Lore
Warped Psyker††	400	T	Psy Rating 2, Special

† *See page 170 for the effect the Sorcery talent has on Psykers*

†† *New talent, see page 169*

The Perils of Prediction

"The future exists as a seething quagmire of possibilities and allegories of things yet to be, and its dark and shadowed reflections, echoing backwards through time can be glimpsed in the turbulent and nightmarish realm of the Warp by those with the courage and ability to do so. For some psykers whose powers tend towards the arts of the diviner, the prediction of the future can too readily become an obsession and a dangerous one. The Warp is a fickle and perilous thing, and for each fragment of truth that can be glimpsed there, there are a thousand falsehoods and lies, shades of possibility and futures made and unmade with each passing second."

–The Reflections of Inquisitor Katuwe Orne, Cantos Ocularis I{XVI}

MALEFIC SCHOLAR

"If you wish him dead I can oblige, though you may be able to affect such an end yourself without recourse to my arts. My speciality is the manipulation of events to violent ends by malign artifice; chiefly war, tragedy and rebellion. If that is not what you desire then perhaps it is not I that you seek."

–Corwainious Tare

A Malefic Scholar studies and acquires proscribed knowledge concerning the nature of the warp, the power and nature of daemons, and the manipulation of warp by the arts of ritual and sorcery. These are the wizened masters of warp craft who can summon daemons, open portals into the ether, see things far off and days remote, and create artefacts of occult and unclean power. Such dedication is motivated by an obsession with knowing what should not be known, or by the desire to wield unnatural power that is beyond that open to most humans. The power of a Malific Scholar has potential that is only bound by the weakness of the human mind when confronted with truths greater than it can cope with.

Forbidden knowledge is bought with unspeakable acts, obsessive pursuit of foul tomes, occult artefacts, incunabula, and long study. Given the fragmentary and often contradictory nature of the Dismal Texts, the practice of warp craft requires long experimentation and a considerable intellect. The effects of such study and practise are corrosive to body and soul. Most Malefic Scholars go mad and are slowly eaten by the cancerous nature of the things they know. Many succumb to daemonic influence and possession or become monstrous things ruled by their malignancy and dwindle into darkness and a life lived in nightmares. Some simply vanish and are lost to an eternity of suffering at the hands of the forces they sought to understand and control.

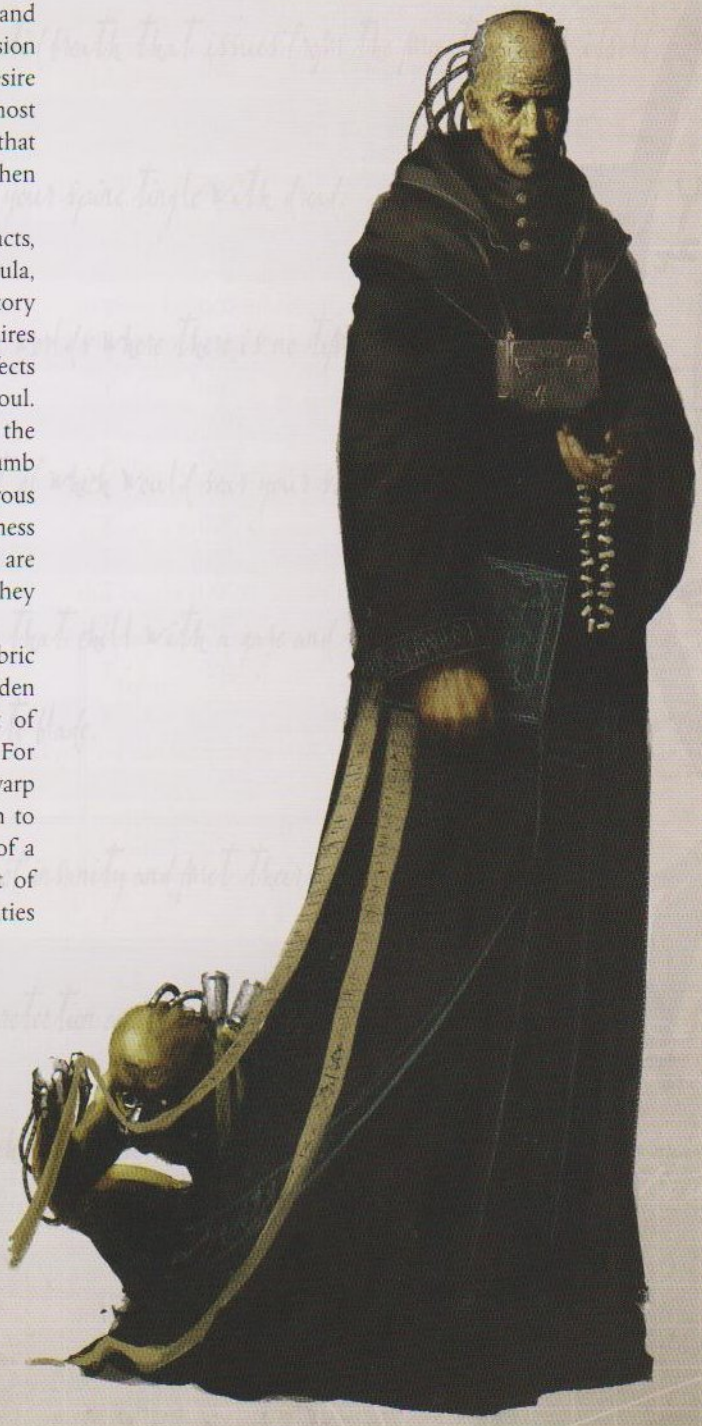
Most Malefic Scholars are an obvious threat to the fabric and security of the Imperium; their pursuit of forbidden knowledge can unleash warp entities, provide a point of incursion for daemons and may corrupt all they touch. For Inquisitors of Radical factions which embrace the use of warp craft, a Malefic Scholar is a valuable servant and weapon to be used to fight the enemies of mankind. In the service of a Radical Inquisitor a Malefic Scholar will find undreamt of access to sources of forbidden lore and endless opportunities to expand their knowledge.

Becoming a Malefic Scholar

Becoming a Malefic Scholar is a conscious choice on the part of an Adept who wishes to pursue forbidden knowledge and sorcery. Beyond this the character must have in-game access to a source of Forbidden Lore (Daemonology) and or Scholastic Lore (Occult), such as a tome containing arcane writings, or contact with an individual who has such knowledge. On entering this career, an adept gains 1d10 Corruption Points and 1d10 Insanity Points.

Required Career: Adept.

Alternate Rank: Rank 4 or higher (2,000 xp).



Advance	Cost	Type
Ciphers (Occult)	100	S
Ciphers (Occult) +10	200	S
Ciphers (Occult) +20	300	S
Favoured by the Warp	100	T
Forbidden Lore (Warp)	100	S
Forbidden Lore (Warp) +10	200	S
Forbidden Lore (Warp) +20	300	S
Forbidden Lore (Daemonology)	100	S
Forbidden Lore (Daemonology) +10	200	S
Forbidden Lore (Daemonology) +20	300	S
Invocation	100	S
Invocation +10	200	S
Invocation +20	300	S
Minor Arcana	100	T
Minor Arcana	100	T
Minor Arcana	100	T
Minor Arcana	100	T
Minor Arcana	100	T
Psyniscience	100	S
Psyniscience +10	200	S
Psyniscience +20	300	S
Major Arcana	200	T
Major Arcana	200	T
Major Arcana	200	T
Major Arcana	200	T
Major Arcana	200	T
Scholastic Lore (Occult)	100	S
Scholastic Lore (Occult) +10	200	S
Scholastic Lore (Occult) +20	300	S
Sorcerer	200	T
Sublime Arts	300	T
Master Sorcerer	400	T

MALTEK STALKER

"Scream for me..."

–Charnel Black Omega, Hand of the Phaenonites

The chosen assassin and favoured agent of the outlawed and malign Phaenonite faction of the Inquisition, the Maletek Stalker is a living fusion of murderous skill, profane technology and the power of the warp. These dark weapons given form are nightmarish shadows that serve only the Phaenonite cause, sowing terror and death among the faction's enemies, and by their very diabolic nature epitomise the horror and malice of the Phaenonite doctrine.

Maletek Stalkers are built rather than made. First, the Phaenonites select a trained killer of consummate ability from the ranks of their tried and tested servants. This candidate must also be of considerable mental and physical fortitude to stand a chance of surviving the process, and the Phaenonites have long known that a body and soul that has already felt the touch of Chaos is likely to yield the best results. The candidate is then taken by the sect's Dark Magos and hereteks and subjected to a series of nightmarish occult rituals and a grueling series of cybernetic and bionic implants. Not all those chosen survive the heretek's attentions, but those that do are profoundly transformed, their killing powers drastically augmented and possessed of a daemon's taste for slaughter.



The Stalker's augmetics are twisted mockeries of those gifted to the Machine Cult's priesthood, attuned and powered by the malefic energies of the warp, which suffuse the Stalker's body with unnatural vigour. These systems react more like flesh than metal, and thanks to the malign power that courses through them can even heal when damaged, and have been seen to scar and weep steaming blood, and may even 'evolve' as time progresses to better reflect the dark soul within. The most potent and terrible effect of the Stalker's maletek implants, however, is to allow the assassin to feed on the lives taken to bolster his own, ultimately acquiring an unnatural hunger for murder even the Phaenonites find hard to control.

Becoming a Maletek Stalker

At the point that he takes this Alternate Rank, the Assassin gains the Mechanicus Implants Trait (see page 27 of the **Dark Heresy** core rulebook) and the new Talent Maletek Warp Coil (see further on in this entry.) For the purpose of these implants and any further advances, the Stalker is assumed to meet any prerequisite which specifies "Tech-Priest." He also automatically gains two good-quality Concealed Bionic Weapons (see page 138 of **The Inquisitor's Handbook**). These tools are fitted in the arms of the Stalker and are initially classed as Mono-knives. Additional weapon options can be taken as part of the Maltek Stalker's advance scheme and are marked with a *. When these advances are taken, these options are automatically added as weapons that can be deployed from the Stalker's concealed forearm rig in addition to any other existing weapons. The process of becoming a Maletek Stalker is an agonising one, and should remove the character from play for an 'in-game' time period of 1d5 months when this Career Rank is taken. During this time the character suffers 1d5 permanent loss to his Fellowship score and suffers 1d5 Insanity Points and 2d5 Corruption Points, and also permanently loses 1 Fate Point.

Required Career: Assassin, T 35+, WP 35+, 10+ Corruption Points.

Alternate Rank: Rank 5 or higher (3,000 xp).

Other Requirements: The character must have already received the Mark of the Phaenonite (see page 72) Elite Advance.

Additionally, the Phaenonites are jealous masters and will tolerate no other allegiance in their servants. An assassin may not take this alternate career if he has any other cult or faith affliation he wishes to continue, and must foreswore any that exist, losing any special Talents or contacts specific to that group (such as The Reaping Talent associated with the Moritat for example; see page 75 of **The Inquisitor's Handbook**). The character may not later take such Elite Advantages or Alternate Career Options after becoming a Stalker, nor gain any Faith-related Talents.

Advance	Cost	Type	Prerequisites
Autosanguine	100	S	—
Logis Implant	100	T	—
Melee Weapon Training (Power)	100	T	—
Prosanguine	100	T	Autosanguine
Orothoproxy	100	T	—
Dark Soul	200	T	—
Feedback Screech	200	T	Tech-Priest
Luminen Blast	200	T	Tech-Priest
Luminen Shock	200	T	Tech-Priest
Maglev Grace	200	T	Tech-Priest
Chain Knives Implantation* (**The Inquisitor's Handbook** page 124)	200		Special
Rite of Awe	300	T	Tech-Priest
Rite of Fear	300	T	Tech-Priest
Energy Cache	300	T	Tech-Priest
Power Blades Implantation* (**Dark Heresy** Rulebook page 139)	400		Special

** These special Advances add one of the specified weapons to the concealed bionic weapons implanted in the Maltek Stalker's forearms. When these advances are taken, one of these weapon options is fitted to each of the Maltek Stalker's forearms (a total of two weapons) for the cost of the experience points spent.*

New Talent

Maletek Warp Coil

Prerequisites: Tech-Priest (Potentia Coil).

The potentia coil powering the Maletek Stalker's implants is a dark fusion of ancient technology and occult science, engraved with dark runes and suffused with the energies of the warp. As a result, a Stalker's implants may 'heal' on their own if damaged just as normal flesh would, slowly re-knitting and repairing themselves (he still may not be healed by first aid, only by the Stalker's natural healing and Talents). Additionally, every time the Maletek Stalker personally kills (that is to say strikes the fatal blow) a living sentient creature, he may immediately restore 1D5–2 (with a minimum result of 1) lost Wounds up to the character's starting total. Damage which has been caused by 'Holy' weapons may not be healed in this manner. This baleful regeneration may also heal the effects of Critical Damage, but cannot be used to restore severed limbs.

When a Maletek Stalker suffers Critical Damage to his body location, roll on the Psychic Phenomena table (see page 162 of **Dark Heresy**) and apply –20 to the result. The effects occur just as if the Stalker were a psyker.

MORTIURGE

"....The Guild-Dame was shot twice at close range while seated at her desk, once to the heart and once to the head, either wound would have been immediately fatal. The killer had gained access though the front door, posing as a Provost-Captain, and left the premises by walking calmly out the way he entered. Evidence recovered at the scene implicates the Guild-Dame and several other prominent Guilders of bribery of cinq-port officials and cadre enforcers. Arbites Castigation Detachments dispatched. See attached log of execution warrants Ω#77–134..."

–Excerpted from Case-file Monograph, Inhumation of Lady Clasis Hortva, Arbites Marshal Gregor Lund reporting

In the Imperium, totalitarian control and summary justice are often the norm rather than the exception, particularly among the teeming multitudes of a hive world, and that judgement is uniformly harsh and often fatal. Accordingly, both the Adeptus Arbites and many local enforcer cadres have need of hardened men and women whose talent lays in dealing death and summary execution rather than upholding the law or maintaining order. These troopers make up the infamous kill squads under the direct jurisdiction of the local Imperial Commander and are used to guarantee their power; they also form the feared Arbites Castigation Detachments tasked to deliver the Emperor's wrath on the recidivist and those who would contravene high Imperial Law without fear or favour. Even among these cold-blooded killers, however, there are those whose particular skill and callous dedication to their lethal duty makes them stand out from the ranks. Singled out and specially trained to operate independently both as snipers and close-quarter gunfighters, the Adeptus Arbites refer to these specialists as Mortiurges.

By the nature of their work a Mortiurge works alone, singled out from his fellows by his differences in purpose and the blood on his hands. In truth little more than judicially recognised assassins, they are often also employed to keep other law-enforcers in check when needs require. As such, these singular killers are often shunned by their colleagues and quickly learn to keep their distance, lest one day they be called on to slaughter a friend.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, some in the Holy Ordos, particularly those Radical factions whose doctrines and intrigues take them into direct and often covert conflict with the Imperium's own authorities, find ready use for these disreputable agents of order and social control. Inquisitors find unique advantage in a servant who is not only a highly trained killer, but who is also intimately familiar with law-enforcement procedures and willing to take out any target without passion or regret.

Becoming a Mortiurge

Arbitrators who take on the role of the Mortiurge seldom do so voluntarily, as it makes them sanctioned killers rather than servants of the law, but their presence in the Adeptus Arbites itself is considered by most a necessary evil. Those that do embrace becoming a Mortiurge often fall into two categories; the embittered and jaded veteran whose skills make them a valuable asset worth saving, perhaps despite their increasingly disruptive and rogue attitudes, and the cold-blooded killer, to whom the role of judge, jury and executioner appeals on some dark and fundamental level.

Required Career: Arbitrator.

Alternate Rank: Rank 5 or higher (3,000 xp).



Advance	Cost	Type	Prerequisites
Marksman	100	T	BS 35
Shadowing	100	S	—
Shadowing +10	100	S	Shadowing
Shadowing +20	100	S	Shadowing +10
Scholastic Lore (Judgment) +10	200	S	Scholastic Lore (Judgement)
Scholastic Lore (Judgment) +20	300	S	Scholastic Lore (Judgement) +10
Talented (Security)	200	T	
Talented (Shadowing)	200	T	
Crack Shot	200	T	BS 40
Mighty Shot	200	T	BS 40
Exotic Weapon Training (Needle Rifle)	200	T	—
Exotic Weapon Training (Needle Pistol)	200	T	—
Sharpshooter	300	T	BS 40, Deadeye Shot
Last Killer Standing	300	T	Nerves of Steel

New Talent

Last Killer Standing

Prerequisites: Nerves of Steel.

Veteran of a hundred gun battles, summary executions and black operations, you have learned to stay alive regardless of the odds when the bullets and las-bolts fly by, using the environment to your best advantage. You are immune to pinning caused by small arms fire (pistol and basic weapons), and additionally you add +1 AP to the defensive value of any cover protecting you against ranged weapons fire while you are deliberately hiding behind it.

Special Ammunition Type: Executioner Shotgun Shells

These rare and specialised shells (whose use is often limited to the upper echelons and important members of the Castigators and Mortiurges of the Adeptus Arbites) contain miniaturised propulsion and stabilisation systems allowing the shell to lock on and track its target. The mechanisms that achieve this are little understood and extremely hard to replicate, and so remain within the purview of those Magos-Munitorium that provide the Arbites with their sanctioned and ordained arms.

Effects: The weapon loses the Scatter Quality, but adds +4 to its base Damage and +1 to its base Penetration. Ballistic Skill Tests for shots that miss at short or standard range may be re-rolled, and the defensive value of any cover for your target is ignored. When firing Executioner rounds, the weapon may not be used for Semi-Automatic or Automatic fire.

Weapons: Shotgun, Pump Action Shotgun, Combat Shotgun.

Cost/Availability: Not offered for commercial sale, within the Arbites and Inquisition for procurement purposes this ammunition type should be considered Very Rare and having a base cost of 150/1.

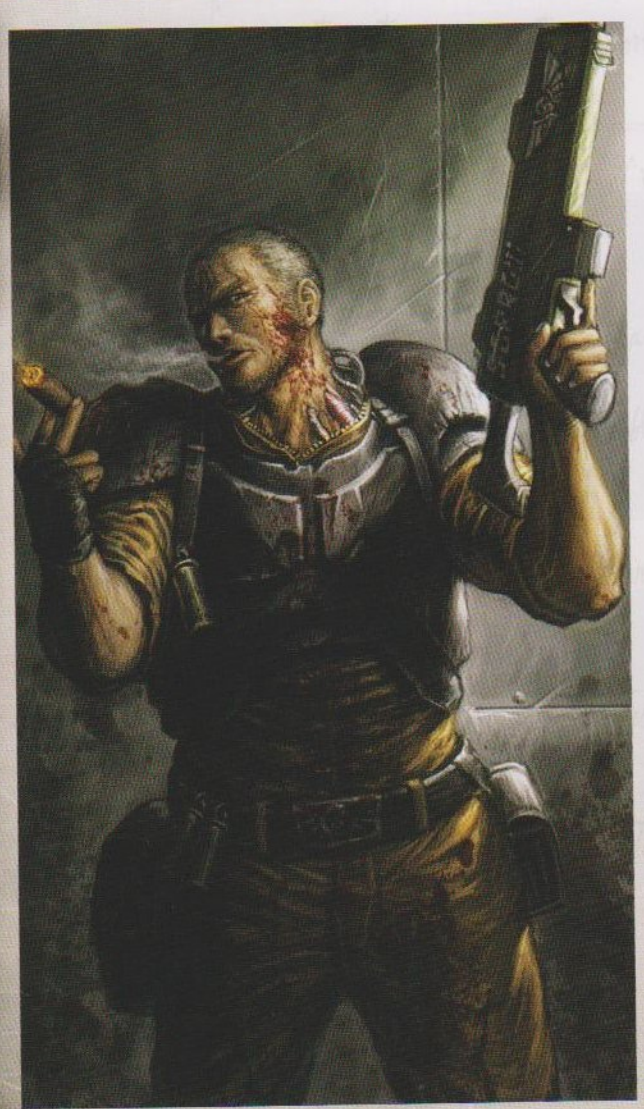
PENAL LEGIONNAIRE

"The Emperor loves me. Oh yes he does, otherwise why would he be so keen to keep me alive?"

–Sirius Tan, 2nd Calixian Penal Battalion deployed to the Tranch Soot Warrens

The penal legions are a filled with scum of the worst kind. These murderers, rogues, deserters, cowards, madmen, seditionists, and drunkards fight for the Emperor in the bloodiest warzones—whether willing or not. The penal units in which these villains serve are the product of the harsh discipline enforced in the Imperial Guard. With millions of men and women under arms, all armed and trained to kill for the God Emperor, there can be no leniency if order and combat effectiveness are to be maintained. The breaking of any number of tenets of military law and the exhaustive wealth of Munitorium regulations up to and including murder are all punishable by death—or service in a penal battalion.

The will of condemned criminals is not easily bound to the Emperor's service, and so many methods may be applied to get these forlorn wretches into battle. These methods may include the generous application of lashes by electro scourges, or fitting the penal legionnaires with auto-injectors to flood their bloodstreams with frenzon, slaught, or other combat drugs and turn them into raving berserkers. Decimation of a penal legion that fails to advance is also a common motivational tool. In some cases legionnaires may be fitted with explosive collars which can be detonated remotely to reinforce an order or give instant punishment.



The penal legions are thrown into the most dangerous and suicidal of engagements where the chances of survival are minimal. Some go into battle filled with remorse for their crimes. Others walk like men already dead, their limbs trembling with fear. Some embrace the carnage and the prospect of their own death with madness born of fear. Most die in the first moments of such engagements and pay a quick price for their crimes—but a few may survive to be cast once again into the cauldron of blood and fire again and see if the Emperor is yet done with their service. These rare survivors are a savage breed who can walk into the mouth of hell and emerge screaming their defiance at death. In the end, however, death finds all, and even the most indomitable survivor will find the only release from their crimes that there can be. A very few of these rare and dangerous survivors may find themselves performing new and more lethal service for an Inquisitor who has use for resourceful and hardened killers.

Becoming a Penal Legionnaire

Becoming a Penal Legionnaire for a member of the Imperial Guard requires being condemned for a crime that is punishable by death and taking the choice to meet that death by surviving in a Penal Legion. It means a decision to meet the death at the hands of the enemies of mankind rather than at the hands of the firing squad or Commissar's bolt pistol. It is therefore preferable that the penal legionnaire Alternative Rank be taken at the point of character creation to represent a rare individual plucked from the ranks of the condemned to serve the Inquisition. It is ideal for characters created with more than the basic 400 xp to spend at the point of character creation. It is possible that a character on the Guardsman Career Path may opt to take this Alternative Rank later in his career, in which case it must be consistent with the character being condemned to serve in a penal legion for a crime he has committed.

A character who becomes a Penal Legionnaire automatically is fitted with either an Injector Rig (see page 138 of **The Inquisitor's Handbook**) or an Explosive Collar (see page 147 of the **Dark Heresy** Rulebook). The remote control for either of these items will kept by either another Acolyte or an NPC in the service of the Inquisitor that the Penal Legionnaire now serves.

Required Career: Guardsman.

Alternate Rank: Rank 0 or higher (0 xp).

Note that this means that you may opt to specify this at character creation as the first rank of your Advance Scheme. This does not affect your starting Skills and Talents, only how and on what you can spend your starting xp.

Advance	Cost	Type	Prerequisites
Berserk Charge	100	T	—
Deceive	100	S	—
Deceive +10	200	S	Deceive
Hatred (pick any one)	100	T	—
Intimidate	100	S	—
Intimidate +10	200	S	Intimidate
Intimidate +20	300	S	Intimidate +10
Jaded	100	T	—
Light Sleeper	100	T	Per 30
Nerves of Steel	100	T	—
Paranoia	100	T	—
Resistance (Fear)	100	T	—
Sound Constitution	100	S	—
Sound Constitution	100	S	—
Sound Constitution	100	S	—
Streetfighting	100	T	—
Die Hard	200	T	Wp 40
Hard Target	200	T	Ag 40
Iron Jaw	200	T	T 40
True Grit	200	T	T 40

The Merov Penal Legion

The Hive world of Merov is home to an infamous unit of the Imperial Guard culled from Magistratum prisons and Arbites Precinct wards across the Calixis Sector. This unit is commonly known as simply "The Merov Penal Legion," although there are rumors that its official designation is much more complex and exists only in some forgotten Administratum data-vault. Nevertheless, the Legion has a long history of celebrated victories, and enormous kill-banners flutter from every spire in Tsares Hive upon the anniversary of the Penal Legion's founding.

The Merov Penal Legion is made up of desperate men, each a hardened criminal seeking redemption through service to the Emperor. The thirty Brother-Generals who command the Legion often engage in cruel games, pitting their units against each other in gladiatorial war-bouts described as "training missions" to the Munitorium. A rare few of the Brother-Generals act as more military commander than warden, training and disciplining their men like nearly any other unit of the Imperial Guard. However, for the majority of the Legionnaires, their existence is short, brutal, and unforgiving—each day merely another chance to die in bloody combat.

One tradition of the Merov Penal Legion offers hope to the thousands of troopers amongst its ranks. It is said that if the Legion is deployed in battle against the Emperor's Foes and only one man survives, that man is set free, absolved of all his crimes. Regardless of the truth, stories about this tradition regularly circulate amongst the Legionnaires, fostering both a determination to survive no matter the odds, and a bloodthirsty, ruthless streak of pure aggression. Such men often volunteer for extremely hazardous missions, such as planting death-gas canisters or joining the battle-drugged demolition teams. Naturally, both of these tactics are commonly used by the Brother-Generals.

SIN EATER

"I am damned,
My soul is forfeit,
I who was pure am now darkened.
This service I must do,
This sacrifice I must make,
For the Emperor and His glory."

–From the forbidden words of Oblation

Sin Eaters are the chosen and sanctified warrior-executioners in the service of an Inquisitor who follows the Radical Oblationist creed. These grim men and women have been trusted with the truth of Oblationism: that the ways of the warp, alien and heretic are paths to utter damnation, but that a few pure servants of the Emperor must tread those paths and walk willingly into damnation if all are to be saved. Having accepted this truth and proved their loyalty to their Inquisitor, an Acolyte may be submitted to terrible ordeals, invested with a dictate to destroy any who stray into damnation, and so become a Sin Eater. Grim in aspect and nature, a Sin Eater is a merciless warrior who is prepared and trained to meet the powers of the witch and the daemon head-on.

The ordeal that creates a Sin Eater is a ritual of pain and damnation. While choirs of blind priests chant sacred verses, prospective Sin Eaters must confess every sin of thought, word, or deed that they have ever committed. No matter how slight the sin they must give it voice, and with every confessed sin their body is charred by a brand, cut with a blessed knife, or tattooed with ink mixed from the blood of heretics. The marks themselves are variously sacred, diabolic, or arcane and the ordeal persists until all of the subject's sins have been confessed and their body is sheeted in marks of damnation and sacred power. Finally the Sin Eater is anointed with crematorium ash and proclaimed to be amongst the lost and damned and so capable of no further or greater sin.

Once created, the sacred charge of a Sin Eater is the destruction of the daemon and the execution of the unclean without mercy or exception, saving only those who follow the ways of the Oblationist. Many Oblationists entrust their Sin Eaters with weapons of daemonic or malefic power, trusting that the will of the Sin Eater is enough to wield such weapons and stay true to his purpose. Thus unhallowed, scarred, and armed, the Sin Eater is a foe that any heretic within the Imperium, outside its bounds, or beyond its truth must fear.



Becoming a Sin Eater

Becoming a Sin Eater is as much an investiture of authority and trust from an Oblationist Inquisitor in an Acolyte as it is a choice on the part of that Acolyte—though the willingness of the Acolyte is paramount. The process of becoming a Sin Eater is a harrowing ordeal in which the Acolyte must mediate and pray while his skin is tattooed with arcane symbols and branded with marks both sacred and profane. At the end of this agonizing process the Acolyte has be born anew as an eater of sin and has acquired 2d10 Corruption Points and the Sin Scarred Trait.

Required Career: Arbitrator, Assassin, or Guardsman.
Other Requirements: Must be a follower of the Oblationist faction (see page 111)
Alternate Rank: Rank 4 or higher (2,000 xp)

Advance	Cost	Type	Prerequisites
Armour of Contempt	100	T	Wp 40
Berserk Charge	100	T	—
Combat Master	100	T	WS 30
Crushing Blow	100	T	S 40
Dark Soul	100	T	—
Flagellant	100	T	—
Hatred (Daemons)	100	T	—
Hatred (Heretics)	100	T	—
Hatred (Mutants)	100	T	—
Hatred (Psykers)	100	T	—
Jaded	100	T	—
Mediation	100	T	—
Melee Weapon Training (Power)	100	T	—
Orthoproxy	100	T	—
Resistance (Psychic Powers)	100	T	—
Sound Constitution	100	S	—
Sound Constitution	100	S	—
Sound Constitution	100	S	—
Forbidden Lore (Warp)	200	S	—
Forbidden Lore (Daemonology)	200	S	—
Forbidden Lore (Psykers)	200	S	—
Scholastic Lore (Occult)	200	S	—
Strong Minded	200	T	Wp 30, Resistance (Psychic Powers)
Fearless	300	T	—
Mental Fortress	300	T	Wp 50, Strong Minded

New Trait

Sin Scarred

Your flesh has been covered with tattoos, brands and ritual scars. These marks, both sacred and profane, grant you the Unnatural Toughness (x2) Trait when reducing Damage from daemons (both ranged and melee attacks), Psychic Powers, psy-active weapons (such as Daemon Weapons or Force Weapons) and Holy Damage. You also gain a +20 bonus to your Willpower for the purposes of Daemonic Mastery Tests or when determining the character's Willpower in comparison to that of a Daemon Weapon (see the Beast Within rule for Daemon Weapons on page 179 of the Dark Arts chapter in this book).

Tainted Psyker

"We are shackled gods. It is not others that restrain our potential but ourselves. We shackle ourselves because we know what we dream ourselves to be and fear it."

–attributed to the rogue psyker designated as "The Burning Princess"

Tainted Psykers are psykers who has given themselves over to the raw power of the warp. These psykers are teetering on the brink of complete damnation and being drawn into the thrall of dark and thirsting gods. Though it is fraught with risk and peril, the power that can be achieved by opening oneself further to the possibility of the warp is immense. Like opening a crack in the casing of a blast furnace to realise the roaring inferno contained inside, the power of the Tainted Psyker is as awful as it is terrifying. Storms of psychic force, uncanny control of flesh, and terrible ways of using the power of the warp are the weapons the Tainted Psyker has bought at the cost of his mind, body, and soul.

The touch of the warp is corrosive and dangerous to even a trained mind, filled as it is with echoes of vast and malign intelligences and the rawness of warp power. By opening themselves to the wider possibilities of psychic power and the undiluted warp energy, their minds begin to crumble, their bodies warped or crippled by the powers they are mediating. Many psykers, once they begin down the tainted path to power, find themselves consumed by emotions and inclinations that they cannot control as the warp echoes and amplifies their dreams, obsessions, and fears. This warping process can end with monstrous madness on the part of the individual psyker or one final fall to damnation and service to the dark gods.

Despite the dangers of cultivating the rawness of warp power, it is a risk taken by Radical Inquisitors who wish to put the abilities of such an individual to work for the ultimate good of the Imperium. Some Radicals even push the psykers in the service towards tainted and forbidden paths of psychic power. Some do this to create more potent walking weapons against the manifold threats that they must confront; others, such as those of the Horusian persuasion, use their own Acolytes as test subjects to be pushed and observed as part of their research into the creation of divine avatars.

Becoming a Tainted Psyker

Becoming a Tainted Psyker simply requires a conscious choice of the part of a character to embrace the darker, corruption-laden possibilities of his abilities. There is no corruption or insanity gained on entering this rank, though it will surely follow as the psyker unlocks his darker potentials.

Required Career: Imperial Psyker, 15+ Corruption Points
Alternate Rank: Rank 5 or higher (3,000 xp)

New Talent

Warped Psyker

Prerequisites: Psy Rating 2, must have suffered Corruption Points because of the Perils of the Warp at least once previously.

Psykers who allow the taint of the warp to sink into them skirt increasingly closer to the edge of madness and daemonic corruption at every turn, and have been plagued with dark dreams and nightmarish visions of the chaotic realms beyond. This stain of the soul can have some advantages, however, as it provides a degree of tolerance to the reality-shattering touch the daemon can cause by its very intrusion into the mortal plane. With this Talent, you are immune to the effects of Daemonic Presence.



Advance	Cost	Type	Prerequisites
Forbidden Lore (Warp)	100	S	—
Forbidden Lore (Warp) +10	200	S	Forbidden Lore (Warp)
Forbidden Lore (Daemonology)	100	S	—
Forbidden Lore (Daemonology) +10	200	S	Forbidden Lore
Forbidden Lore (Psykers)	100	S	—
Forbidden Lore (Psykers) +10	200	S	Forbidden Lore (Warp)
Scholastic Lore (Occult)	100	S	—
Scholastic Lore (Occult) +10	200	S	Forbidden Lore (Occult)
Psychic Spite	200	T	Psy Rating 4, Corpus Conversion.
Psychic Vampire	200	T	Psy Rating 4, 30+ Corruption 1+, one or more Psychic Powers that can be used to directly kill with psychic energy
Psychic Power	200	T	—
Psychic Power	200	T	—
Minor Arcana	200	T	Sorcerer
Minor Arcana	200	T	Sorcerer
Major Arcana	300	T	WP 45+, Sorcerer
Major Arcana	300	T	WP 45+, Sorcerer
Warped Psyker	200	T	Psy Rating 2, Special
Sorcerer†	400	T	Int 35, Wp 35, Forbidden Lore (Demonology or Warp) +10, Scholastic Lore (Occult) +10
Fuelled by Flesh††	200	T	Sorcerer

† *See page 170 for the effect the Sorcery Talent has on Psykers.*

†† *See page 169*



WARP DABBLER

"She would have been just a petty recidivist and peddler of harm, but then the warp found her and she became a true monster. I am just grateful that she is a monster loyal to me."

–Inquisitor Soldevan, spoken of his Acolyte Lotus Zan

Warp Dabblers, sometimes referred to as warplocks and petty sorcerers, are individuals tampering often blindly with the malignant arts of the warp sorcery. Whether cultists, non-compliants, recidivists or even servants of the Inquisition, these individuals have had contact with forbidden knowledge and have decided to succumb to the possibilities it can offer. These are not true sorcerers or savants of the forbidden, but instead are dark-hearted warriors, soiled enforcers, spiteful adepts, and twisted killers who have acquired a degree of warp lore and have made the perilous decision to put it into use. Although they may never achieve the terrible heights of occult power and knowledge that the true masters of sorcery can, a little knowledge is a dangerous thing. This knowledge, in particular, makes most Warp Dabblers very dangerous indeed.

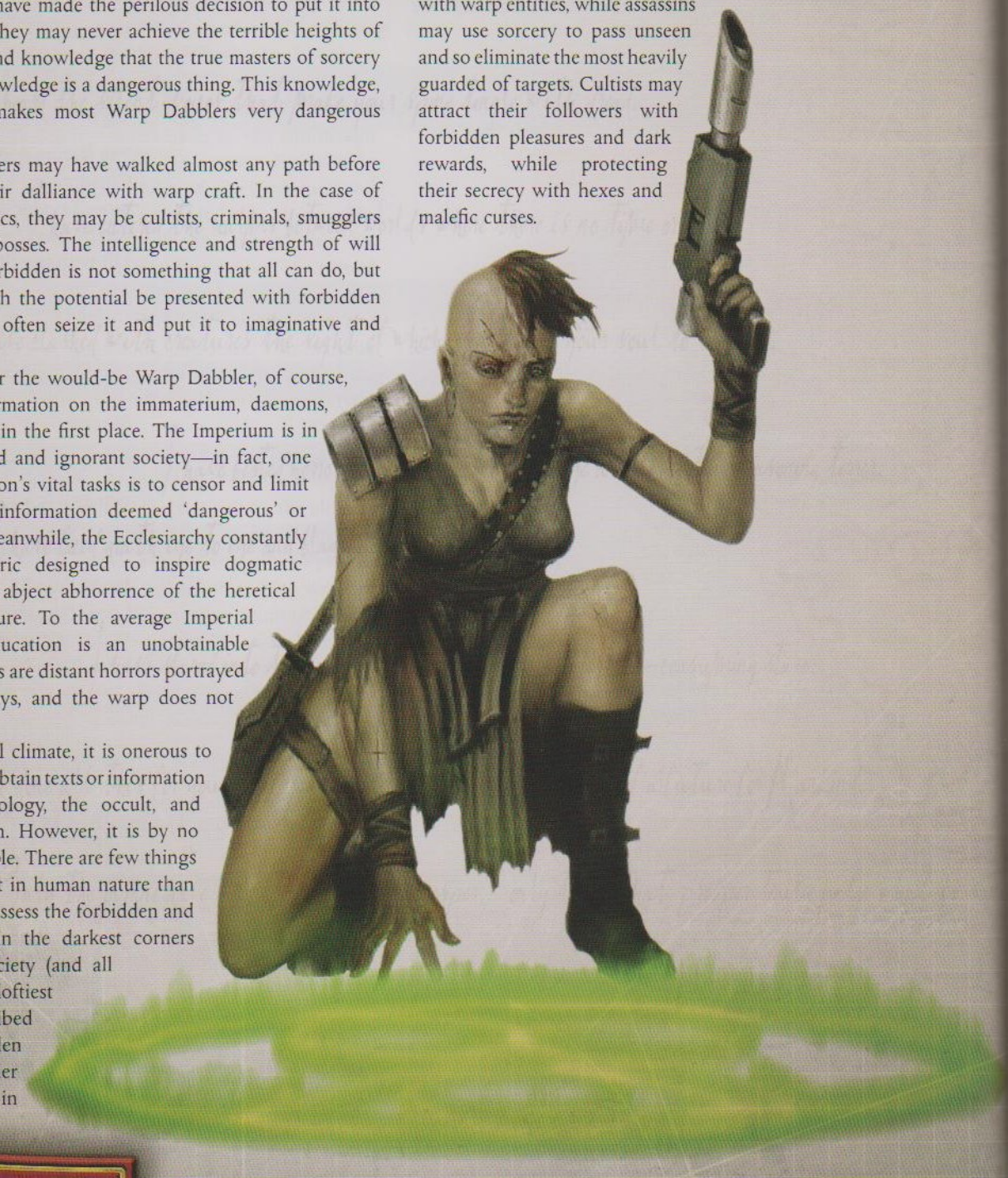
Warp Dabblers may have walked almost any path before they begin their dalliance with warp craft. In the case of recidivist heretics, they may be cultists, criminals, smugglers or even gang bosses. The intelligence and strength of will to study the forbidden is not something that all can do, but should one with the potential be presented with forbidden power, he will often seize it and put it to imaginative and horrible use.

The trick for the would-be Warp Dabbler, of course, is to find information on the immaterium, daemons, and warp craft in the first place. The Imperium is in general a closed and ignorant society—in fact, one of the Inquisition's vital tasks is to censor and limit the spread of information deemed 'dangerous' or 'corrupting.' Meanwhile, the Ecclesiarchy constantly preaches rhetoric designed to inspire dogmatic obedience and abject abhorrence of the heretical in equal measure. To the average Imperial citizen, an education is an unobtainable luxury, daemons are distant horrors portrayed in morality plays, and the warp does not exist.

In this social climate, it is onerous to the extreme to obtain texts or information about daemonology, the occult, and the immaterium. However, it is by no means impossible. There are few things more consistent in human nature than the desire to possess the forbidden and unobtainable. In the darkest corners of Imperial society (and all too often, its loftiest heights), proscribed texts, forbidden tomes, and other instructions in warp craft can be bought, traded, and stolen by someone with the right connections or resources.

The sad irony of this is that due to the Imperium's tireless efforts to suppress forbidden malefic knowledge, those who do manage to obtain such information often have no understanding of just how dangerous it can be. To them, the rituals and incantations are just another tool to obtain their goals, or worse, an amusing dalliance. Only when it is far, far too late, does the average Warp Dabbler realize how his actions has doomed him.

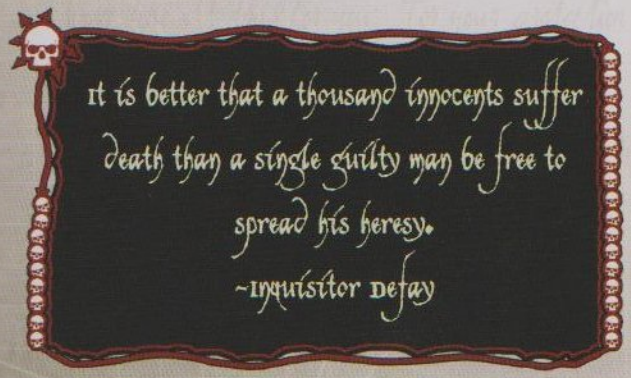
That is not to say, however, that Warp Dabblers are not formidable foes. On the contrary, the combination of low skill, resourcefulness, and ruthless cunning they need to obtain the forbidden knowledge in the first place makes them competent adversaries. In addition, the warp-fueled powers and daemonic allies they can draw on makes them even more dangerous. Warp Dabbling crime bosses may take down rivals with warp entities, while assassins may use sorcery to pass unseen and so eliminate the most heavily guarded of targets. Cultists may attract their followers with forbidden pleasures and dark rewards, while protecting their secrecy with hexes and malefic curses.



Advance	Cost	Type	Prerequisites
Ciphers (Occult)	100	S	—
Forbidden Lore (Warp)	100	S	—
Forbidden Lore (Warp) +10	200	S	Forbidden Lore (Warp)
Forbidden Lore (Daemonology)	100	S	—
Forbidden Lore (Daemonology) +10	200	S	Forbidden Lore
Invocation	100	S	—
Invocation +10	100	S	Invocation
Scholastic Lore (Occult)	100	S	—
Scholastic Lore (Occult) +10	200	S	Forbidden Lore (Occult)
Decadence	100	T	T 30
Minor Arcana	200	T	Sorcerer
Minor Arcana	200	T	Sorcerer
Psyniscience	200	S	—
Fuelled by Flesh†	200	T	Sorcerer
Sorcerer			
Major Arcana	300	T	Wp 45, Sorcerer
Dark Soul	400	T	—
Favoured By the Warp	400	T	Wp 35

†*See page 169*

All this makes a Warp Dabbler an all-too-common quarry of the servants of the Inquisition. However, it also makes such an individual extremely useful to those Inquisitors willing to use the warp to their own ends. Warp dabbling Acolytes can call on their knowledge to bend the powers of the warp to pursue and defeat their targets, or use it to gain a better understanding of the motives and operations of their adversaries. There are few truer examples of the very nature of Radicalism than a Warp Dabbler Acolyte.



Becoming a Warp Dabbler

Becoming a Warp Dabbler requires both motive and opportunity; the Acolyte must have a source from which he could acquire Forbidden Knowledge (Warp), Forbidden Knowledge (Daemonology) or Scholastic Lore (Occult). The Acolyte's Inquisitor might be a source of such possibility, while contact with warp cults or forbidden tomes might be other possible routes. Once a character chooses to dabble in warp lore, he must spend an amount of time studying or being tutored, at the end of which he enters this rank and gains 2d10 Corruption Points.

Required Career: All except Tech-Priest and Adepta Sororitas.

Alternate Rank: Rank 6 or higher (6,000 xp)

Radical Elite Advance Packages

"When I was young I would dream of what I would do, what I would see, what I would become. Now I have walked in those dreams, seen things that I would not have dared to imagine, and I fear what I am become."

–From the journals of Inquisitor Felroth Gelt

While Alternate Careers represent a fundamental shift in your character's direction by way of training, goals, or role, there are of course things that can profoundly affect the way you behave or even the fundamentals of your inner self that have little or nothing to do with career choice. It may be some conviction of belief, some strange event, or even something that has been deliberately inflicted on you. One very good way of reflecting these life-changing occurrences is by the use of Elite Advance Packages. These build on the rules for Elite Advances (see sidebar for a summary of these) to allow your character to spend xp outside the usual Career Path development to gain an unusual Skill or Talent, or in this case a package of changes, for both good and ill. Although in some cases the effects might be largely detrimental, the cost might be very low.

Regardless of how your xp are spent, you advance through the ranks of your Career Path normally.

There is an endless variety of Elite Advance Packages, just as there are a limitless number of potential life altering events. Indeed, such packages are intended for use by GMs to be something of a campaign toolbox, providing them a framework through which they can express their own creativity (fiendish or otherwise) and customise the development of the nuances of their campaign and player characters.

There are also no hard and fast rules for creating them; it's up to the GM's own judgement as to what they should cost relative to the abilities or potential advances they grant. However, bear in mind firstly that this is the 41st Millennium, a hard, harsh and dark future where nothing should be without its price. That doesn't just mean xp, but also in more direct costs to the character in terms which can be either explicit—Insanity Points, Characteristic loss or Corruption Points—or more ephemeral, but no less challenging, costs such as restrictions on behaviour, in-game enemies, or secret masters to whom they are beholden.

If you'd rather develop your own ideas, look to the background options shown in Chapter I and the examples that follow for sparks. Astute readers may already notice the rules for Dark Pacts found in the **Dark Heresy** rulebook offer a very similar and parallel system for describing unusual abilities. Elite Advance Packages should always be narrative-led: this is to say they should reflect an in-game occurrence or some force, ideology, faction, or event within the Warhammer 40,000 universe of your games. They should not just be an excuse to string together abilities a player wants that he can't normally have, just because he wants them! Whereas, say, having your character coming back from contact with a daemonically possessed artefact locked in conflict with a daemon that is now using him as a vessel for its power is not.

The use of Elite Advance Packages is of course an optional rule, and as they modify and can potentially upset the balance of the character progression system, they are recommended for experienced groups.

Elite Advances Rules Summery

A character's nature and development is broadly defined by their Career Path. However, the Advancements listed are not the sum total of all that your character could learn. Sometimes a character will be exposed to certain Skills or Talents during play or deliberately seek out new abilities to combat or exploit the things he encounters.

Sometimes, the GM will offer a player an opportunity to take an Elite Advance as a consequence of his character's actions or developing events in-game. Sometimes these Elite Advances come with additional side-effects, such as Corruption or Insanity Points, or the character becoming indebted to a NPC or part of a conspiracy.

A player can also request an Elite Advance for a Skill or Talent not listed on your Advancement Scheme, but this must be reasonable and appropriate for his character's situation. To make a request the player will need the following:

- Logical justification for his character to have the Elite Advance.
- An explanation for how he gained the advance, why he got it, time taken, resources expended, etc.
- An offer of how many xp or other costs the player is willing to pay to gain the advance. The further a Skill or Talent lies outside his character's normal area of expertise, the more it should cost, likewise for particularly rare or unusual knowledge.

The GM may decide not to grant the player the Elite Advance, or request a higher xp cost than that he suggested, or impose some other counterbalancing penalty. The GM may also rule the player needs to pass a series of tests in order to successfully learn the requested Skill or Talent. This usually ties into the player's explanation for how his character gained the Advance.

SWORN RADICAL

"No my Masters, I do not deny it. I swore my oath to defend mankind from its enemies both within and without, and defend it with by blood and my will I have. You may call me Radical or renegade, but in my heart, I know I have remained true."

–Acolyte Locos Bok, Libricar, at his trial for the murder of Prelate Quilp, later acquitted

It is one thing to openly consider or have sympathy for the beliefs and doctrines of a Radical faction within the Inquisition, but is quite another to give them your allegiance and follow their doctrines at the risk of life and limb. Acolytes who become Sworn Radicals do exactly that: they continue to carry out their duties with the Inquisition and maintain their former loyalties to their Inquisitor and fellow Acolytes as they once did. However, they have now accepted a higher calling to serve, and embraced the beliefs and ethos of one of the Radical factions, either openly or (more likely) in secret. These convictions will now inform their actions and goals, divide their loyalties and may lead them into actions that endanger themselves and possibly others. Regardless, these Acolytes will now find themselves pulled into the perilous and treacherous game of inter-Inquisition politics, deception and betrayal.

Acolytes who have taken this advance should and indeed must be played as such, and the GM should reward their players accordingly. This book lists seven major Radical factions as well as several of the Radicals minoris to pick from. In-depth information about them, their individual natures, goals, and history can be found in the Radical factions chapter beginning on page 77. The GM is of course free to invent, modify and detail additional Radical factions as necessary for his campaigns.

Restrictions: Career Rank 3 or higher. The character must also have been exposed to the teachings and doctrines of the radical faction he wishes to become a part of, and the GM must approve that the character is suitable to join that faction. (An Adepta Sororitas would never join the Phaenonites for example!)

Advance Cost: 150 xp.

Effects: The character gain an individual common-level contact with a single chosen Skill (see page 219 of **The Inquisitor's Handbook**) allied to the faction for free, and he can of course develop more as normal. Also, the character gains the Forbidden Lore Skill relating to the faction he has joined and from this point on may also pick his advances from those listed for this Elite Advance.

Advance	Cost	Type	Prerequisites
Ciphers (Faction)†	100	S	—
Ciphers (Faction)† +10	200	S	Ciphers (Faction)
Ciphers (Faction)† +20	300	S	Ciphers (Faction)
Forbidden Lore (The Inquisition)	100	S	—
Forbidden Lore (Faction)†	100	S	—
Forbidden Lore (Faction)† +10	200	S	Forbidden Lore (Faction)
Forbidden Lore (Faction)† +20	300	S	Forbidden Lore (Faction) +10
Paranoia	100	T	—
Resistance (Interrogation/ Questioning)	100	T	—
Hatred (Faction Enemy)††	100	T	—
Unshakable Faith	200	T	—

†(The character must choose a particular Radical faction he is part of. The following are listed in this book (but the GM is free to invent and detail more): Istvaanian, Xanthite, Recongregator, Oblationist, Libricar, Phaenonite, Ocularian or one of the Radicals Minoris).

††(The character may pick a particular other faction of the Inquisition, Radical or Puritan to be the subject of their personal ire, this cannot obviously be a faction he is part of!)

DAEMON VESSEL

"Something terrible is being born within me. Sometimes I can feel it behind my eyes looking out. It hungers for what is on the other side of my skin."

–Danus Carol, former Acolyte of Inquisitor Ahmazzi

A daemon vessel is a human within whom a daemon has nested a portion of its being and power. Like a vile growth it will grow in potency and influence until it overwhelms the unfortunate human, and then the daemon is born into the physical world in a birthing of pain, horror, and shattered dreams. This process of gestation, from infection to the daemon being unleashed from the fetters of the vessel's flesh, is a long battle of wills in which the daemon's nature begins to subsume that of the human vessel. Eventually, the daemon breaks down its vessel's will until there is nothing left that is human except, maybe, the tiniest mote of consciousness screaming endlessly and silently in pain.

How a daemon finds a human vessel is a matter of chance and opportunity, but always begins with contact between the vessel and the power of the warp. It may be a glance into a cursed mirror, a wound from a daemon sword, a stray daydream of power and ruination in a profane temple. However, no matter what it is, once the daemon has its barbs hooked into the flesh of a warm human vessel, the road to a tragic catastrophe has begun. Once the seed has been planted, it may take some time for the human vessel to realise what is happening to him. Strange occurrences and the spontaneous manifestation of unnatural powers together with a growing malignancy of being will lead him eventually to realise what is happening to him, what he is becoming.

During this time of sublimation, a human vessel may try to resist the onset of the daemon's power, or he may believe that he can control it and bend it to his will. Indeed, many who become vessels to daemons can suppress or unleash the power of the daemon, but to hope that they can truly control the abomination that is encysted within them is a wishful lie. Every attempt to leash the daemon within brings its time closer and all that is certain is its time will come. Over time the power of the Daemon Vessel grows, and the humanity of the vessel withers faster and faster while the daemon within bubbles to the surface more frequently and potently. At the last, when there is no will left to stop it, the daemon rips into existence with an exultant cry and is free to wreak unmeditated and



unrestricted havoc in the realm of matter and flesh.

It is a tragic truth that, besides the disciples of the dark gods, it is the servants of the Inquisition who are most at risk of becoming seeded with the taint of a daemon. Acolytes and Inquisitors that come into contact with daemonic entities and warp-imbued objects must practice unfailing vigilance in their thoughts, words, and deeds when dealing with such threats, lest they create a gap in the armour of their soul that a daemon may exploit.

Restrictions: The character must have recently come into close contact with a daemon, the warp or a warp-tainted artefact and gained corruption in the process. Characters who have a daemonic pact, or who have the Untouchable Trait may not select this Elite Advance Package.

Advance Cost: 600 xp, or 400 xp for characters that have the Warp Touched, Thy Name I Keep, or A Shadow Over Thy Soul (page 35 of **The Inquisitor's Handbook**) Background Packages.

WARNING: This elite package is a daemon-fuelled express train to character death and oblivion. The Daemon Vessel is a very powerful and tempting package for players, but one that will result in their character eventually being eliminated from play, either by being finally consumed by the daemon within them, or by being destroyed by their former comrades. It is intended to be lead to memorable roleplaying moments and a character demise that will be remembered for a long time. Once a character has acquired this package, he is on a countdown to being out of the game. Players have been warned!

Effects

The effects of taking the Daemon Vessel Elite Advance are immediate, progressive and degenerative. The character's struggle as the ever more potent powers of the daemon within him begin to overwhelm him is represented in **Dark Heresy** by a series of Talents. As the character uses these Talents, he becomes more and more corrupt, and the daemon manifests itself ever more powerfully and uncontrollably. The power granted by these Talents is deliberately high and tempting to use. After all, tempting the player to give in a little more to the daemon within is what this Elite Advance is all about: the players themselves cause their speeding decline.

Acquiring Daemonic Talents

A character with the Daemon Vessel Elite Advance gains Daemonic Talents using the following guidelines:

At the point that the character takes Daemon Vessel, he gains the Daemonic Essence Talent. Like many normal Talents, Daemonic Talents are interlinked and staggered so a character may only take Daemonic Talents if he meets that Talent's prerequisites. The Talent forming the basis of all other Daemonic Talents is Daemonic Essence, and a character must always have this Talent to have or use any other Daemonic Talent.

Once a character has the Daemonic Essence Talent, he will gain additional Daemonic Talents if and when he gains enough Corruption Points that he would normally have a chance of gaining a mutation (see **Table 8-7: The Corruption Track** on Page 238 of the **Dark Heresy** Rulebook). This happens when the character gains a total of 31, 61, and 91 Corruption Points.

When a character gains a new Daemonic Talent, the player chooses what it is. The exception to this is if a character crosses the 91 Corruption Point mark, when he will automatically gain the Ruin Incarnate Talent.

The acquiring of Daemonic Talents is not retrospective. If a character has already crossed one of these points when he takes the Daemon Vessel Elite Advance, he do not gain additional Daemonic Talents for the having crossed one of the mutation points on the Corruption Track in the past.

Example

Beam Rollings was critically wounded by a daemon weapon wielded by a False Prophet of the Pilgrims of Hayte, but heroically managed to disarm the cult leader and in the process grasped the weapon. As a consequence of this Beam gained six Corruption Points. After discussion with his GM, Beam's controlling player decides that a fragment of the daemon within the weapon was left in Beam and is slowly manifesting its nature and will through Beam. With the GM's blessing Beam acquires the Daemon Vessel Elite Advance and so gains the Daemonic Essence Trait. Beam already had 35 Corruption Points at the time he gained the Daemon Vessel Elite Advance but does not gain an additional Daemonic Talent for having crossed the 31 Corruption Points mark in the past. Beam will gain additional Daemonic Talents when he crosses the point of having 61 and 91 Corruption Points. Should he survive that long...

The Daemon Masked

Once a character is a vessel, the daemonic entity within is very careful to mask the effects of corruption on its human host. Once a character has acquired the Daemon Vessel Elite Advance, he does not gain mutations as a result of increasing corruption (see page 239 of the **Dark Heresy** Rulebook). He will still, however, continue to acquire Malignancies as normal (see pages 238 and 239 of the **Dark Heresy** Rulebook).

The Jealousy of Daemons

Daemons jealously guard any foothold that they have gained in the flesh and mind of a mortal. Once a character has taken the Daemon Vessel Elite Advance, he is immune to possession by any other warp entity and may not make Dark Pacts from this moment on.

Using Daemonic Talents

The power of a daemon pushing itself into the body and mind of a mortal is represented in **Dark Heresy** by a series of Talents that represent the daemon coming to the surface of the character's nature. Daemonic Talents only come into effect in the following circumstances:

The player deliberately spends a Fate Point to evoke the power of the daemon. When he does this all his Daemonic Talents come into effect: he cannot pick and choose. The character will gain 1d10 Corruption Points for activating his Daemonic Talents in this way (see Accelerating Corruption below).

If the player spends a Fate Point for any other reason (see 'The Role of Fate' on page 185 of the **Dark Heresy** Rulebook) he must take a **Challenging (+0) Willpower Test** or all of his Daemonic Talents will come into effect as the daemon within pushes itself to the surface. The character may not opt to fail his Willpower Test automatically. The effects of spending the Fate Point still apply. The character will gain 1d10 Corruption Points for his Daemonic Talents being activated in this way (see below).

Example

Beam rolling now has 63 Corruption points and has a second Daemonic Talent—Monster Beneath the Skin. He is desperately trying to keep the internal struggle between his will and the daemon's a secret from his fellow Acolytes. Unfortunately for Beam, he and all his comrades have just been ambushed by a pair of Ashen Tear assassins. It looks as if the Acolytes will be cut down before they can even fight back, and so Beam's player opts to spend a Fate Point to count as having rolled an Initiative of 10. As he is secretly a vessel for a daemon, the GM asks Beam's player to make a ***Challenging (+0) Test*** *on his Wp of 39. Beam's player fails the Test on with a roll of 42. Because of this, both Beam's Daemonic Essence and Monster Beneath the Skin Talents come into play: His eyes glow with a green death light, and his jaws begin to distend as huge fangs appear. Beam is going to have trouble explaining this one away…*

The GM can and should feel free to activate all of the character's Daemonic Talents at any time. The GM should give the character 1d10 Corruption Points for activating the character's Daemonic Talents in this way (see Accelerating Corruption below).

Accelerating Corruption

As the power of the daemon within manifests, so the corruption of the vessel character accelerates. As the character acquires more corruption, so the power manifested by the hidden daemon increases to the point where it is born into unnatural existence and the character is consumed. Whenever a character has his Daemonic Talents activated, he will gain a number of Corruption Points (usually 1d10 but the GM may vary the amount).

The Daemon Unbound

When a Daemon Vessel character reaches 100 Corruption points, the daemon that has been gestating within will be born into reality. The daemon no longer needs the skin and flesh of the character, and so the physical form is consumed as a vile entity is unleashed in all its dark glory. This true manifestation of the daemon can be represented by an unbound daemonhost (see pages 355 to 357 of the **Dark Heresy** rulebook). The character is removed from play, but hopefully not before an exit that none of the players will ever forget.

Example

Beam Rollings now has 93 Corruption points and three Daemonic Talents: Daemonic Essence, Monster Beneath the Skin and Ruin Incarnate. He is also under close guard in the brig of a ship being transported back to the Bastion Serpentis for examination, dissection, and execution. Unfortunately the ship has been surprised and boarded by corsairs of the Kabal of Crimson Woe. With everyone being slaughtered, Beam's player decides to activate his Daemonic Talents for perhaps the last time. He spends his fate point and rolls his 1d10 Corruption. He rolls a 9 and so tips beyond the 100 Corruption Points mark. With that result, Beam Rollings is no more, and the rest of the Acolytes are caught between the manifest daemon and the corsairs.

Death and the Daemon

Should a Daemon Vessel be killed before he has 100 Corruption Points, the daemon with him will not be unleashed into reality. At the point that the character dies, the GM should mark the moment with a suitably grisly and unnatural set of events such as the character's body being consumed by fire from within or similar.

DAEMONIC TALENTS

Daemonic Essence (Talent)

The daemon is bound to your flesh and being. When it rises to the surface, it suffuses your blood and bones, insinuates itself into your thoughts, and touches all around with the shadow of the warp. Once activated, this Talent has a number effects listed below that last for 10 Rounds of combat, or 1 minute of narrative time. At the end of this time the effects of this Talent end. While this Talent is active the character is subject to the following rules:

- The character has the Daemonic, Dark Sight, From Beyond, and Warp Instability Traits.
- The character generates a Daemonic Presence. Within an area equal to the character's Willpower all other characters (friend and foe alike) suffer a –10 penalty to Willpower Test. Within this area all characters experience a single phenomenon that is generated randomly from **Table 12-8: Daemonic Phenomena** on page 357 of the **Dark Heresy** Rulebook.

Exorcising the Daemon

While using exorcism on a character with the daemon vessel elite advance is theoretically possible, but extremely difficult, and often fatal. Further attempting an exorcism on someone who is unwilling to have the daemon removed, or who had entered into a daemonic pact and voluntary been possessed is all but impossible, and certainly cannot be performed without the risk of killing or hopelessly crippling the frail human vessel involved.

The exact nature of the exorcism and its nature and possibility of success is left in the hands of the GM to judge, based on the role the possession and the nature of the entity involved in the ongoing campaign. Needless to say it should never be easy (contesting against a creature with the Unnatural Willpower Trait for example) and have dire consequences if failed (such as a manifestation from the Perils of the Warp chart or the sudden appearance of an unbound Daemonhost).

Rather than simply 'do away' with the character's spent XP, the GM should feel free to convert this elite advance to the Exorcised package (see page 70). Apply its provisions, and have any development lost as the result of the exorcism conferred into advances based on that package instead.

Creating Your Own Daemonic Talents

The Daemonic Talents presented here are only a beginning and many players and Game Masters may wish to create new ones to suit their own campaign and character. This is a great way of making a character's fall into daemonic ruin a unique and personal play experience. If you do wish to create new Daemonic Talents to augment those presented in this book, here are some ideas to consider:

Daemonic Essence is the basis of all Daemonic Talents and should be a prerequisite all other Daemonic Talents.

Look at the Traits and special rules for daemons in **Dark Heresy** publications for potential effects granted by a Daemonic Talent. The Boons from Dark Pacts listed on pages 242 to 243 of the **Dark Heresy** Rulebook are also a good starting point.

When creating new Daemonic Talents, consider the nature of the daemon that is using the character as a vessel. If the daemon serves Khorne, it may grant the character a resistance to psychic powers as well as making him frenzied and bloodthirsty.

Monster Beneath the Skin (Talent)

Prerequisites: Daemonic Essence

While the daemon within you reigns, the monster that is lurking beneath your skin and behind your eyes is visible to all: your body warps, phases and changes as you are flooded with raw daemonic power. Once activated, this Talent has a number of effects listed below that last for 10 Rounds of combat, or 1 minute of narrative time. At the end of this time the effects of this Talent end. While this Talent is active the character is subject to the following rules:

- The character gains the following Traits: Fear (2), Improved Natural Weapons (that also have a Pen of 3 and the Tearing quality), and Unnatural Strength (x2) (Note: This substitutes for, rather than stacks with, any Unnatural Strength Trait that the character already has).
- The character gains a randomly determined Unholy Change (roll on **Table 12-7: Unholy Changes** on page 356 of the **Dark Heresy** Rulebook). The effects of this Unholy Change are different every time the character's Daemonic Talents are activated. Once this Talent is no longer active, the character's appearance will return to normal.

Power of the Warp (Talent)

Prerequisites: Daemonic Essence

The power of the warp flows through you when the daemon within is unleashed, allowing you to violate reality with powerful sorceries and psychic power. Once activated, this Talent has a number effects listed below that last for 10 Rounds of combat, or 1 minute of narrative time. At the end of this time the effects of this Talent end. While this Talent is active the character is subject to the following rules:

The character gains a Psy-rating of 4 and may choose a number of Psychic Powers and/or Sorcery Arcana equal to his Willpower Bonus.

The character does not suffer Psychic Phenomena or Perils of the Warp when using his powers, but when a 9 is rolled on the power dice, the character suffers an automatic Wound for every 9 rolled. These Wounds are not reduced by Toughness, Armour or any other effect, and any Critical Damage results will default to Energy Damage to the Head.

Ruin Incarnate (Talent)

Prerequisites: Daemonic Essence and 91 Corruption points

Note: This Talent is automatically gained when a character with the Daemon Vessel Elite Advance package reaches 91 Corruption Points.

Once activated, this Talent has a number effects listed below that last for 10 Rounds of combat, or 1 minute of narrative time. At the end of this time the effects of this Talent end. While this Talent is active the character is subject to the following rules:

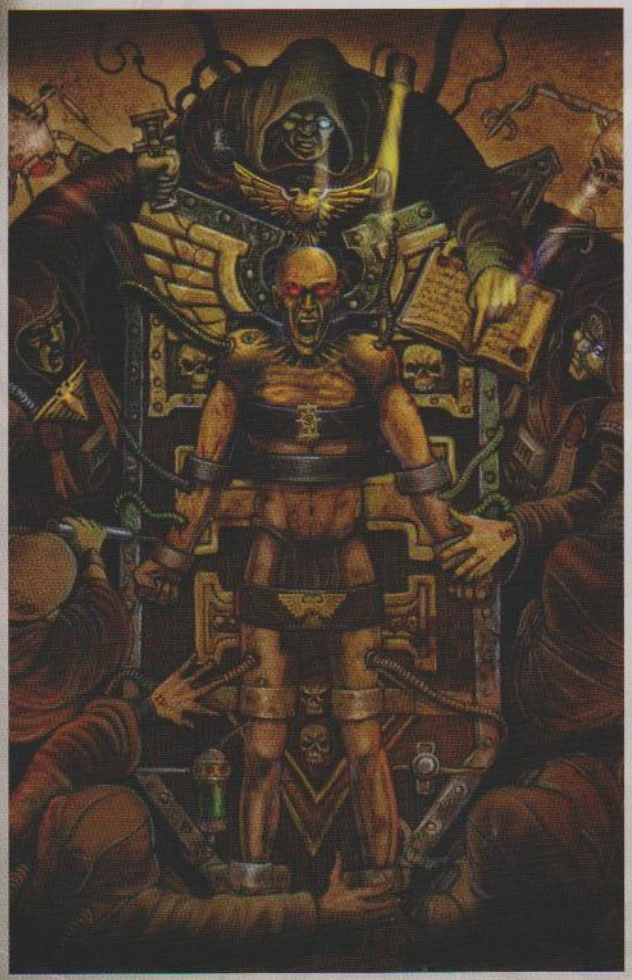
- The character gains the Fear (4) and The Stuff of Nightmares Traits.
- The character gains a randomly determined Unholy Change (roll on **Table 12-7: Unholy Changes** on page 356 of the **Dark Heresy** Rulebook). The effects of this Unholy Change are different every time the character's Daemonic Talents are activated. Once this Talent is no longer active, the character's appearance will return to normal. Note: This Unholy Change will be in addition to any gained if the character has the Monster Beneath the Skin Talent.

THE EXORCISED

"I am half alive. The thing destroyed so much of me, and when it was torn away from me it took a part of what was left. I fear that within me there are still parts of it, fragments left like thorns in my soul."

–The confessions of "Seraph" to Antonia Mesmeron

Exorcism is a process of ritually casting out a daemon, unclean spirit, or warp entity that has taken possession of a person, place, or object. A person who has been exorcised has been subjected to a full and invasive possession by a creature of the warp and then had that entity ripped out of him by the power of faith and ritual. People who have had their body and mind slaved to a thing from beyond—and then had that parasite ripped from them—are left with the withered remnants and deep scars in both mind and soul, and are never the same again. Many die from the shock, and more take their own lives shortly after rather than live with the relics of the possession. However, those who do survive being exorcised and can endure the scars they bear are steeled against the corrupting influences of the warp, their minds and bodies fortified against further posession. Many who have been exorcised claim to be able to see the smeared traces of corruption around them, to feel the ebb and flow of the warp nearby, and to hear the thoughts of daemons as maddening whispers in their minds.



The process of exorcism is not one commonly undertaken. Instances of full bodily possession are usually so dangerous and potentially corrupting to others that the possessed is simply executed. On occasion members of the Inquisition break with this wisdom and take the risk of performing an exorcism on a possessed subject. Accompanied by Black Priests and chanting choirs of blind and deaf monks, the subject is restrained in a hallowed place amongst symbols of the Emperor's divinity. The exorcism itself is a ritual in which the exorcists command the daemon to leave by the power of the God-Emperor, and compel the daemon further by naming it with its true name. It is an undertaking fraught with risk to both the exorcists and the possessed subject: the daemon within will use any means to prevent being cast out, and many who have attempted an exorcism of a powerful daemon have perished or been possessed themselves in the process.

Even if the exorcism succeeds, the host may still die from the shock of the daemon's withdrawal from his body, or be so broken in mind and spirit that he is granted the Emperor's peace. A few manage to regain their humanity and sanity, but once you have been possessed by a daemon, you are never quite whole again. Many Inquisitors would shrink from even allowing an exorcised person to live, and most would advocate confining them for the rest of their lives, but the effectiveness of a one-time host and vessel for a daemon in the battle against the manifold enemies of mankind is without doubt. Cold and disconnected from empathy or emotion, the exorcised human is disturbing and ruthless as well as being highly resistant to the influences of the warp. It is, therefore, small wonder that Radical Inquisitors may choose to retain the services of an Acolyte who has been possessed and exorcised.

Restrictions: The character must be possessed by a warp entity, or have the Daemon Vessel Elite Advance Package (see page 66 in this chapter). There are any number of mechanical and in-game ways such a situation can occur: a psyker rolling 91 to 99 for his Perils of the Warp result (see page 163 of the **Dark Heresy** Rulebook) or by an in-game circumstance conceived by the Game Master.

Advance Cost: 500 xp and the character must burn one permanent Fate Point. As an alternative if the character cannot afford the xp cost, they can burn all of their Fate Points in lieu of the xp cost.

The ritual of exorcism and the character's subsequent recovery will normally take 1d10 minus the Character's Willpower Bonus (to a minimum of one) in days: this may be altered at the discretion of the Game Master.

Effects

The effects of an exorcism on a character who was possessed are as follows:

- Reduce the character's Fellowship to 10 (if the character's Fellowship is already less than 10, reduce it to 1) as he becomes cold and disassociated.
- Reduce the character's Wounds by 1d5 for the wracking effects of the exorcism.
- Gain 2d10 Insanity Points from sharing his mind with a daemon.
- Gain Psyniscience (Per) +10 as the character can sense the movement of the warp around him.
- Gain the Fearless, Dark Soul, and Resistance (Psychic Powers) Talents.
- The character is immune to Warp Shock (see page 238 of the **Dark Heresy** Rulebook) and halves all Corruption Points gained from any source.
- The character is immune to the mutating effects of Corruption.
- Any Daemonic Talents the character has acquired are lost permanently and the character may not take the Daemon Vessel Elite Advance Package.
- Any Dark Pact the character had, and any boons granted by a Dark Pact are lost permanently and the character may not make Dark Pacts in the future.

Deliberate Possession and Exorcism

An Acolyte who has been possessed and exorcised can be a highly prized servant to a Radical Inquisitor, as he is highly resistant to the powers of the warp and steeled against the maddening effects of things that should not be known. These being the case, some Radicals even go so far as to deliberately induce possession in an Acolyte and then perform an exorcism: inducing the disease and administering the cure. This practice is especially common amongst Inquisitors who believe in the self-sacrificing and self-annihilating creed of the Oblationists.

If the Acolyte's Inquisitor should propose such a course of action, it can be handled using a Chaos Ritual to induce the possession of an Acolyte (see the Chaos Rituals section on pages 162 to 166 in **Chapter V: The Dark Arts**) and then applying the Exorcised Elite Advance Package as normal. The GM should consider introducing an extra element of risk into such an undertaking: a massively powerful daemon accidentally being summoned into the Acolyte's body or the exorcism going wrong, for example.



Mark of the Phaenonite

"...As you can see, the warp-mutant's regenerative powers allow us to conduct a live vivisection to explore the extent that we can successfully inculcate the biomechanical feeding tubes into the nervous tissue, where a normal human would quickly die of shock. Of course I have had to sever and completely cauterise the vocal cords, as I find the incessant screaming such a distraction..."

–Phaenonite Magos Barabbas to his students

The Phaenonites are one of the darkest and most malignant radical factions of the Inquisition, obsessed with harnessing the powers of the warp and mastering the daemon though the use of twisted and long forbidden technology. Declared Excommunicate Traitoris for its many crimes and from turning from the worship of the God-Emperor in favour of its own megalomaniacal quest for power, the faction was brutally suppressed and purged, but not destroyed. Operating now entirely under a shadowed veil of secrecy like a slowly spreading cancer within the Inquisition, the Phaenonites, though few in number, are growing again in power and influence within the Calixis Sector.

Thanks in part to their outlaw status and the extreme paranoia of the secret Phaenonite Inquisitors, it has become the faction's practice to mark their most trusted inner circle of Acolytes as their own. This mark takes the shape of a painful series of electoos burned onto the subject's flesh that—once implanted—are invisible until triggered by the conscious will of the recipient. The occult geometry, warding sigils, and malefic warp runes that make up the electoos pattern are unique to each marked Acolyte and serve both as a secure means of identification so that the Phaenonites may know each other and as a covert means of enforcing an Inquisitor's control over his followers.

The mark's presence also indicates one who has been inducted into the heart of this excommunicate and sinister faction and begun to learn its secrets, and who has likely done and seen many terrible and fearful things in order to earn it.

Restrictions: The character must swear allegiance to the Phaenonite Inquisitor who grants him his mark, an act that places him under penalty of death should this ever be exposed to the wider Inquisition. This Elite Advance should only be made available to an Acolyte who has become the trusted servant of a Phaenonite Inquisitor.

Advance Cost: 350 xp.

Effects

The effects of the Phaenonite Mark are as follows:

- Gain 1d5+1 Corruption Points and 1d5+1 Insanity Points.
- The character reduces all further Corruption Points they incur (after the initial penalty for taking this advance) by –1 per incidence.
- +10 to Tests to resist the effects of Fear, psychic probing of the mind, and interrogation.
- The character may 'trigger' the electoo at will, displaying its glowing runes dancing across his flesh and augmetics, identifying himself and his 'patron' to fellow Phaenonites.
- **Geas:** The character must pass a **Difficult (–10) Willpower Test** to resist a direct command from the one who gave him the mark. (The GM may alter this difficulty to provide a bonus to resist the effect of commands that are harmful to the character as appropriate.) Should the character ever successfully resist such a command by a margin of three degrees or more, this effect is permanently broken, although the mark's other effects still apply.
- **Phaenonite Advances:** A character with this mark has access to the Skills and Talents shown on Phaenonite Advances at the listed additional xp cost from this point on.

Advance	Cost	Type	Prerequisites
Ciphers (Occult)	100	S	—
Forbidden Lore (Warp)	100	S	—
Secret Tongue (Phaenonite)	100	S	—
Secret Tongue (Phaenonite) +10	200	S	Secret Tongue (Phaenonite)
Secret Tongue (Phaenonite) +20	300	S	Secret Tongue (Phaenonite) +10
Forbidden Lore (Archeaotech)	200	S	—
Tech-Use	100	S	—
Binary Chatter	100	T	—
Jaded	100	T	—
Hatred (Inquisition)	200	T	—
Hatred (Adeptus Mechanicus)	200	T	—

Alternative Corruption Rules: The Path of Damnation

"The touch of Chaos can be soft and sweet as easily as it can be vile; that is a truth that must be understood lest you fall without even knowing you do so."

–Inquisitor Cassilda Cognos: The Tenebrae Dictates

The rules for corruption in **Dark Heresy** (see pages 238 and 239 in the Game Master chapter of the **Dark Heresy** Rulebook) allow characters to be slowly corrupted by contact with the dark truths that lurk behind the reality of the 41st Millennium. This optional set of rules offers Game Masters an alternative to the mutating effects of corruption. In this alternative scheme the points at which a character would potentially gain a mutation instead allow him to advance a step along the path of damnation, which has different but equally toxic effects on a character.

Instead of using the Corruption Track (**Table 8-7: The Corruption Track** on page 238 of the **Dark Heresy** rulebook) use the Alternative Corruption Track presented here and apply the following rules:

- A character Tests to resist gaining Malignancies as normal.
- Every time a threshold is crossed from one step on the path of damnation to another, apply the results that given in the following section.
- The first step on the Path to Damnation (Touched) has no effect beyond the Malignancies that a character may gain in the normal way.

Table 2-2: Alternative Corruption Track

CP Total	Malignancy Test	The Path of Damnation
01–30	+0	Touched
31–60	–10	Imperiled
61–90	–20	Tainted
91–99	–30	Unhallowed
0	-/-	Damned –Character Removed from Play

Imperiled

The weight of terrible knowledge lays heavily on you, filling your sleep with nightmares and murdering any chance of joy you possess. Gain 1d10 Insanity Points, or the negative effect of one of your malignancies is doubled (player's choice). Roll 1d10 on the following Table.

Roll	Result
1–5	**Horror's Companion:** The terrors you have witnessed have only made you aware that there are even worse things waiting in the dark. Increase the difficulty of all Fear Tests by one level.
6–9	**Forbidden Lore:** You have gained an instinctual and worrying affinity for the empyrean, you gain the Forbidden Lore (Warp) (Int) Skill if you do not have it, and increase it by one level if you do. You also gain an additional 1d10 Insanity Points.
10	**The Proposition:** Your potential has sparked the interest of a daemon, you are offered a Dark Pact if those optional rules are being used by the GM, otherwise re-roll this result.



Tainted

The warp is in you now, you can feel it caressing the darkest corners of your mind, taunting and tempting. Do you resist? Make a **Difficult (–10) Willpower Test** (or else give in to the darkness voluntarily). If you succeed you have held back the shadow in your soul, but know it is always there, always waiting to claim you. Reduce your Fellowship by 1d10 and gain the Fearless Trait. If you fail, you are touched by the power of Chaos. Roll 1d10 on the following table.

Unhallowed

The power of the warp suffuses your character and you are no longer fully human. Reduce your Fellowship by 10 and gain 20 Insanity Points. You gain a +20 bonus to any Test made to resist mind control, domination, or anything else that prevents you from acting freely. One Characteristic of the Gamemaster's choice gains the Unnatural (×2) Trait and is now counted as daemonic for the effects of holy barriers and weapons used against it.

Roll	Result
1–5	**Stigmata:** Your character's body is transformed vilely. Roll on the Major Mutation Table (see **Table 12–4: Major Mutations** on page 335 of the **Dark Heresy** Rulebook). You must take care to somehow conceal or explain this away, or suffer the consequences.
6–9	**Dark Channelling:** You gain a single randomly determined Psychic Power that you may use at will without a Psychic Test, or if you are already a psyker you may to re-roll a failed Psychic Test. Each use inflicts one further Corruption Point. These powers brand you a witch if discovered.
10	**Possession:** Your character is possessed by an entity the equivalent to an Astral Spectre (see page 350 of the **Dark Heresy** Rulebook) and gains 10 Insanity Points. This terrible creature only manifests control at particular times (such as when you are badly injured or asleep, as determined by the GM, who takes control of your character during these periods). You may also call on the daemon within to take control, but if you do, you gain 1d10 Corruption Points by giving yourself over to Chaos in this way.





III

Factions

Istvaanians

•

Recongregators

•

Xanthites

•

Libricar

•

Ocularians

•

Oblationists

•

Phaenonites

•

Radicals Minoris


REPENTIA

Chapter III: Factions

"Our blessed Imperium has many strengths, each invaluable in its own way. From the strength of its numberless masses, to its great fleets that span the stars and the iron fist of its military, all have their role to play. So it is also with the Holy Ordos, it is a strength not unlike that of the seas; tempestuous, unpredictable and fathomless, with many cross currents and tides that may sweep a man away. Brought together, a destroying wave against which no stone may stand."

–Attributed to Marhanus Sult, Lord Sector Calixis

THE RADICAL PATH AND THE CALIXIAN CONCLAVE

The following chapter contains information on all of the major (and several minor) Radical factions present in the Calixian Conclave of the Inquisition. These factions range greatly in their scope and concerns, from the sorcerous power of the Xanthites, to the revolutionary zeal of the Recongregators, to the malice of the excommunicate Phaenonites and the mysterious dealings of the Ocularians. Each has its own character, unique history, and goals, but they are united by the fact that they are each mastered and made up of individual Inquisitors and their trusted Acolytes—and by the fact that, thanks to their doctrines and ethos, these Radical factions sit outside the Inquisition's mainstream of thought and practise.

The Calixian Conclave is a hugely diverse organisation, and one with its own particular and tangled past—a past that has long made it a hotbed for intrigue, political infighting, and factionalism, radical and otherwise.

To be part of a Radical faction is in essence to be in the minority, to be different and set apart even in an organization as powerful, diverse, and individualistic as the Inquisition. Radical factions by their very nature hide the truth behind a bodyguard of lies, misdirection, and secrecy. This is not only the case when it comes to dealing with the other arms of the Inquisition, which might be suspicious and more likely hostile, but also to a varying extent from themselves. For an Inquisitor or his Acolytes to take on a Radical doctrine is to court danger and risk their own lives either for an ideal or for their own obsessions, and even within the greater factions there are as many strains of Radicalism as there are individual Radicals. As such, much of what is known or reported about the Radical factions can be paradoxical and contradictory, and two factions can have very different interpretations of the same event. Likewise, their conspiracies and motivations may clash both with other Radicals and with the Holy Ordos itself, and indeed their own ideologies blind them to other forces at work. Just who has the right of it, only future history may tell—and history as they say, is written by the victors.

Knowledge of Radicalism

Just what a character knows about a given Radical faction is up to the GM to interpret based on the character's own experiences and the doctrines he has trained under, but the following guidelines can be used as a basis using the Forbidden Lore (Inquisition) Skill.

Table 3-1: Radical Knowledge

Degrees of Success	Details Known
Standard Success	Confirmation of the faction's existence and its core goal.
One	Basic detail about its history and structure.
Two	Detail of its history in the Calixis sector.
Three	Rumour about the faction's current activities.
Four (or more)	Deeper knowledge on the faction's true nature and purpose.

Major Radical Factions

Istvanians
Recongregators
Xanthites

Minor Radical Factions of the Calixis Sector

Libricar
Ocularians
Oblationists
Phaenonites



ISTVAANIANS

"The price of our survival is pain, suffering, and death."

–General Cradtz at the Golgenna offensive

Denounced by many as warmongers and destroyers, the Istvaanians are Radical Inquisitors who believe that mankind must be strong to survive and ascend to its rightful place amongst the stars. Strength to the Istvaanian mind is only truly created in times of trial, conflict, and sorrow. In times of disaster, mankind shows its potency and its potential: unbending, decisive, and valiant, while the weak are cast on to the flames of history as fitting sacrifices to the Imperium's greater glory.

The Istvaanians believe that the survival and strength of the domains of the God-Emperor depend on a process of continual trial and eventual triumph that ensures that they continue and grow. In the Istvaanian ideology, only by passing through near destruction can the weaknesses of mankind be shed and the strong prosper. These are the convictions of the Istvaanians, and the beliefs for which they willingly spend the lives of the Imperium's citizenry and soldiers and the genesis of the wars, misery, and bloodshed that they create within the realms that they are sworn to protect. For if they do not act, then mankind's strength will fail, the Imperium's defences weaken and it will be beaten down until humanity is rendered extinct.

STRENGTH THROUGH TRIAL

Istvaanians are named after the infamous planet Istvaan III. At the outset of the Horus Heresy, the greatest conflict that mankind has ever faced, the renegade Warmaster Horus virus-bombed Istvaan III and in that moment ignited a civil war that that would see brother kill brother, the galaxy in flames, and the death of billions. Istvaanians point to this moment as the moment that mankind's future was forged. Though the Imperium was forced to its knees and teetered on the edge of the abyss, it ultimately triumphed, and from that triumph came strength: strength to face the reality of Chaos, strength not to trust, nor cease in vigilance, and strength to act with fury and decisive might. The dark times of the Horus Heresy were moments of transformation and revelation that made the Imperium rise to greatness, whilst times of relative peace and prosperity have brought nothing but venal weakness and corruption. To the Istvaanian, the strength of the Imperium was born out of trial of the Horus Heresy, its achievements wrought out of the necessities of survival. The Imperium, however, cannot rely on the trails and triumphs of the past.

The virus bombing of Istvaan III was the true birth of the Imperium, but for the future, mankind must achieve its own revelation and strength in moments of blood and pain. It must face moments of terror and disaster and emerge with its head unbowed and its soul made stronger.



THE EVOLUTION OF MIGHT

Istvaanians believe that strength is the vital quality in a hostile universe. It is vital, because it is strength that allows mankind to defend itself, strength that keeps it unified, and strength that allows it to destroy those that would destroy it. Without strength, mankind would be doomed to extinction. The strength, which Istvaanians value, is a result of surviving and triumphing over trials; they believe the more severe the trial, the greater the strength that results. This true strength is the vigour of a battlefield veteran—his body is sacred, his soul yet armoured, his skill at arms is without peer. Istvaanians and their servants create trials for mankind by creating conflicts in which humanity can struggle, and disasters in which they can find their true strength.

When many are tested, some fail, and if the trial is a real test of mind, body, or sprit, those that fail may not survive at all. Those who cannot survive and cannot triumph are consumed. The Istvaanians view this as a blessing, as it removes weakness from the Imperium and leaves only what is strong. This elimination of those who are tested and found wanting is a principle that Istvaanians put into brutal practice: they winnow out the weak-willed, easily tempted, and decadent with war, revolt, and bloody crisis.

The Revelation of Adversity

Istvaanians believe that revelations and wonder follow in the wake of the mayhem they create, and that it is not just strength that results from disaster and conflict. They point to many of the Imperium's greatest achievements that resulted from extraordinary and violent events. In the times of greatest strife and bloodshed, the Imperium took its greatest steps forward in all areas of achievement. A favoured example often used in Istvaanian polemics is the coming of Sebastian Thor, his reformation of the Ecclesiarchy, the elimination of the hidden weakness of Ecclesiastical dominance, and the renaissance of Imperial power which followed it. All of these were only made possible in Istvaanian eyes because of the bloodshed and tyranny of the Age of Apostasy that came before it. Others point out that the genesis of Imperium itself and those that defend it, from the Space Marine legions to the Adeptus Mechanicus, were born out of the Emperor's great war of unification.

To the Istvaanian, the truth is clear for those unafraid to grasp it. These moments in which mankind makes a great leap forward are only ever made possible in the face of annihilation, the willing sacrifice of blood, and the revelatory experience of imminent destruction. Many go further and state that the more terrible the danger and the greater the price of failure, the greater the heights that the Imperium will ascend to in order to overcome it. Therefore, they reason, if humanity is ever to truly dominate the stars, it must pass through ever greater and more terrible conflicts than before. The Istvaanians also believe that it is the Inquisition's role to aid and manage this process for the betterment of all; their gifts to the Imperium are the conditions of blood and sorrow from which it may be reborn.

The Engendering of Conflict

The chief concern of Istvaanian Inquisitors is engendering and managing vital conflict. Although all conflict interests them—from personal ambition, to economic and social struggles, to the viperous infighting of the nobility—raw violence is the form to which many Istvaanians prefer to devote their attentions. Warfare and the battle for survival tests all aspects of the participants; it has the highest of stakes for all involved and is fatal to those that fail, winnowing out the weak. The scale of conflict may be as small as a blood feud between noble houses, or as cataclysmic as a war that engulfs planets and stars and consumes millions of lives before its force is spent. The outcome of the wars, insurgencies, and the vendettas they create is often of little interest to an Istvaanian. The fact these ordeals exist and the effect that they have on those who pass through them is everything, and most such Inquisitors pride themselves on a measured dispassion toward those involved.

Istvaanians' interventions are always a matter of judgment and wisdom, as above all they wish to strengthen the Imperium, not destroy it. It is those who are perceived as weak in their eyes that are the most likely to be subjected to their attentions. But where this fine line of judgement is placed can be a matter of some difference and discord among the faction and between individual Istvaanians. While some would not strike at a world or sector already at war, others take a grander view and see that war and its outcome in the context of the wider area, or even weigh a conflict's outcome against wars and threats yet to be. They may see a sector or army grown complacent on victory as easy prey for the foes of the future and better purged now; the chaff weeded out from the strong wheat, rather than destroyed utterly later. It is this wonton creation of anarchy, mayhem, and discord as an end in itself that makes many Inquisitors outside the faction look on the convictions and conspiracies of Istvaanians with incredulous horror.

The methods Istvaanians use to create conflict vary from subtle and measured to wild and indiscriminate, as suits their current aims. Many Istvaanians believe that conflict and aggression are mankind's natural state and that a nudge in the right direction will create all the bloody conflicts that could be desired. By fanning the natural resentment of a populace, working on the paranoia of a governor, and introducing a fog of disinformation, an Istvaanian or his agents can create a world of fear and bloodshed from an atmosphere of peace and harmony. Others will create phantom threats whose power to induce terror grows with every whispered conversation and whose existence demands a response. Such illusory threats can be small enough to only affect a local population (such as a killer preying on local officials) or vast and terrifying enough to seize the minds of billions and cause the Imperium to mobilise vast resources. Some, of course, abstain from such subtlety and simply start a war when they feel the cause is sufficient. A notorious tactic of Istvaanians is to first strike one side and leave evidence implicating the other. This in turn creates a counterattack, and before long, an all-out war will have sprung from nowhere.

The Creation of Disaster

To the eyes of the most extreme Istvaanian Radicals, a disaster is an extreme trial that leaves those it touches either remade or crushed by its passing. It is a trial by fire in which the epitome of Istvaanian doctrine is rendered into a moment of pure revelation. Those Istvaanians who follow this path often manipulate the circumstances that lead to a disaster and let events take their course, rather create them outright—although such agents will engage in major acts of sabotage and terror if it suits their purpose. The more established, comfortable, and indolent the circumstance in which such a disaster occurs, the more it achieves the ends of an Istvaanian as the greater the shock to the system. Should one of these Inquisitorial patrons of calamity find in their judgement that a world is too soft, too fat, and satisfied with its own success, he will see it as his duty to make that world pay for its privilege. If it is strong despite its appearances, it will survive, but if it was wanting, then that world will be brought down in fire and ruin, and the Imperium will be stronger for it. For a desert settlement, such a disaster might be the destruction of their water supply; for a Navy Battlefleet, it might be the destruction of a critical warship carrying the command staff; and if a sector comes under the judgement of an Istvaanian cell, then the result might be the assassination of the Lord Sector or the destruction of an entire planet.

The Hand with the Iron Gauntlet

One paradox of the Istvaanian position is the desire to build up the Imperium's might at the same time as insuring that it is challenged. As a result, Inquisitors of the Istvaanian creed not only create conflict, but also expend much of their energies to help forge the iron fist of Imperial might so that it might triumph in war. The Imperial Guard, Imperial Navy, the leadership of Imperial Governors and Commanders, the Adeptus Arbites and even, where possible, the Adeptus Sororitas, Adeptus Astartes, and the Inquisition itself all come under the Istvaanian's scrutiny and judgement. Each is a vital part of the Imperium's war machine that must be honed and sharpened in the face of the enemy. Most Istvaanians have close ties with the militant branches of Imperial authority and use their influence and resources to manoeuvre strong individuals of proven ability into key positions. While this may seem a practice more in accordance with the conservative doctrines of the Puritan factions, it is in fact merely a consequence of the Istvaanian quest for creating strength through trial. Often an Istvaanian will promote or manipulate a capable warrior into a position that brings him closer to carefully selected conflicts. In this way, Istvaanians both forge the weapon and ensure it remains strong for when it is truly needed.

ISTVAANIANS WITHIN THE HOLY ORDOS

The Istvaanians, like any other Radical faction, are but a small percentage of the Holy Ordos, and most make no overt show within the Conclave of their allegiance and creed, the better to go about their true work. The Istvaanians' presence and ideology is long established within the Holy Ordos furthermore, for every true 'warmonger' (as they are often disparagingly named by their comrades) there are still more fellow Inquisitors who give some credence to the Istvaanians' concerns and theories, if not their more extreme acts.

Rather than a grand conspiracy, one of the faction's greatest strengths is that it holds to a single ethos rather than an organisation. In practice, this means that while Istvaanians can and do band together to form covert cells to plan and carry out their interventions, just as many operate on their own, following their own compass of conviction without recourse to each other's knowledge or approval.

Istvaanians see every facet of the Imperium as worthy of their attention, and everything in it either as possible tool for creating vital conflict or for defending humanity. As such, Inquisitors of Istvaanian conviction can be found throughout the Ordos Hereticus, Xenos, and Malleus, each with his own particular sphere of interest and expertise. Those within the Ordo Hereticus use the internal strife and factionalism within the Imperium to create civil wars and blood feuds, while also playing on the fear of the mutant and the witch to create violent reactions to perceived threats. Istvaanians within the Ordo Xenos attempt to bring the Imperium and alien races into open war by provoking conflict or by stirring up hatred and fear of the alien. And though their involvement is rarer, the Ordo Malleus provides Istvaanians with such nightmarish possibilities that give even the most diligent Istvaanians pause: inciting malign cults to violent action, releasing forbidden lore or artefacts to attract the attention of the weak and corrupt, or even the 'controlled' release of daemons to sow terror and thereby prove the need for ever greater vigilance and brutal response. A significant number of Istvaanians are affiliated with no single Ordo, however, and must find their own focus and means of achieving their ends, changing fluidly and quixotically between creating strife and purging evil according to what they judge the Imperium to need.

A SECRET HISTORY

It is not recorded when Istvaanianism was born or how it first flourished; these facts are lost to ancient secrecy and drowned by the tides of blood that have engulfed the Imperium down the millennia. But it is an old doctrine, and along with Xanthism it vies for position as perhaps the most established and embedded strain of Radicalism within the Inquisition.

The convictions and creed on which the Istvaanian doctrine is founded are not new; the ideas and theories on which they are based are as old as human civilisation and perhaps older still. They came with humanity to the stars like a cold shadow in the mind, and have been part of the fundamental psyche of the Imperium since its inception. It is possible that the Istvaanian doctrine as a cogent theory and movement is in some ways the inevitable product of minds forced to seek the answers to unforgiving questions about humanity's place in the universe and the perils it faces daily—why do some resist the temptations of the warp or triumph over the alien, and why do others fall so easily into treachery, corruption or cowardice? Seeing conflict as a test that revealed weakness and honed strength, the first Istvaanians were drawn to not simply observe and note these qualities, but to promote the circumstances that give rise to them. With time, their convictions deepened, and the management of conflict gave way to promotion and finally outright creation. In that moment, Istvaanianism was born.

What hand Istvaanians have had in the long and bloody history of the Imperium cannot be known, even by those that advocate its path. Theirs is a doctrine based on the importance of evolution and trial and thus does not require that the exact end is always known, only that conflict and disaster arises to try the Imperium. It is always too early to say what the final effect of any given action or intrigue will be, and when those intrigues are designed to be things of awe, blood, and power, this is doubly so. The ripples of a single engineered war may be felt for centuries, even millennia. After all, the consequences of the Warmaster Horus's bombing of Istvaan III still reverberate more than 10,000 years after the end of the Horus Heresy. It may be that were one able to see all causes that led to the rise of a genius or tyrant or to the destruction of a thousand stars, one would find the will and conviction of those such as the Istvaanians. Ignorance of the ultimate consequences of their actions is of little concern to Istvaanians. It is simply enough that conflict is nurtured so that mankind might be tried—and in that trial will find strength.

The Crusade into the Calyx Expanse

Not all wars have at their heart the conspiracies and designs of an Istvaanian, but the war that created the Calixis Sector did, according to those Istvaanians who passed the torch to their successors within the Conclave Calixis today. For millennia before a crusade was launched to claim it, the Calyx Expanse was known thanks to the writings of the Rogue Trader Solomon Haarlock who declared it to be a "chalice of great and ancient wickedness" that would only be purchased for the Imperium with a "great effusion of blood." It was this malign reputation that drew the notice of Istvaanians, who saw it as a cauldron of wrath and fire into which servants of the Imperium could be plunged, and so be tempered by a war of the bloodiest kind. Of those Istvaanians active in Segmentum Obscurus at that time, it was the great and notorious Inquisitor Lord Stark who saw the possibilities of the Calyx Expanse as a field of trial. He used the patronage and the alliances he had assembled over hundreds of years to draw together a conspiracy of Inquisitors of Istvaanian convictions. Under the direction of Lord Stark, these disparate Radicals bent their will to create a movement for war to be waged in the Calyx Expanse.

It took a decade of manoeuvring in every branch of the body Imperium before their objective was at last in sight: the raising of a warrior to the rank of Lord Militant and the granting to that warrior of a writ to persecute a crusade within the Calyx Expanse. The design of Inquisitor Lord Stark and his fellow Istvaanians was a success in all but one, crucial detail. At the last minute, the High Lords of Terra decided to pass over Lord Stark's carefully groomed choice for Lord Militant and instead invested Golgenna Angevin as Lord Militant of the crusade. So it was that the Istvaanians succeeded in creating their crucible of blood and fire but saw the forces plunged into it led, not by a fierce and blooded warrior of their choosing, but by a weak and vain man obsessed by status and patronage. No matter what great qualities lying poets would later give him, to the Istvaanians Angevin's weakness was plain enough that it would require no testing to be proved. To them Angevin's slow decline and the rise of a stronger figure was inevitable, for the only other alternative was that the crusade would turn to a slaughter and the Calyx Expanse remain a place still of darkness.

The Fenksworld Calamity

The Fenksworld Calamity lives in infamy as one of the greatest disasters of the Angevin Crusade. Its consequences can still be seen in the towering mausoleums on the world of Orendal's Tomb, to say nothing of the decades it took to complete the conquest of the Calyx Expanse. In 359.M41, a second front of the Angevin Crusade was opened by a fresh army group gathered from the core worlds of Segmentum Obscurus. Commanded by High Admiral Vaakkon, the new front was intended to link up with Lord Militant Angevin's forces in the central worlds of the Calyx Expanse and shorten the crusade by years. Such was the intention, but from the outset the Vaakkon's forces were beset by warp storms that threw battle groups off target, causing a terrible toll in ships and troops who were lost to the warp. Intelligence on the strength of enemy forces and hostile worlds also proved terminally inadequate, as the 100,000 troops lost in an attempted landing on Woe attested. Despite these setbacks, Vaakkon's forces moved forward inch by blood-bought inch, and it seemed to all on the second front that matters could get no worse. In fact, they were very wrong. The eventual misjudgement, although none knew it, was the product of premeditated design by servants of the Holy Ordos.

The planet of Fenksworld had been established as the crusade's primary staging point. The space above the planet swarmed with loaders, troop transports, and spear-prowed warships, all gorging on the fuel and supplies fed to them by the installations that had been towed into the system and anchored in high orbit. The life blood of the second front flowed through the docks of Fenksworld, and its loss would be disastrous—but also nearly impossible, given its defences. Impossible, that is, as long as one ignored the possibility of treachery. The Istvaanian cabal that shadowed the crusade had so far been most satisfied with how the Admiral Vaakkon and his forces had risen to the challenges on the second front, but in Fenksworld they saw an opportunity that could not be wasted to grant the man either death or glory which would see the endeavour of the crusade "put back on the right track."

It took months of careful work by covert agents to introduce just enough terminal stress and potential flaws into the systems controlling the movement of craft around the Fenksworld docks, and considerably more effort to get suicide-programmed tech-priest and assassin Acolytes aboard the Apocalypse-Class Battleship *Tempest's Child*. Then, as the vast form of *Tempest's Child* approached Fenksworld, several crucial scanning and communication systems were crippled, the bridge crew massacred, and its engine and reactor output locked to maximum. As flocks of craft jostled in confusion around the docks, the stricken warship ploughed into them. Over fifteen warships, twenty mass conveyors, and countless other craft were lost in an expanding cascade of destruction. The Fenksworld life line was cut, and hundreds of thousands of troops scattered amongst the hostile stars had their support stripped away.

The Fenksworld Calamity did not destroy the second front, but cost the lives of millions and extended the crusade by years, even decades. For the Istvaanians, their actions were later vindicated when the unbreakable warriors that came out of the hell of the second front became the keystone of the battle against the dark forces that were to beset the Crusade in later years as it pushed ever onwards into the Hazeroth Abyss and the Adrantis Nebula. They would say that such heroes were bought by fire and calamity in the void above Fenksworld.

The Mara Landing Massacre

The Mara landing massacre was, apparently, one of the greatest tragedies of mis-navigation ever to occur within the Calixis Sector. The ice world of Mara is a cursed place where no man is permitted to set foot. A frozen world devoid of life, Mara was once home of a number of Imperial installations, including a mining facility. Through a series of incidents so dark and terrible that their details are held under seal by the Holy Ordos, Mara was stripped of all living souls and left alone in the cold void to be a place of secret legends and tales of madness. It remains quarantined to this day, patrolled by ships from Battlefleet Calixis.

The tragedy of the Mara landing massacre began when the troop transport *Vervilix*, bound for the war on Tranch, suffered a critical navigational error and dropped out of the warp close to the ice world of Mara and within the cursed world's quarantine zone. Disaster might have been averted had the ship's engines and communications not failed and left it drifting alone and lost above one of the most dangerous places in the Calixis Sector. Not knowing where they were but detecting structures on the surface, the officers commanding the 100,000 troops on board decided to mount a landing onto the surface in an attempt to gather information on their position and press aid from any that might live on the ice world. This decision was to cost the lives of over 50,000 men.

Soon after the landing, all communication with the surface was lost. First-person reports from breathless dropship pilots told how the troops deployed to the surface had begun to slaughter each other, and discordant sounds began to rip through the communications networks—alongside cries imploring someone to "make the buzzing stop." Not knowing how to respond, the officers poured more troops onto the surface of Mara until most of the soldiers had been deployed. When the Imperial Navy patrol ships reached the *Vervilix* five days later, only a few hundred survivors could be recovered from the thousands who had set foot on Mara. An investigation by the Holy Ordos determined that the it it was a tragedy of misadventure. Most of the survivors were executed, and quarantine patrols around the ice world were doubled. Since the massacre, rumours have persisted in the Calixian Conclave that the cascade of accidents and coincidences that lead to the disastrous planetfall were not the product of chance, but carefully planned and orchestrated by the renegade Istvaanian Inquisitor Amaros and her close servants. It is said that Amaros was keen to see whether any useful survivors could be created and harvested from exposing untried guardsmen to such a great, unknown threat. The involvement of Istvaanians in engineering the circumstances of the massacre has never been proven, although a number of the survivors who were not executed for potential taint were quietly drawn into the service of several Inquisitors with suspected links to Amaros, a fact which may itself have sparked the theory. This harvest of survivors was bought in the blood and madness of thousands, but if the stories are true, its creator likely considered it a small price to pay.



CURRENT CONSPIRACIES

"Our test is crisis; no others are of worth. All life is war, all war is life. It is self-evident. Every human being is born with blood on their hands."

–Lady Alecto Amaros, On War, Vol I

Istvaanians are commonly seen as rash and headstrong individuals who will not allow the Imperium a moment's respite from strife and conflict. The relative current stability of the Calixis sector might, therefore, indicate a small or inconsequential involvement by the warmonger Inquisitors within the sector. Nothing could be further from the truth. Istvaanian actions have been woven into the fabric of the sector since before the Angevin Crusade, and a hardened core of Istvaanian Inquisitors operates at the heart of the Calixian Conclave. The current situation is simply the quiet before the coming storm as far as they are concerned, a storm that may be unleashed if several powerful Istvaanian conspiracies bear fruit.

The Hyades Locks

A number of powerful Istvaanians within the Tyrantine Cabal have discovered passages within the deep archives that speak of the Hyades Locks, a subject with which they have become rapidly obsessed. The nature of these devices is uncertain, but the fragments of ancient legend and prophecy speak of them as "great locks to the portals through which all shall pass to endless sleep, held fast by ages and secured by the key," and indicate that they are present on a number of worlds within the sector.

It seems clear to the Istvaanians that opening these locks will destroy the worlds on which they rest. The efforts of a number of Istvaanian Inquisitors, including Lady Amaros, have uncovered indications that one of these devices exists in the heart of the Golgenna Reach. Using any means at their disposal, these Inquisitors are racing to discover the exact location of this and other Hyades Locks, and the keys to open them. Whether the key is metaphorical, allegorical, or literal is currently unclear, as the only reference to it is contained within the *Propheticum Hereticus Tenebrae* and speaks only of a "key once held by the herald." The intent of the Istvaanians, should they find both lock and key, is simple: open the lock and let the death of a world shake Calixis out of its dormancy and content.

Unfortunately for the Istvaanians, the matter of the Haydes Locks pertains to events and powers already in motion far outside the warmonger's usual remit. They are dangerously late comers to a particularly dark and terrible game and may well suffer for it.

The Madness of Marius Hax

Sector Governor Marius Hax is a fair and even-handed man who many believe is slipping into paranoia and tyranny. This change has not been one of his own making, nor a consequence of some weakness of mind. It is the product of careful manipulation by agents serving masters of the Istvaanian conviction, Inquisitors who see the myriad threats and dark prophesies that are rising like shadows all around the Calixis Sector as a coming trial by fire, in which Hax must prosper or the sector must die.

Devoted to ordered rule, and harsh in his judgement of any thing that threatens it, Hax has had his nature played on by carefully engineered assessments of the sector's stability, steered by incidents which cause him to question the loyalties of his servants and the Adepta. Moreover, advisors who serve other, secret masters have been carefully positioned to bend his ear. By these means, a number of Istvaanians have succeeded in making Hax increase the military power of the Lord Sector's office beyond its direct necessity and secure the armed forces loyal to him alone, such as the notorious Chaliced Commissariat. These manipulators are also nudging the Lord Sector's perception and mental state further and further into fear of rebellion, sedition, and conspiracy. Inch by inch, they are creating Marius Hax as a fanatic who will rise to a crisis at the head of a tide of blood and iron. Such a deadly crisis is surely not far off.

The Istvaanians and Other Inquisitorial Factions

The Istvaanians' agendas as warmongers and agents of anarchy tend to conflict with those of most other Radical and Puritan factions within the Inquisition. Those who perhaps comes closest to concordance with Istvaanian convictions are the philosophies of the Recongregators, who wish to tear down the stagnant monoliths of the Imperium and replace them with bold agencies of change. Both factions frequently foment rebellion within the Imperium, operate covertly, and create mayhem and disorder. This agreement is, however, largely superficial, as the creation of conflict, disorder and mayhem is an end itself to the Istvaanians; what comes after is an inevitable consequence of the disaster acting on mankind. On occasion, agents of the Istvaanians and Recongregators work in concert, but it rarely results in more than the briefest alliance. Like the Recongregators, the destabilising nature of Istvaanian operations puts them in frequent and bitter conflict with the powerful Amalathians who value order and continuity above all else.

Other factions, both Puritan and Radical, are seen by Istvaanians as being of little importance in terms of what they believe or do, but are seen as vital for creating conflict within the Inquisition itself. It is not uncommon for Istvaanians to wade in on one side or another of a clash between Inquisitors of rival factions for no other reason than to make the strife between members of the Inquisition all the more intense. This, however, can lead to profound trouble for the Istvaanian forces involved, particularly if they have meddled in the affairs of powerful or supremely dangerous factions such as the Xanthites or the Libricar, whose retaliation is likely to be both brutal and swift.

Like all Radical factions, the Istvaanians are either viewed as contemptible or dangerous by the Puritan majority, while many other Radicals see Istvaanians as destructive and impetuous fools who upset and destroy things of which they have no deeper understanding, and whose actions ultimately weaken the Imperium.

Acolytes of the Istvaanians

Many Acolytes who serve Istvaanian Inquisitors are drawn from the militant arms of the Imperium or from worlds where strife and destruction is a way of life. Given their bombastic and warmongering nature, this preference is unsurprising. Many Istvaanian Inquisitors have contacts within the Imperial Guard, Adeptus Arbites, Departmento Munitorium, and Imperial Navy who they use to recruit warriors, killers, and saboteurs into their service. Given their proclivities, Istvaanian Inquisitors are particularly fond of recruiting and sponsoring "survivors" into their service, a practice that is far from uncommon throughout the Holy Ordos, but sits particularly well with the Istvaanian mindset. Particularly prized are individuals who are veterans of great conflicts or who have overcome appalling adversity and beaten the odds to survive. So valued are the progeny of such calamitous events that some extremist Istvaanians will engineer a particular kind of catastrophe so that they can recruit the hardened individuals who emerge from its rubble and ashes.

Many Istvaanian operations are undertaken covertly within the Imperium, often in direct opposition to Imperial authority. Acolytes who serve an Istvaanian master must be more than mere blunt tools; they must be resourceful, capable of autonomous action, and of course deniable, should they be discovered. Many are trained infiltrators recruited from assassin cults or other organisations that exist on the borderline between Imperial sanction and heresy. Istvaanian Inquisitors must first make sure to completely sever any remaining ties to their Acolytes' past lives and ensure that previous loyalties are stripped away.

RECONGREGATORS

"The future of mankind is not something that is bought with mouthed reverence to the past. The future is bought with violence and the execution of all that we hold most sacred."

–Xaius Orel, *The Dictates of the Future*

A revolutionary faction of Radicalism within the Inquisition, the Recongregators believe that Imperial society has reached a dead end of stagnation and decay which has robbed mankind of the means and of the will to survive in a predatory universe. There is only one solution to such a danger, they believe: to tear down the calcified monoliths of Imperial power and make them anew so that mankind can survive. The ancient bureaucracies, the forms of rules and governance, and the thinning blood of the ruling elite all are irretrievable and must be replaced by those not fettered by tradition but emboldened to make mankind's future anew. The price for such change is terrible, but for an Inquisitor of the Recongregator philosophy, it is a price that must be paid lest all fall into darkness and slow ruin.

THE FUTURE REBORN

Inquisitors who cleave to the Recongregator vein of radicalism have a different philosophy on what threatens the Imperium and must employ unique methods in pursuit of their ends. Their principle aim is to save the Imperium, not from what threatens today, but from the oblivion into which it is blindly stumbling as a society. To Recongregators, the threats that their fellow Inquisitors see as most dangerous are lesser when compared to the greater danger of being crippled by stagnation and choked by mouthed tradition. Because stagnation of the Imperium is the paramount threat to mankind, Recongregators must adopt methods that are vile heresies to their Puritan peers. If the Imperium will not heal itself of its wasting sickness, then those with vision, strength, and power must provide the medicine—no matter how bitter it might be.

THE NECESSITY OF CHANGE

The core belief that informs all Recongregator Inquisitors is that the Imperium, which they are bound to defend, has become corrupt and is decaying. The great pillars of authority and order which once supported the untold glories of mankind no longer serve any purpose other than to pull humanity into a future of slow death and wasting ruin. The domain of the God Emperor persists in spite of the monolithic organisations and vacillating elite, who believe that they are serving and protecting that which they are in fact strangling. Time is



running out, the hope of the future slipping away like the hand of a drowning man beneath the surging water. If the Imperium is allowed to continue as it is, it will stagnate to the point where it will fall apart—and then circling predators will come to feast, and mankind will be nothing but burnt flesh and blackened bones.

To Recongregator Inquisitors, there is only one choice: the Imperium must be changed. That change may not be accepted, understood, or desired, but it must happen lest all be lost. Those who rule mankind with the worn wisdom of the past must be replaced by those with those of vision and fresh ideals. The great dead structures of power and control, perpetuating only stagnation and decline, must be torn apart and made anew. The future can only be saved by the Radical and will only be destroyed by the conventions of the present. Ensuring that change will come is the scared duty of Recongregators, for the domain and subjects of the God-Emperor of mankind must be saved.

All that threatens the Imperium pales in significance when compared to the stagnation that pervades the Imperium and the minds of its servants. This torpor makes loyal citizens, soldiers, and rulers vulnerable to the corrupting whispers of the warp and the lies of the alien. This vulnerability will only deepen with time until mankind can no longer raise its wasted limbs to defend itself. To the Recongregators, the persecutions of all other threats are subservient to promoting and enabling change amongst the mind and body of the Imperium. This is not to say that Recongregators are unconcerned by the malign predations of daemons or the conspiracies of xenos, only that they have a higher calling and a different rod by which to measure menace. The concerns of Recongregators are focused inwards to the body of the Imperium, and unless an action in some way changes the status quo, it is a lesser concern. Such things can be left to the attention and energies of more mundane minds; Recongregators can have no time for anything that does not work to change the doomed direction of mankind. Hope is running through their fingers like sand, and the time to act is now.

The Doctrine of Mind, Flesh, and Iron

The predominating doctrine amongst Recongregators within Ordos Calixis holds that the roots of the Imperium's stagnation can found in three primary places: in the conformist minds of its rulers and citizens; in the stagnant blood and wasting bones of its people; and in the fear of its own technology. The tri-fold Doctrine of Mind, Flesh, and Iron diagnoses "a disease of repetition and dwindling variation amongst all manifestations of man's endeavour." The ideas and understanding of even the greatest minds is weighed by tradition and convention. The blood and bodies of humans have become shackled by drudgery, and the blood of its elite has become poisonous through inbreeding. Once mankind created wondrous machines which subjugated the impossible to its will; now, all is consumed by fear of new knowledge and innovation.

Though not all Recongregators accept the implications of the Doctrine of Mind, Flesh and Iron, it has inspired a number of undertakings by those who do, including the genetic manipulation of House Koba of Malfi, the protection of The Great Library of Knowing, and the supply of forgotten data fragments to the Cult of Sollex, the full consequences of which remain unclear.

The Methodology of Rebirth

The methods used by Recongregators to affect change in the body Imperium falls between a number of poles through which an Inquisitor and his agents steer according to their own beliefs and the requirements of their endeavours. The pace at which change is affected, where it is affected, and with what force determines the tactics employed by Acolytes who serve a Recongregator, as well as the nature of those Acolytes.

Change to a Whole Society or Replace Those Who Rule

Changing the politics, factionalism, bureaucracy, and immense edifices of the Imperium can be effected by changing those who govern and control those structures, or by removing the mechanisms that support and enable those structures to exist. The sluggish structures of the Imperium pervade every part of society. The monoliths of stagnant tradition exist in a close symbiosis with the men and women who give them support. To some Recongregators, the most effective method of change is to focus on the leaders and governors of the Imperium; by changing them, these Recongregatorscan change the hand that steers mankind into the future. Others prefer to effect wider change, which then makes the structures and ideas of the past untenable.

Feudal worlds within the Imperium are often subject to the attentions of Recongregator manipulation. A feudal world governed by an established line of monarchs and noble vassals, ruling over peasants who work with primitive tools, can be destabilised by changing the ruler or by changing those he rules. A Recongregator who favours change from the top down would work to replace the established monarch of a feudal world with a bold monarch who wants to pull the world up out of primitive tradition. An equally profound change could be made to the same feudal world by introducing and spreading unconventional ideas amongst its population. Off-world technology that breaks the need to work by hand, weapons that remove the ability of the nobility to enforce their rule, or the idea that the nobility are not more worthy by birth can all cause the traditional rule of a feudal world to become untenable and change to become a necessity.



Sudden or Gradual Change

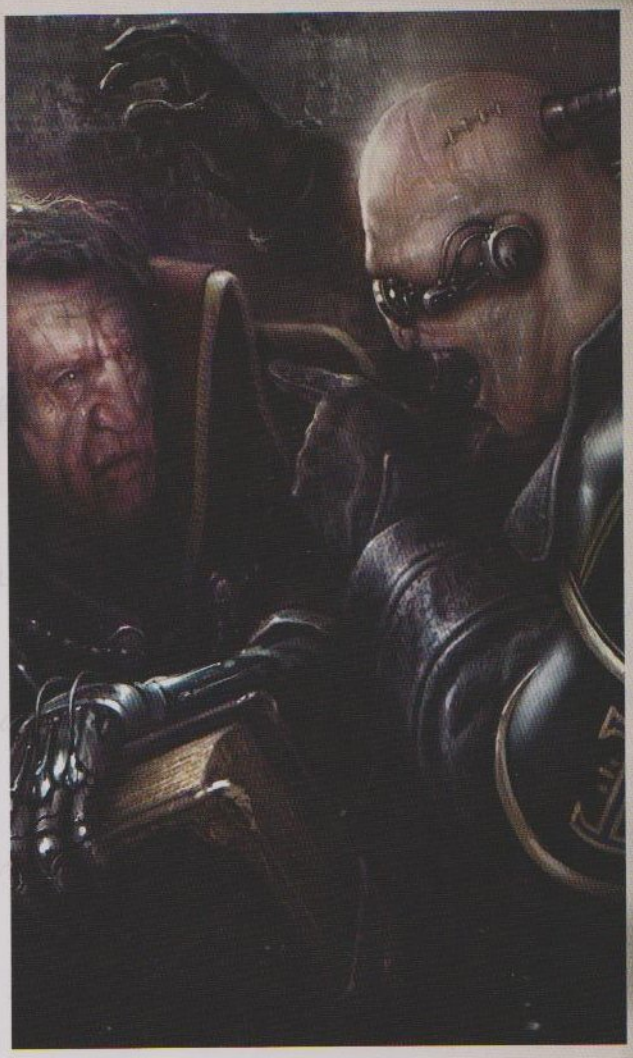
Transformation can come gradually, with existing authority being slowly undermined, its key figures discredited and its pillars of support changed by degrees until they no longer resemble what they once were. At the other extreme is very rapid change effected by the abrupt removal of a ruling figure or body or the shock of discrediting of convention or custom. Gradual change has the advantage of being less likely to cause reaction to prevent it, as well as minimising any unfortunate side effects, such as destroying what they were trying to change. The faster the change, of course, the more likely it will necessitate violence and rebellion. Faced with a world that has an established method of governance lasting millennia, two Recongregators may approach the same end at very different paces.

Those who favour slow change might slowly cripple the economic power of ruling elites through sabotaging production of tithed materials or sponsoring internecine strife and vendetta. They might isolate them politically by bribing or blackmailing their political allies, both on- and off-world. A campaign of whispers that paint the established rulers as laughable or indecisive might then open the door for a new set of rulers to be established and supported with the backing of all involved. Alternatively, those servants of the Recongregator doctrine who favour swift change might plant damning evidence of deep heretical practice amongst the ruling elite and let the iron hand of Imperial authority sweep away millennia of established rule with ruthless efficiency.

Blunt or Subtle Manipulation

In the end, almost all Recongregator endeavours usually necessitate violence to some degree, whether it is assassination, rebellion, sabotage, threat, or insurgency. The question is whether violence is used to force circumstances or to guide them. The blunt use of manipulation takes a stable situation and enforces change brutally: creating and arming rebellious factions, killing planetary commanders, and effecting coups d'état. Subtle manipulation takes the opportunities offered and enhances certain aspects to achieve the desired end: creating the circumstances for rebellion or dissent and provoking a tide of rebellion and change. Of course, the most effective operators amongst Recongregators use both blunt and subtle manipulation to create an unstoppable force of violent change.

In planning the reconfiguration of power in a stable subsector, a Recongregator who favours subtle manipulation in the application of violence may introduce an exotic bio-toxin to the subsector's agri-world, causing food shortages in the hives fed by the agri-world. When food riots begin, covert Acolytes infiltrate the riots and instigate an attack against an enforcer stronghold, triggering a brutal response that fans the flames of insurgency higher—all the while isolating the subsector governor and truncating his ability to supply his tithe and keep order. A minor noble, hailed as a hero, would then emerge to broker a deal with the rioters, and together with emerging allies in the mercantile elite across the subsector, he rises overnight to the seat of subsector governor. The corresponding blunt approach would be to fund and arm a rebellion against Imperial rule on the subsector's ruling world. The subsector governor is then horrifically assassinated and carefully placed elements in the military step in to restore order.



RECONGREGATORS WITHIN THE HOLY ORDOS

The Recongregator creed is popular with many Inquisitors who look to its doctrines as providing potential answers and even hope for the Imperium's future. As a result, the Recongregator creed is more widely and openly debated within the Inquisition than most. This fact serves in part to mask the secret activities of those who dedicate their careers and activities fully to the Recongregator creed, whose embrace of revolution and heresy in their fight for humanity's future would mark them as targets for zealous factions within the Inquisition.

Given their concern with the internal workings of the Imperium, many Recongregators are part of the Ordo Hereticus. This is not only because it makes them ideally placed to discover individuals, organisations, and circumstances that might be open to their manipulation, but also because many who have spent their lives uncovering weakness and corruption have their perception changed to the point where

they are in accordance with Recongregator philosophy.

A significant portion of Recongregators owe no allegiance to any single Ordo, a fact that is unsurprising given the all-consuming nature of most Recongregator concerns and designs. Unfettered by being focused on one of the supposed great threats to mankind, these independent Inquisitors concentrate their effort on what they see as the true threat: stagnation and decline.

Some within the Ordo Malleus follow Recongregator doctrines, and indeed some come to them after decades of seeing the so called pillars of the Imperium eaten from within by daemonic influence and the temptations of Chaos. A daemonhunter who follows the Recongregator philosophy may find individuals of great potential amongst those who resist the influences of malefic cults or rise against the daemonically influence tyrant. Of all the three great Ordos, the Ordo Xenos is the one least populated by Recongregators—though there are always a few drawn by the possibility of how the knowledge that xenos possess might be used to change the Imperium.

A SECRET HISTORY

Throughout the untold history of the Inquisition, the full impact of the Recongregator philosophy on the Imperium cannot be fully guessed, and if any beneath the Golden Throne know it in truth, they have never spoken it to another. The ways of the Recongregator are those of deeds done in secret by those who move behind a mist of secrecy and misdirection, and their actions are often only glimpsed when their plans have unintended consequences or go disastrously awry. So has it been for the life of the Imperium, and so it has been for the crucible of the Calixis Sector; indeed, it is likely that the puppetry of the Recongregators played its part in the birth of the sector and tampers with its fate even to this day.



As with most strains of Radicalism or Puritanism within the Inquisition, the origins of the Recongregator philosophy remain unknown, although the term itself was in use at least as early as the Age of Apostasy. At some point prior to this dark time of schism and blood, a pattern of thought and action by members of the Inquisition became established and consistent enough to be recognised and labelled. In all probability, there never was a true founding of the Recongregator philosophy, which likely began as a slow gathering of ideas on importance of progress, frustrations at stagnation, and dreams for the future. While there have been numerous concerted cells of self-declared Recongregators in operation, in both the past and present, even today Recongregators are only loosely bound by a coincidence of opinion and methodology. Indeed, many of those within the faction's true number would not consider themselves such, no more than they would consider themselves heretics, and many follow their own path and are only branded as Recongregators by others in turn. Such fierce individualism, however, is the truest mark of the Recongregator, and has ever been since the first Inquisitor decided that mankind was sleep-walking into the abyss of the future.

The Rise of Drusus

Drusus—warrior, visionary, saint, whose rise to greatness is the story of the birth of the Calixis Sector itself. The history wrote in seminaries across the sector tells of how Drusus came to the untamed stars and nebulae that would become the Calixis Sector as a general in the staff of Lord Militant Angevin in his crusade to carve a new domain of the Imperium of Mankind. The stories tell of how the enemies of the Emperor sent terrible assassins against him and dragged him down amongst the dead, but the Emperor, not accepting the death of his servant, destroyed his assailants and allowed Drusus to live again. His return from death remade Drusus, and from that day his story is one of triumphs, brilliance, and inspiration. In the decades that followed, Drusus threw the enemies of mankind back, took command of the crusade in the wake of the great Lord Militant Angevin's death, and forged the Calixis Sector by his will.

There is another story, a story that is known in part by few and in whole by none. It is a story bound with lies, so that even the great Lords of the Holy Ordos Calixis do not know where truth begins and lies end. They know only that it is made of both, of truth and lies bound into a knot. It is a story of an old man of weakening health and a mundane mind given command of a mighty Crusade by virtue of old blood and the favour of dusty traditions. Under his failing will and weak strategies, millions died for little gain, and the forces of the Imperium were shamed. It is said that among the Inquisition were those unwilling to see such blood split to no end, who watched the pitiful scrabbling of a so-called crusade amongst dead stars and hateful worlds and decided that it could not be allowed to continue. These watchers picked another to be the

The Amalathians: Arch-rivals of the Recongregators

The Amalathians are a Puritan faction of Inquisitors whose concern is the protection of the stability and strength of the Imperium. These Inquisitors and their servants work to create unity amongst the branches of the body Imperium and to preserve the traditions and institutions that they believe preserve mankind in the face of its enemies. The greatest enemy to mankind is the force of change which can open the Imperium to disaster. Such a dedication to maintaining the status quo and suppressing change puts Amalathians in diametric opposition to the revolutionary philosophy of the Recongregators. This fact has created a secret and ongoing war between the two factions for the future of the Imperium, and one that has often blindsided both to external threats and the rise of other, more arcane factions within the Inquisition.

hand of destiny, one with the will and personal power to forge mankind's future amongst the unforgiving reaches of space. These Recongregators, it is said, made a deal with the darkest of powers in order to meet their ends. If this is to be believed, it was they who saved Drusus and began the whisperings of his favour in the sight of the Emperor, they who wielded the knife that removed the old and made space for the new. The story says that the Calixis Sector was born of their will and that Drusus was a saint not of the Emperor's making but at the hands of hidden powers who charged a heavy price for their aid. Other respond that if the future needs be bought by a lie, then it is a small price to pay.

The Manipulation of Malfi

The hands of Recongregator agents are filthy with the stinking blood of dire mistakes that have been made in trying to wield Malfi as a tool for sector-wide change, but the faction's manipulation of the bloodlines of the Malfian nobility remains its greatest work—and its most dire shame. The nobility of Malfi has always been rotten, ancient, and wicked long before the coming of the Angevin Crusade. Since the rise of Scintilla as the dominant capital of the sector, Malfi's nobility has become increasingly bitter and resentful. In this darkly brooding feud, the Recongregators saw an opportunity to create a force for change in a sector becoming too comfortable in its newly acquired stability. The key, they felt, was in the old blood of Malfi, a lineage and stock with a vast history of scions great and terrible down the years. The Recongregators saw in these dynasties a tool they could use, and in doing so embraced a vile heresy long forbidden. With the aid of rogue elements within the Adeptus Mechanicus, a powerful Recongregator cell poisoned members of several noble families with gene-locked viral agents that would release their potential by augmenting their genetic makeup and sowing the seeds of the same in the next generation. The intent of the manipulation was to breed a great line of charismatic and powerful individuals who would wrest control of the sector away from a course doomed to stagnation. Matches between various infected bloodlines were engineered, and the resulting progeny were monitored over the years. Each generation was more changed than the last, but without warning, the experiment slipped from their grasp. Records were destroyed, adepts were killed, and those Inquisitors closest to the project were found dead or missing. The culprit responsible remains unknown to this day.

As the years progressed, it became patently apparent that the results were, sadly, not what was intended, and too late the Recongregators began to realise the grave error of their choices. They had unwittingly committed a sin from humanity's ancient past.

The products of Malfi's manipulated noble bloodlines were monstrous. Though they bore no marks of mutation, these men and women were near genius exemplars of cunning and viciousness and the guessed-at names of those noble lines most affected ring now with infamy: Sinderfel, Belasco, and Koba. None outside a few Inquisitors know of this secret atrocity. The Recongregators have taken great pains to cover up this sin over the years, and to combat the evil it has wrought, but even they cannot guess at how many have been born of the tainted blood of Malfi.

The Riddle of the Logicians

The Logicians are a conspiracy of so called progressives inspired by a proscribed doctrine outlined in the pages of *In Defence of the Future: A Logical Discourse.* An agglomeration of merchants, hereteks, and nobles, the Logicians hold the heretical belief in the importance of progress. They pursue technology and forbidden knowledge in the hope of restoring mankind to the god-like state it once held in its lost "golden age." The cult's activities in the Calixis sector are centred on the hording of

The Malice of Malfi

Malfi has been at the heart of the conspiracies of Recongregators since its founding in the early days of the Angevin Crusade. It is likely that Recongregator influence has contributed—at least indirectly—to the forging of Malfi into the viperous bed of intrigue it is today, but to say the faction has ever been truly in control of this world's twisted culture of vendetta and intrigue would be false. Infamous as a society made of lies founded on malevolent ambition, Malfi carries at its heart a resentment of the primacy of Scintilla as seat of Imperial power. It is something the Recongregators have been ready to fuel and exploit. During the early phases of the Angevin Crusade, Malfi, a long standing and technological advanced human world with pre-crusade links to the Imperium, was key in the rule of the expanding realm won by the crusade. For a time during the founding wars it was even the de-facto capital of what would become the Calixis sector. Time and circumstance, however, robbed Malfi of its brief crown and chance of dominance. As the star of Scintilla rose to its zenith, the bitterness of Malfi festered.

power and exploration of forbidden knowledge. The riddle of the Logicians is whether it is the Recongregator inspired creature it seems; even to those of the Recongregator doctrine do not know whether the Logicians are one of their untamed monsters loosed on a wounded galaxy.

The great mystery in the matter is whether or not the Logicians are a creation of a Recongregator's scheming. The spread of the tech-cult through the dissemination of an idea rather than demagogues and fanatics is one favoured by Recongregators and seen in the corrupting proliferation of the text *In Defence of the Future: A Logical Discourse.* The overt doctrine of progress at any price and obtaining lost and forbidden technologies through dealing with hereteks, the most ambitious and mercenary of the Commercia, and the nobility all reek of Recongregator influence. The only problem with this view is that it the evidence bears little chance of it being true, no matter how much some in the faction might wish it so. It is a riddle that grows all the more knotted when it is considered that even powerful Calixian Recongregator Inquisitors like Astrid Skane, Lucius Fulcio, and Lhor know of no influence their kind have exerted over the Logicians. Also the past actions of the heretical tech cult have proved to be both damaging to individual Recongregator plans, and served as an open case in point for rival factions of the perils of such revolutionary thinking. The solution to the riddle must therefore be either that the Logicians are the product of parallel evolution—a cult whose doctrine is something akin to an extreme form of the faction's own—or that it was once a cat's-paw grown to a power and life of its own. Some feel that the Logicians are perhaps the product of some unseen and unknown Recongregator plan of unparalleled subtlety, although others in the faction condemn this theory as no more than dangerous hubris.

CURRENT CONSPIRACIES

"You spit on me and call me mutant, twist, freak and what of it! Have I not strong arms to serve the Emperor, have I not a heart that beats, a mind that wills, have I not the soul He gave me, pure and clean beneath this rough flesh? Insult me and mock me if you will, but it is for Him I fight, not you. And in my death before Him I shall go, loyal servant of the Throne with His enemy's blood on my hands!"

–"Sergeant" Urak Ironback, 17th Penal Legion, Leader of the Forlorn Hope at the battle of Smeltery Complex Gamma, The Tranch War

The nature of the Recongregator philosophy spawns endless plots and endeavours, and the presence of a number of powerful Recongregators in the Calixis Sector means that it teems with manipulations and grand designs of change, many of which are inevitably stymied by inertia or thwarted by the machinations of other power groups. Chief amongst the concerns of Calixian Recongregators is the fate of the seat of Imperial power on Scintilla, and stalwart Recongregators seek to thwart the activities and dominance there of their arch-rivals of the Amalathian faction.

The Lucid Concern

The chief focus of most Recongregators in the Calixis Sector is Scintilla, nexus of governance and focus of the power and traditions of the Imperial rule in the sector. By their nature, Recongregators tend towards working alone without coordination with like minded peers, but the concentration of tradition and power draws the attention of Recongregators like insects to a naked flame. They devote special attention to the infiltration of the Lucid Court and the circles of influence around Sector Governor Marius Hax. As the embodiment of Imperial authority in the sector, Hax is a disastrous ruler from the perspective of Recongregators, being both highly conventional and obsessed with the maintenance of order and Imperial tradition.

The fact that Hax's authoritarian streak and reasoned loathing of change has seemed to drift into paranoia and despotism is of critical concern. Desperate operations to destabilise Hax's power base amongst the planetary defence and enforcer forces have so far proved fruitless, while the sphere of influence around the Lord Sector has proved impenetrable to infiltration. A number of Recongregators are becoming increasingly desperate to loose Hax's stagnating grip on the sector and have banded into a cell known to its hidden membership as the Lucid Concern. Though they have yet to determine a course of direct action, the Lucid Concern is united in the absolute belief that the longer Hax's rule is allowed to calcify into immobility, the more extreme the solutions that can and should be contemplated to end it. So far, the group has been held back by the fear of accidentally destabilising the entire sector in the process.

The War Within

The war fought against the stabilising influence of Amalathian Inquisitors has been waged in the Calixis Sector since the sector was founded. It has been a long and bitter struggle in which the Amalathians have the upper hand at present. The conventional and change-resistant rule of Sector Governor Hax and the relative stability of Imperial rule throughout the sector has smothered the potential for change. While many Recongregators focus on breaking Hax's power base, others have focused on areas distant from Scintilla's influence. A key secret battlefield between agents of Recongregator Inquisitors and servants of their Amalathian rivals is the feudal world of Acreage. Lone agents and hidden Acolyte cells have thoroughly infiltrated the populace and slowly begun to spread new ideas. With the ground laid, they have begun to smuggle technology and weapons into the hands of elements resistant to the rule of the high king. In return for these manipulations, enforcement cadres trained by Amalathian Acolytes root out sympathisers of the new ideals and drag away rebellious elements—while the high king is watched over by bodyguards sent by Amalathians within the Ordos Calixis. Unknown to the Amalathians, though, is the fact that among their Acolytes in the king's court are a few who wait the command of their Recongregator masters to remove the barriers to change and let the transformation of Acreage begin.

THE RECONGREGATORS AND OTHER INQUISITORIAL FACTIONS

The philosophy and methodology of Recongregators aligns with and conflicts with those of many other factions within the Inquisition. Most obviously, the group's opposition to stagnation and the belief that the Imperium is being strangled by blind tradition conflicts in every point with the Puritan Amalathian faction. So deep is this rift that the two factions fight a constant invisible war of influence, a war that often breaks out into bloody vendetta and rivalry. The Inquisition's powers-that-be are often forced to intervene to keep the damage at a minimum.

The Libricar, that secret Radical spawning of Amalathian obsession, views Recongregators and their agents as targets to be eliminated at all costs and counts themselves as the most implacable of the faction's enemies. The warmongering activities of Istvaanians, on the other hand, and their creed of strength through conflict, can align with the rebellious plots of a Recongregator. But beyond the use of anti-Imperial organisations, violence, and destabilisation to achieve their ends, the two factions have a fundamental difference: Recongregators want to change the current order and see it replaced by something new, while Istvaanians wish to unleash mayhem with little thought of what is to come—as long as it is stronger than what came before. As a result, many Recongregators see the Istvaanians as dangerous loose cannons and are just as likely to confront them as to make common cause.

The forbidden tools of the Xanthite may lure some Recongregators, but many Inquisitors of the Recongregator philosophy will view most individual Xanthites as vile heretics. Malevelolent Xanthite splinter factions such as the Phaenonites consider the Recongregators' preoccupations petty and inconsequential compared to their own. Of course, fanatics who cleave to the Monodominant or Oblationist creeds see the Recongregators as unredeemable heretics and arch-traitors whose only fitting reward can be pain and death.

ACOLYTES OF THE RECONGREGATORS

The Acolyte cadres that serve Recongregator Inquisitors are usually a collection of demagogues, assassins, manipulators, agitators, criminal fixers, tame insurgents, and infiltrators. Those drawn from the Adeptus Arbites, Imperial Guard, or Adeptus Mechanicus are often used to infiltrate Imperial organisations during an operation, allowing the Recongregators to play both sides against each other. The operations of these Acolytes are often complex and require them to be capable of making imaginative decisions without recourse to their master.

Unsurprisingly, Recongregator Acolytes are usually highly independent operators encouraged to think and make decisions for themselves—that, after all, is the Recongregator ideal. Recongregator operations are usually covert, to the extent that even a hint of Inquisitorial involvement would compromise their mission and undermine what they are trying to achieve. In this way, most Recongregator Acolyte teams are subject to denial by their masters if they are caught fomenting rebellion or planning an assassination. With none to vouch for them, these Acolytes will die as heretics rather than as servants of the Golden Throne.



XANTHITES

"...And I heard the voice in the midst of the thunder saying 'Come and See,' and I saw,
And I beheld the Children of Men bearing terrible weapons while the eight-fold star was trampled at their feet,
And the fourth seal shattered and the Beast did cower in new-forged chains,
The Ancient Seraphs bore witness, their wings dipped in blood, and the lamentations were mighty as They That Can Not Die were cast down,
And the Voice in the Abyss spoke again saying 'It is Done'..."

–The Corrinto Propheticum, declared to be an extreme moral threat and suppressed, 744.M41

To the Xanthite, the warp and its denizens are things to be enslaved rather than denied. To them, Chaos is no less an enemy that must be fought and defeated, but one ultimately that should be tamed, bound to humanity's will and put to use in the Imperium's service.

Born from the paradoxical position inherent in the role of the Inquisition, Xanthites believe it is the Inquisitor's sacrosanct freedom to understand and even wield that which is forbidden in order to better combat it. Xanthism remains perhaps the most insidious and most ominous of all doctrines, and the Xanthite movement itself arguably the most ancient, powerful and above all the most dangerous of all the Inquisition's Radical factions. Indeed, to some the words 'Radical' and 'Xanthite' are synonymous. When a Puritan Inquisitor ponders the Xanthite, with their dark lore and darker secrets, they see an enemy a thousand times more dangerous than any twisted mutant, debased heretic, or crazed witch—and fundamentally they are not wrong.

Many other Inquisitors, be they Puritan or Radical, consider the Xanthites to be walking along the edge of a precipice, arrogantly tampering with powers no mortal mind can fully comprehend, and with catastrophic implications should they but slip for a moment. But despite the appalling dangers the Xanthites court, they are nevertheless one of the oldest and most heavily entrenched philosophies of the Inquisition, and their number includes not only some of the most learned and politically influential Inquisitors, but also some of the most personally powerful individuals whose true strengths and mastery of the dark arts are seldom guessed at until they are angered or directly challenged. It is indeed a courageous or foolhardy Inquisitor that dares challenge a true Xanthite directly and unaided, let alone a cabal of their number operating together in fell purpose. Instead, those that would challenge the Xanthite creed must do so with caution. More often it is the case that several Inquisitors must make common cause to expose a Xanthite that they believe is guilty of crossing the line into outright heresy. They must bring irrefutable proof before a full Conclave in order to gain justice, and even then the outcome is never certain.

XANTHISM AND THE ORDO MALLEUS

Given its focus on the direct opposition of the daemon and the warp-worshiper as an organisation, not to mention its access to occult lore and artefacts, it is perhaps unsurprising that many (but by no means all) of the Xanthite faction can be found within the ranks of the Ordo Malleus. These Malleus Xanthites form a powerful minority within the Ordo, and while most are as dedicated to the Ordo's mission as any other daemonhunter, their methods and concerns mark them out from their peers. In extreme cases, this has lead to covert warfare and strife between particular Xanthites and their brethren. These differences are put aside in most cases by the Ordo Malleus, as this notoriously insular division of the Inquisition is apt to close ranks and keep any discord or intellectual disagreement behind closed doors as far as the wider Inquisition is concerned. This seeming tolerance for the heretic in their ranks is the result of a number of factors, not least being that every Malleus Inquisitor has a close knowledge of the infernal and a schooling in the dark arts to some extent. As such, almost every member of the Malleus fundamentally understands—even if they do not agree with—the Xanthite position. There is, however, a point at which such tolerance ends, and that is the point of moral corruption. When a Xanthite (or any other Inquisitor for that matter) strays from the quest to understand and dominate the



The Horusians

Xanthism, as old a creed as it is, is far from uniform and exists with many divisions both in personal approach and in schismatic doctrine. Within the Xanthites there are those whose beliefs range much further afield from their fellows, from the suicidal fury of the Oblationists to the more recent tech-heresies of the Phaenonites. Perhaps the most extreme and outlandish Xanthite faction is known as the Horusians. This handful of infamous Radicals looks to the great catastrophe of the Horus Heresy and to the Primarch Horus, who they view as a mighty being invested with immense Chaotic power, and sees an opportunity wasted rather than a monster that nearly doomed all of humanity. They believe that if a new Horus could be created and invested with great energy from the warp and control that power, he would effectively be a 'Second Emperor,' a super-being able to unite and lead the Imperium for its betterment and greater glory, rather than enslaving it to Chaos.

Puritanical Inquisitors, especially those of the Thorian persuasion, have a particular loathing for Horusians, who they see as the direst of heretics and their very theories enough to guarantee their place on the pyre. Even among other Radical factions, the Horusians garner little shrift and much suspicion, particularly from those who have had access to the proscribed histories of the Traitor Legions.

warp and willingly or not becomes the pawn of the Ruinous Powers—or worse yet, succumbs to the temptation to bend the knee to the Dark Gods in return for power and the promise of immortality—then the Ordo Malleus will turn on them with all its wrath. The Xanthite faction itself will be at the forefront of carrying out this retribution and is merciless in its pursuit.

Despite Xanthism at its roots being simply a matter of outlook on the daemonhunter's part, rather than specific association, an important difference remains between Inquisitors who profess Xanthite beliefs and what some choose to call 'True Xanthites'—men and women who have dedicated their lives and their wills to the absolute mastery of warpcraft in the God-Emperor's service. Xanthites of this rank and power, usually long-serving veterans of the Inquisition's war, often become sorcerers and daemon binders equal to any Chaos Arch-Magus or warp prophet. The names of these rare and appallingly dangerous individuals have echoed with equal parts reverence and infamy in the secret histories of the Inquisition and invest the word 'Xanthite' with such import and dread. Men and women such as Mokartus, Quixos, Angelique De Falk, and Zaranchek Xanthus himself, according to the Xanthites, embraced the darkness and were willing to risk the ultimate sacrifice in order to safeguard the Imperium—but by the judgement of others, they became monsters in their fall from grace.

DARKNESS AGAINST DARKNESS

Xanthites believe that Chaos cannot be defeated in an absolute sense, for it is a reflection of humanity itself and therefore must endure as long as humanity does. However, those energies and powers created by its existence can and should be harnessed and even enslaved for the benefit of humanity, rather than left as an untamed hazard that preys at will upon the Imperium's lives and the souls of its people. So rather than surrender to Chaos or hide away in fear, Xanthism holds it must be marshalled and controlled, much in the same way the mute energies of the warp already are harnessed by the Imperium to allow for interstellar travel, navigation, astro-telephathy, and in the manner that psykers are sanctioned and serve in order to benefit the human race. Some even go as far as to controversially hypothesise that this was perhaps the Emperor's plan all along.

The Xanthite path is defined by three concerns when it comes to all aspects of the warp, its manipulation, and the power of Chaos: investigation, understanding, and application. Individual Xanthites can differ immensely in how they put this into practice, and the lengths to which they go in serve of their ultimate goal of harnessing the power of Chaos and the seething energies of the warp for mankind.

The first step of the Xanthite ethos, investigation, is a natural consequence of the Inquisitor's role and is given licence by the power and authority of the Inquisitorial rosette. This power and the fundamental strength of character are factors without which Xanthism would not be possible. The investigation of the malefic is also perhaps the most obvious reason that Xanthites are drawn to involvement with the Ordo Malleus—even if it was not their first or lasting affiliation—as the combating of daemonic incursions and the rooting out of Chaos cults offers the Xanthite firsthand interaction with the forces of the warp.

It is in the second step, understanding, where many subtle dangers lie. When a Xanthite Inquisitor or his Acolytes encounter malign forces, they prefer not simply to purge its presence, but also to learn and capture what they can from it. Chaos cults and warp-incursions, their nature, powers, and weapons are studied with a view to investing this knowledge into the Xanthites themselves where possible, destroying knowledge and artefacts only when completely necessary. Once these dark materials and lore are gathered and often paid for in blood, they must be then studied and measured, a project that can as treacherous and lethal as the fight to acquire them in the first place. To aid them in this task, many Xanthites value building a strong and tightly knit organisation of trusted Acolytes and agents who share their vision and possess skills of use both on the battlefield and in the librarium. Some Xanthite Inquisitors go much further than this, skirting the edge of true heresy by creating sects of their own or manipulating existing cults to aid them in the unravelling of ancient mysteries and the deciphering of arcane lore.

It is in the third step, application, where the Xanthite's true power and the risk of destruction by his fellow Inquisitors lies. The wielding of the warp's power is the final goal of the Xanthite doctrine, and it is not a risk to be shirked from when the Xanthite Inquisitor and his forces are able to do so. As a result, many members of the Xanthite faction will use warp-tainted artefacts, daemon-weapons, books of Chaos lore, and other heretical works as tools, employing where possible the powers and abilities of these occult sources to combat the incursions of Chaos, purge the heretic, and lay waste to the xenos. It is the belief of Xanthites that many facets of Chaos can be controlled and tamed to the Emperor's Will by the spiritually pure and strong of mind. Following this logic, some Xanthites go as far as to practice the dark art of sorcery within their own self-imposed strictures and limitations, even instructing favoured Acolytes in its use. This is perhaps the most dangerous extent of Xanthism, not only because of its practical risks, but because sorcery in any form is viewed by most Inquisitors (particularly outside the Malleus) as inherently corrupt and the mark of Chaos taint. Of all such sorceries, the most potent and infamous is the binding of daemons and the creation of daemonhosts to serve the Xanthite. This is an activity, no matter how powerful a weapon it places at the Inquisition's disposal, which the vast majority of Inquisitors, including those of the Ordo Malleus, see as a blasphemous sin and a headlong plunge into the depths of the darkest heresy.

A SECRET HISTORY

The Trial of Zaranchek Xanthus

Xanthism is one of the oldest philosophies of the Inquisition. It is named after Inquisitor-Master Zaranchek Xanthus, brought to trial and eventually executed as a heretic in the early 32nd millennium. Xanthus was accused by a cabal of Inquisitors who had united to accuse him of Chaos worship. Although he professed his innocence strongly and with great dignity, he was eventually burnt at the stake, and many of his Acolytes and former apprentices were hunted down by the purge that followed. Throughout his trial, Xanthus maintained that despite the many malefic relics found in his possession and the vast repository of dark lore he had amassed, he had remained pure, both in spirit and purpose. He admitted that he did on occasion utilise the forces of the warp and the powers of Chaos to achieve his goals in the Imperium's service. By virtue of his rank and record, Xanthus's trial was held by the Great Conclave itself, and regardless of his eventual conviction, his skilled oratory, undoubted eloquence, and unwaveringly firm stance that such power could be harnessed without spiritual corruption found resonance in many who listened. His ideas were to be picked up on by other Inquisitors in the following years, and within a century a core of self-professed "Xanthites" had become a vocal and controversial minority within the Inquisition, and one that risked being rendered excommunicate en masse for their views.

Angelique De Falk and the Calixian Malleus

Perhaps the most famous Xanthite Inquisitor in the history of the early Calixian Conclave was Angelique De Falk, a woman whose great cunning and implacable intelligence marked her out from her days as an Acolyte of the Ordo Xenos as a rising star. De Falk, newly raised to the rosette, was one of a number of Inquisitors assigned to the fledgling Calixis Sector in the middle of the 39th millennium in the aftermath of the Angevin Crusade. This period, known to Calixian histories as The Great Founding, was far from an untroubled one, as war and anarchy still blighted the area. The subsequent mass colonial expeditions from the overpopulated worlds of the distant Segmentum Solar and from nearer afield in the troubled Mandragora and Gehenna regions created serious problems of their own. The newly born Calixian Conclave soon had its hands full weeding out the corrupt chaff from the good wheat in the new population and helping manage the difficult transition from High Crusade to stable civil rule. De Falk took to her duties with bravura and won for herself considerable fame within the Conclave, smashing cult after cult, battling human renegades and mutant uprisings. In particular, De Falk is credited with exterminating one of the last hellish nests of the warp-worshiping Yu'vath, a xenos race that had bitterly contested the Crusade's latter stages. It is recorded to have caused some acrimony when De Falk crossed the floor to join the Ordo Malleus, leaving her erstwhile comrades in the Ordo Xenos somewhat aggrieved to lose the famed and influential Inquisitor to what was at the time a political rival.

She quickly mastered the arts of the daemonhunter and rose swiftly with the ranks of the Calixian Malleus, demonstrating a mastery of occult lore that swiftly had Inquisitors of far longer service seeking her aid and council in matters of the infernal. As time progressed, however, she demonstrated increasingly Radical Xanthite leanings. Rumours began to circulate that she was able to command dark warp spirits at will, and that she had replaced her left eye, lost in battle with a Chaos Magus, with a baleful orb torn from the skull of a half-daemon thing worshiped as a god amid the steaming jungles of Fedrid. Her successes against malign forces, however, only grew in number and scale, as she and her Acolytes cast down the first and most terrible flowering of the Cult of Baphomael on Scintilla. By her own hand, De Falk destroyed the black beating heart of the Nightmare-Hulk Spectre of Winter, which had terrorized Imperial shipping since it was first sighted during the voyages of Solomon Haarlock.

After two centuries of service within the Calixian Conclave and a track record that arguably has never been equalled by her successors, Angelique De Falk was the leading power of the Ordo Malleus in the sector. She always refused to have the fact officially acknowledged, and she declined the appellation of 'Lord' which her peers repeatedly offered her despite her growingly sinister reputation. During this long tenure she acted as mentor to more than a dozen Acolytes raised to the Inquisitor's rank in their own right, only ensuring a strong strain of Xanthism in the Calixian Conclave to this day. De Falk's successors, in turn, produced

other legends. These include Requis Corina, the first to battle the Pilgrims of Hayte and halt the Bloody Solstice on Malfi; the infamous witch-master Inquisitor Soldevan, who slew the psi-abomination of the Bloodmind on war-torn Malice; and the malignant Kul Harkness, perhaps the most suspected and feared of the current Calixian Xanthites. But her gravest test and the act that was to grant both glory and infamy within the Inquisition was yet to come.

The Three Daughters of Atropos

In 799.M39 the hive city of Atropos on Solomon, a citadel with a population of more than 100 million, went mad in a single night. The culmination of a nightmarish plot long in the making, this terrible night of insanity and wanton murder was the work of the Master Sorcerer Alrac the Broken. Long a foe of the Calixis Sector, born beyond the Emperor's Light, founder of a dozen cults, and author of the thrice-cursed grimoire the *Liber Noctis Eternem*, Alrac had come to Solomon to kill this vital Imperial world in order to pay off a dark pact struck centuries before with the hellish forces beyond. As the death toll rose steadily into the tens of thousands and Atropos tore itself to shreds, violent chem-storms engulfed Solomon, and madness began to leap from ship to ship in orbit. With every drop of blood shed, Solomon tipped toward the Chaotic destruction of a full-blown warp incursion on a planetary scale. At the centre of this whirlpool of violence, Alrac took the high-prelate's throne in the gore-spattered Cathedral of Saint Morgana at the pinnacle of the Hive Spire and began his ascension to daemonhood as the gates holding back the warp began to shatter.

Plunging through the storm like a bolt from the heavens came Angelique De Falk's gun-cutter. It had been pure chance she had been in the outer Solomon system taking on supplies in preparation for a long journey to a distant Inquisition fortress. Ill-prepared for a major confrontation, she was accompanied only by a number of junior Acolytes in training and her personal staff. Although long past the prime of her life, De Falk's mind was sharp and her power greater than ever. So it was that in order to save Solomon and countless Imperial lives, three of De Falk's Acolytes gave themselves up to damnation aboard her ship in hurried rituals of terrible power. The gun-cutter smashed its way into the twisted cathedral to confront Alrac at the moment of his dark apotheosis, and De Falk and three bound daemonhosts of dreadful potency confronted the ascending arch-sorcerer. The details of what occurred in the battle have never been revealed, but it is known that Alrac was torn asunder at the moment of his triumph and Atropos scoured clean. De Falk's shattered body was borne away by her last surviving sorrowful 'daughter,' and she was never seen again. Whether she lived or died remains a mystery.



CURRENT CONSPIRACIES

"To slay a Xanthite, you must first become one..."

–Proverb of the Ordo Malleus

The Xanthites are a diverse group and one whose individual members are continuously subject to the pull of their own obsessive drive to master the warp, enslave the dark powers that threaten mankind, and turn them back on themselves. These obsessions may manifest in a myriad of ways, from the never-ending quest to expand their own knowledge and power, to the hunting down and destruction of Chaos cults and the appropriation of their dark secrets for the Xanthite's own. Some Xanthites, particularly those who chose to conceal their Radical tendencies, conduct their business of the Holy Inquisition with diligence and zeal, but always with an eye toward their own hidden agendas; they do not shirk from using covert murder to achieve their ends. Other Xanthites care little if they are known as such, confident enough in the rightness of their position to follow it heedless of the opprobrium of their peers, while others have attained such levels of infamy that the fear of their name precedes them even in the Conclave. Regardless of their methods and goals, conspiracy and secrecy are ever the Xanthite's watchwords where needed, and lies are always a favoured weapon—just as with the daemons they seek to bind.

Hayte, Suspicion, and the Rising Tide

The number of demonic encounters and the spread of Chaos cults within the Calixis Sector has increased at fearful rate over the last century, a fact that has not been lost on the Ordo Malleus or its Xanthite constituents. Given this rise in baleful activity, many of the most senior members and their trusted allies have come together in secret council on Maccabeus Quintus to discuss and debate this phenomenon and its possible causes and potential eventual outcomes. The conclusions of this council, which is believed to have met several times over the last three years, have not been made available to the wider Holy Ordos, or even to the Conclave Calixis, and despite their vehement protests the Tyrantine Cabal has been shut out as well. Some see this development, which has caused considerable acrimony, as an indication that the Ordo Malleus suspects some part of the Calixian Inquisition itself in the matter. No public charges have been made to this effect, and the Calixian Malleus refuses to be drawn into debate.

Since then, it has been observed that several prominent Puritan members of the Ordo Malleus have become decidedly more distant to their colleagues. At the same time, known Xanthites and other Inquisitors with long-standing ties to the Malleus, along with their independent Acolytes and agents, have become vastly more active to those trying to track their movements—far from an easy task at the best of times. These roving groups of Radical Xanthites have been observed travelling to hotspots of daemonic activity as they flare up, often re-visiting the sites of older atrocities searching for wisdom in their ashes, appearing and disappearing suddenly, without recourse to wider Imperial authority, and occasionally riding roughshod over the activities of other Inquisitors. This has only worsened relations between the Xanthites and the rest of the Conclave. One example includes an incident on Carver's Gate, when the warband of the militant daemonhunter Justinius Vorr clashed with the forces of the Witch Hunter Compt Pryce while pursing a secret cult of the Pilgrims of Hayte in the deep flood vaults of Bane City. Incidents such as these have done little to ingratiate the Xanthites with their Calixian brethren. Matters have worsened recently following the notorious Xanthite Inquisitors Harkness and Golgol's activities on Landunder, which disrupted a covert operation of the Tyrantine Cabal. Their actions resulted in the death of Inquisitor Slake, a former pupil of the senior Spectarian Lady Olianthe Rathbone. Only the direct and unexpected intervention of the Puritan Lord-Malleus Ionfel, avowing that the two Xanthites were on the Ordo's work, prevented Rathbone and her allies from declaring Harkness and Golgol Excommunicate Traitoris and sparking open conflict. Deep resentment still simmers over the matter, and Rathbone is known to have privately sworn her vengeance. Given Harkness's past, this merely adds one more name to a long list of personal enemies, a list that up until now was believed to have included Ionfel himself.

Even now, many of the Xanthites of the Calixian Conclave seem to be moving in an unprecedentedly concerted, overt manner, and many other Inquisitorial factions harbour with deep suspicion and fear about what this unknown pattern portends.

The Seven Devils of Dread Calyx

Of all the dark lore that rests in the secure vaults of the Calixian Malleus, some of the most contentious and strange deals with the myth of the so-called Seven Devils of Dread Calyx, an ancient legend that still forms the obsession of many Xanthites to the present time. The region was first named in the writings of the legendary Rogue Trader Solomon Haarlock, whose thirteen voyages out past the edge of Imperial space in the late 36th millennium would define the Calyx Expanse as a realm rich in "Souls, Plunder, Wealth and Things Best Left Undisturbed." Three millennia later, the Angevin Crusade would forge this region into the Calixis Sector. Haarlock's writings spoke of the seven devils as beings of dark power, fiends who haunted this area of space, some as savage predatory beasts, some walking amid the cold stars and others worshiped as fickle gods by those mortals who fell inside their domains. These seven, Haarlock claimed, were connected together by a dark and terrible web of fate, and if all were brought forth at once, a key would be turned that would extinguish the stars themselves. Haarlock's writings, filled with allegory and symbolism, have continued to strike a cord with the Ordo Malleus, particularly those of the Xanthite persuasion, and still echo through the sector's histories. Those who have sought out the truth behind the legends are known to have discovered much of value in them, as well as great peril.

Today, the greatest authority on the myth of the seven devils and the malefic lore that surrounds them is Inquisitor-

The Bray Lexicon

Andros Bray, in his long consideration of the legend of the seven devils, has formed his own list that he believes offer the strongest clues as to the nature of the entities involved. Compiled from concordances and evidence ranging from recovered cult relics, local folklore and divinatory prophecy, to the records of entities encountered at various times by the Inquisition. They are as follows:

- **The Voice of the Flame:** The daemon Balphomael, lord of the dark fire, Scintilla/various.
- **The Dweller in the Depths:** The Sightless Gaze, autochthonic entity, nature unknown, Spectoris.
- **The False Prince:** Tychak Crowfather, spiteful, pre-crusade indigenous deity of the Ashleen, incarnate form slain by Saint Drusus, Iocanthos.
- **The Treader in the Dust:** The Radiant King, legendary avatar of madness, Malfi/various.
- **The Eater of the Dead:** Mord'dagan, supernatural beast of legend, godhead of the Saynay cannibal cult, Dusk.
- **The Empty Hunger:** Astral entity/aetheric residue of extinct xenoform, attributed cause of lethal psychic phenomena, Drusus Shrine World/ Sacris.
- **The Night Traveller:** Nature unknown, also known as the kin-slayer, one that returns from where none has before and whose predicted coming will herald the End of Days.

Emeritus Andros Bray, Keeper-General of the Ember Archive at the fortress-asteroid of the Bastion Orpheus in the Maccabeus system. The aged Bray, a fiery proponent of the Xanthite ethos in his younger days and reputedly the longest-living servant of the Calixian Conclave, has long since retired from the field. However, he will happily expound on the subject to anyone the clearance to plumb the Ember Archives' depths. He also makes it a point to show any would be seekers a shrine he keeps to those Inquisitors and their Acolytes lost or vanished on the quest to uncover the seven's secrets. Among the memorials and reliquaries is the empty tomb of Morell Orpheus, the famed daemonhunter and onetime master of the Calixian Malleus, after which the bastion is named.

The Xanthites and Other Inquisitorial Factions

The Xanthites are an old, powerful, and heavily entrenched faction, shielded both by their own tightly-knit organisations and the wider secrecy and fear that attends their reputation. The influence that many Xanthites wield within the Inquisition's structure—and particular within the Ordo Malleus—makes them by far the most politically potent of the Radical factions. Despite the sinister suspicions many have of their membership's activities, Xanthites are the most tolerated Radical faction, if only grudgingly so, by the majority of their peers. Exceptions exist, of course, on both side of this divide, and many Puritans, particularly of the Ordo Hereticus, will never find common cause with a self-professed or even suspected Xanthite without the direst need. Conversely, some Xanthites take perverse pleasure in outraging their more rigid-minded colleagues at Conclave.

In terms of their relations with the other Radical factions, the Xanthites often maintain a measure of distance and disdain, ranging into outright antagonism toward such excommunicate splinter groups as the Phaenonites. The Xanthites' own obsessions seldom leave room to give more than passing attention to the political infighting and squabbles of the other Radical factions—except where it directly affects their interests or seeks to challenge them. But if a particular morsel of occult lore is tangled up in the machinations of others, their fellow Inquisitors can find a Xanthite's presence to be an unexpected and usually unwelcome factor in their proceedings. This general indifference is returned as antipathy on the parts of many other Radical factions. To the likes of inveterate intriguers such as the Recongregators and Istvaanians, the Xanthites represent a powerful and dangerous element of extreme unpredictability capable of upsetting their plans almost at will, while to the Libricar and other Puritan extremist groups, the Xanthite is the enemy within.

Acolytes of the Xanthites

Xanthite Inquisitors favour building interlocking circles and cells of trusted Acolytes and agents who can be relied upon for their loyalty, dedication, and strength of will in the face of the onrushing and insidious threat of Chaos. As their activities often take them in the forefront of direct battle against very powerful and implacable enemies—including Chaos cultists, daemonkind and those corrupted by warp taint—the Acolytes of the Xanthite are expected to be self-reliant and martially inclined, and even the most bookish savant will be required to know how to defend himself and stand on the firing line when needed.

The most singular characteristic of the Xanthite Acolyte is their likelihood of possessing a deep knowledge of the arcane and usually forbidden daemon lore. These Acolytes use occult artefacts and even daemonically-infused weapons far more than their peers in the Inquisition. This knowledge is hoarded by the Xanthite Inquisitor, who chooses to teach his more trusted Acolytes in order to empower them to defend themselves. A chosen few within each Xanthite's retinue may even be practising sorcerers, just as their master may be in turn. To many Inquisitors, this would be the most deviant of heresies and grounds for immediate destruction. This is not true in the Xanthite's service, but to imagine that these occult Acolytes are given free rein is also be incorrect. The trust a Xanthite Inquisitor grants his servants comes at a price beyond the danger of destruction by those of another faction. Xanthites are often better placed than most to know when one of their own has fallen to corruption, and react accordingly with crushing finality.

LIBRICAR

"Your mistake was not simply that you strayed from the light of the Blessed Throne or were derelict in your duties, nor that you consorted with heretics and drank deep of the forbidden. Nor was it even your arrogance that you were strong enough to remain pure. No, your most grievous error was in believing that you could do these things un-seen and un-judged!"

–Inquisitor Claudia Tarshek, from the Excommunication of the Witch Hunter Mokartus

A relatively newly fanned flame of radicalism founded from an unexpected Calixian source, Libricaranism is a relative newcomer to the clash of Inquisitorial ideology and doctrine and one that earns its fanatical counter-reformers an often outcast status in the Holy Ordos. An extremist outgrowth of the puritan Amalathians, for the Libricar it is not enough to preserve the institutions of the Imperium, but also necessary to ensure that those who rule and maintain them are ceaselessly watched, mercilessly judged, and made pure by bloodshed.

To a follower of the Libricar doctrine the sacred pattern of the Imperium as divinely ordained by the mind of the God Emperor, has become weakened from within by petty political corruption, factional strife, and beset by arrogant ideology, not least of all within the Holy Ordos itself. Above all, they despise those proponents of change who presume to second guess the will of the divine or betray their Emperor-given power and privilege for petty personal vice. For the Libricar, true order must be restored and tradition venerated and the path to this sacred goal clear—and if they must take it into their own hands and become judge, jury, and executioner in order to show the way, then so be it.

STABILITY AT ANY PRICE

The Libricar are a minor Inquisitorial faction, but one that has gained notoriety beyond its actual representation or influence thanks to both its vociferous counter-revolutionary doctrine and the single-minded zeal with which it pursues its targets. More a branding of like-minded zealots and extreme hard line reactionaries than a cohesive sect, the Libricar's sole aim is the maintenance of the Imperium's status quo at any price. This goal is achieved by subverting and destroying any radical or disruptive force or agency before it becomes a threat regardless of the source, or the elimination of authorities that may have become corrupt and unfit. The judgement of Libricaranism is uniformly harsh and unyielding; death to the recidivist, the revolutionary, and the deviant. Controversially, many Libricar are also of the conviction that the places that should be scoured first are the halls of the great and the powerful of the Imperium. Contrary to common Amalathian doctrine which offers a considerable leeway and tolerance for the various Adepta and the Imperium's powers-that-be, the Libricar reason that this tolerance has allowed for the Emperor's divine order to become tainted by the greed and ambitions of the weak and corrupt. To their reasoning, rot spreads most dangerously and does the worst damage at the highest levels of society. However, unlike radical factions that espouse sweeping away tradition and established power, the Libricar defend the institutions of the Imperium at all cost, especially from internal weakness. Accordingly, the Libricar espouse the viewpoint that the Inquisition is uniquely placed to police the Imperium's highest authorities more closely than it has, and indeed that it is the Emperor's will that they do so, after they clean out their own house…

Even as an ideological standpoint, it can readily be imagined just how easily Libricaran doctrine can be the cause of argument, resentment, and defamation within Inquisitorial Conclave, particularly some of its proponents controversially see themselves standing in moral judgement even against the Inquisition and the Ecclesiarchy itself without official sanction to do so. The most extreme Libricaran radicals have openly called for a great purging of 'disruptive elements' from the Imperial body politic and a 'return to the ancient traditions laid out by the writ of the God Emperor' that would consign as many to the grave as any Redemptionist crusade would send suspected sinners to the pyre. The difference being that if the extremist Libricar's proposals were to be followed, the victims would be members of the nobility, the Administratum, the Ecclesiarchy, and the Inquisition itself. To the Libricar mind, the Recongregator or the Istvaanian and their fellow travellers are as worthy of immediate death as any xenophile or warp-cultist. Given the intransigence and entrenched power of those that would judge, many of the Libricar have fallen into secret plots and covert terror and assassination campaigns to enact what they see as their righteous judgement, and walk a perilous tightrope as dangerous as that of any Xanthite in risking the Inquisition's wrath.

To the Libricar, the Imperium's long term stability is a prize that is worth any price to pay, and if sacrifices have to be made at all levels of society and power to achieve the glorious will of the Golden Throne, then that too is ordained.

THE LIBRICAR AND THE HOLY ORDOS

The doctrine of the Libricar is not one that garners much by way of respect or recognition within the Inquisition as a whole, relegating its advocates to the status largely either of lone voices or small localised groups pouring out their vitriol on their fellows when the opportunity arises. This lack of influence or acceptance has made even the most idealistic Libricar Inquisitor more than a little bitter and willing to test the bounds of their authority where they can. In terms of role and placement within the Holy Ordos, their ideological isolation often garners those of this faction the role of independent Inquisitor at large, whether they wish it or not. Notable exceptions to this are Inquisitors who have come to the Libricar position late in their career managing to maintain their prior Ordo affiliation (although often earning the disdain of erstwhile friends in doing so) and small cliques of Libricar Inquisitors and their tacit supporters which have formed within the Ordo Hereticus in some locales.

The Libricar's detractors in the Inquisition see their doctrines as hopelessly simplistic and reactionary, and the rallying cries and denouncements of the few Libricaran Inquisitors are viewed by many moderates as divisive demagoguery of the most dangerous sort. However, some on either side of the puritan/radical divide have taken delight in using the Libricar's unsubtle ideology and lack of broad support as a lever to make its proponents cat's-paws in their own rivalries, vendettas and intrigues.

The Libricar's greatest enemy in the wider Holy Ordos, and the principle reason its membership is largely ostracized and kept on the fringe of Inquisitorial affairs, is the strong antipathy presented to them by many of the puritans of the Amalathian creed from which the Libricar themselves spring. Many Amalathians see the Libricar doctrine as a dangerous corruption of the true way; a naive folly that would do infinitely more harm than it would good for the Imperium, risking creating the very anarchy and schism it would claim to prevent in its heedless stampede. Worse still for the Amalathians are those Libricar who go beyond merely raising riot in Conclave or disrupting the steady rule of an Imperial world with an unwarranted 'fishing expedition' against political corruption. Some Libricar covertly or overtly step outside the bounds of the Inquisition's authority to pursue their doctrine. Unsanctioned assassination pogroms, disguised sabotage campaigns, and even black operations against fellow



Inquisitors; all these charges have been laid against Libricar agents in the past. In every case, it is the puritan Amalathians who are among the first to call for inquest and declare the culprit's lives forfeit if evidence of guilt is found.

THE AMALATHIAN DOCTRINE

The Amalathian viewpoint is one of the widest held and best accepted of the diverse dogmas and ideologies to be found present within the Holy Ordos of the Inquisition, and its adherents found across all the differing Ordos. The fundamental position of the Amalathian doctrine is that the Imperium as it stands is valid, divinely ordained, and worth fighting for. Amalathian Inquisitors therefore strive to maintain the current balance of power and the structure of the Imperium's military, church, and state. Change other than the slow glacial pace of history is for them an anathema and revolution an unthinkable blasphemy against the divine order. This doctrine leads Amalathian Inquisitors in scouring out and destroying any individual or agency that might destabilise or damage the greater Imperium both from without and within its domain. As a result, Amalathian Inquisitors often rank the crimes of bodily and spiritual corruption, witchery, and personal heresy as being of a lower priority for their attentions than wider threats against the status quo or ones that endanger or corrupt the standing institutions of the Imperium either on a local or interstellar level.



One marked characteristic of those that follow the Amalathian doctrine is their tendency to operate 'within the system' and display a tolerant conservatism to the rights and domains of the Imperium's various arms of governance and authority (where they have not become corrupt or overstepped their bounds). This approach commonly sees them working successfully in close co-operation with the Adeptus Arbites, the Ministorum, and local authorities such as the Imperial Governors and planetary law enforcement. They also maintain good relations with notoriously independent powers such as the Cult Mechanicus and the Navis Nobilite.

Compared to all the ideologies prevalent within the Inquisition, Amalathism has remained one of the most stable, and perhaps the one closest to the founding conception of the Inquisition; the Imperium should find strength through unity, and unity through strength. Although over the years there have been self-professed Amalathians who have strayed far from the path into radicalism of their own accord, or have in the judgement of their peers 'gone too far,' they have been few true splinter doctrines from the Amalathian root. Radicals tend to react against this conservative and puritan creed rather than adopt it. As such, the development of Librcaranism amounts to a disturbing and unexpected development in the eyes of many. Most Amalathians would prefer to see this cancer cut from the body of the Inquisition.

A SECRET HISTORY

The Promise of Gathalamor

To understand the root causes and origins of the Libricar doctrine, it is first necessary to understand the origins and concerns of the more widely accepted and acclaimed Amalathian ideology from which it springs. The opening years of the 41st millennium have been described by some Adepts as a brief summer of spiritual and physical resurgence for the Imperium as whole, and a key part of this renewal was the great conclave held on the shrine world of Gathalamor, at Mount Amalath. At this conclave thousands of military, political and religious leaders of every stripe and corner of Imperial space, from Sector Governors to a score of chapter masters from the mighty and aloof Astartes all gathered to reaffirm their faith in the God Emperor's vision and re-swear their oaths of allegiance to the High Lords of Terra. Gathalamor was the birthplace of many portentous events that followed it, from the foundation of what would become the Macharian Crusade to the final ending of the bloody Suzerain Reformation Wars, but perhaps the most subtle and widely influential was the birth of the Amalathian movement. The movement, which formalised a long standing groundswell of belief held by many Inquisitors that the Imperium's structure and direction was fundamentally sound. As a salient doctrine and society of peers, the Amalathians, taking their name from the mountain bedrock on which they stood, cohered in part as a reaction against the growth of more radical doctrines,

and prospered in the groundswell of optimism and impetus the conclave had come to embody.

Large numbers of Inquisitors joined the Amalathian movement and subsequently returned to their home sectors, spreading the conviction that it was their sacred duty to protect and nurture the Imperium's resurgent strength throughout much of the Inquisition.

Unfortunately as the 41st millennium has progressed, the Age of the Imperium has grown ever darker, and much of Gathalamor's light has been since swallowed up in shadow. While many Amalathian Inquisitors have gone on to show the courage of their convictions despite this and held true to their beliefs, others have fallen by the wayside and either given up on the Amalathian principle in favour of other, more militant or more radical doctrines. Of these the Libricar movement is perhaps the Amalathians' most extreme and bitter outgrowth, born by the perceived betrayal of Gathalamor's promise by the venal and petty corruption of the Imperium's ruling classes.

"Let None be Beyond the Emperor's Wrath"

The Libricar owe the moment of their birth as a cohesive doctrine to the aftermath of the so-called 'Slighting Wars' that erupted in the Ptolemaic Reach and Crassan sub-sector regions of the Ixaniad Sector, on Calixis's Coreward border in the late 430's of M41. When the Crassan governorship fell vacant, a long burning morass of bitter noble vendettas and bloody trade feuds broke out into a series of interplanetary wars and civil conflicts that saw a volume of space blessedly untouched by direct warfare for more than three centuries bathed in blood. The wars, though brief and swiftly brought to a crashing halt by the intervention of the Battlefleet Obscurous and the Lords Segmentum, were exceptionally vicious and saw the whole of inter-sector trade and supply in nearby conflict zones reliant on their output grind to a standstill for nearly a decade. The repercussions of this economic anarchy lead directly to the failure of the second Meridius Crusade and the loss of a dozen inhabited worlds to Waaagh! Heart'rippa and a wave of other setbacks.

In the aftermath, the task of rooting out the guilty fell to the controversial figure of Inquisitor Claudia Tarshek, then a respected Amalathian of long standing. Given her writ of legatine authority by the Inquisitorial Representative to the High Lords in person and charged specifically to "Let none be beyond the Emperor's Wrath" in the matter, it was clear from the start that an example was to be made at the highest levels for whole Segmentum. With Battlefleet detachments, an entire army group and thousands of Arbites put at her disposal, and even more potently over seventy other Inquisitors placed under her warrant, rarely has such power been vested in single hands. In retrospect, perhaps it was too much.

The Crassan Purge lasted for eleven years, considerably longer in fact that the wars that had spawned it. During this time, it is said that Tarshek signed over three hundred thousand death warrants by her own hand. The principle target of the purge quickly became the Crassan sector's ancient and convoluted network of governing clans and guilds whose greed and narrow-minded arrogance had caused such ruin on worlds far removed from their own. Sickened by the political corruption and overweening ambition she found, Tarshek railed savagely and publicly against the Crassan nobility's sins. On some worlds entire aristocracies were sent to the gallows or the pyre, while on Merovincha, the primary hive was bombarded from orbit when its rulers refused admittance to her inquest. As time passed Tarshek strayed ever further from the spirit of the Amalathian doctrine if not its letter, and implored repeatedly in council and in her many missives to those Inquisitors placed under command to be as 'Libricar' to use the pre-Imperial form. She desired for them to weigh the souls and the worth of those in power on the scales of their judgement, and send those found wanting to perish.

As the purge went on and on, dissent began to breed in the ranks. Tarshek's judgement began to be called into question as she began to re-visit and re-purge worlds that had already felt her anger, often finding perceived flaws and inequities in individuals she herself had formerly put in power. Matters came to a head and spurred open conflict within the Holy Ordos itself when she and her closest coterie of allies began to target members of the Adepta and even Inquisitors present in the Crassan sector not part of her purge, often accusing them of dereliction of duty in allowing the wars to occur in the first place. Not long after the publicly bloody apprehension and trial (and the subsequent escape) of the infamous Xanthite Witch Hunter Mokartus by her followers, Tarshek's personal flagship, the Lunar Class cruiser *Magera* suffered catastrophic reactor failure and consigned both Tarshek and much of her inner circle to fiery oblivion. Whether this was pure misfortune, or the result of the actions of the wily Mokartus, the vengeance of the Crassan nobility, or even the action of the Lords Segmentum as some dissident voices in the Inquisition have since claimed—ridding themselves of tool that had outlived its usefulness—remains unknown. Certainly investigations into the matter afterward were desultory at best and the Crassan Purge was allowed to quickly die out without the impetus of its driving force and central authority.

Even though her life and the now infamous purge she lead were ended, Claudia Tarshek's legacy was to live on. She has provided both a heroic martyr and an intellectual framework for a hardened core of disaffected Amalathians ever since. Those who are driven either through conviction or bitter experience and look to bloody and retributive measures to reassert the Emperor's chosen order and defend against damaging change view her work not as a monstrous excess but a golden standard. She has also given these self-professed 'saviours' of the Imperium's traditions a name; the Libricar, and her example would become a rallying cry to them for years to come.

The Red Scourge of Sibellus

The Libricar doctrine first gained a solid foothold in the Calixian Conclave in 609.M41 during the restoration of the power and prestige of the Lucid Court remembered by Calixian scholars as the Sult Ascendancy. During this time and with the backing of the Calixian Inquisition, the newly inaugurated Lord Sector Larhanus Sult (somewhat ironically

entitled "The Great Conciliator" by his biographers) did much to pull back executive authority to his office as well as presiding over a massive expansion of the military forces under the Lord Sector's direct control. This resurgence of power in the seat of the Lord Calixis was in no small part a reaction to a dangerous corrosion of the Calixis Sector's governance and the growing and often malign influences of a burgeoning Combine Commercia and the petty nobility. A rot many traced back first to the horrors of the Brotherhood of the Horned Darkness' corruption of the Lucid Court nearly two centuries before and the shadow war that ended it.

Sult's closest ally in the Holy Ordos, and a growing power in the Conclave at the time was Inquisitor Drakos Monke, once an Acolyte of Tarshek herself and a staunch advocate of the then newborn Libricar doctrine. At Sult's invitation, Monke was charged with overseeing aggressive reforms to the governance of Hive Sibellus, a task he took to with bloody gusto worthy of the Crassan Purge in which as a young man he had taken part, and soon gained Sult's respect and favour, rapidly earning himself the appellation of the 'Red Scourge.' As Sult's star rose so did Monke's, despite growing accusations from his peers that he had become too close to the personal clique of the Lord Sector and had lost his objectivity. For several decades Monke remained a potent force within the Conclave Calixis and was grudgingly raised to the title of Lord Inquisitor, based in no small part on Sult's backing. Monke further cemented his powerbase by building up an inner circle of subordinate Inquisitors, most of which shared his doctrine to some extent, although he counted far more enemies than friends in the Conclave, particularly in the Ordo Malleus and the Tyrantine Cabal of who he seemed to carry a deep seated disdain and distrust.

When Monke died in 734.M41 (apparently of natural causes), his power and influence had long since waned as Sult himself gave way to his kinsman Marius Hax, and those who had long born grudges against Monke and his allies, (rumours of secret murder-cells used against fellow Inquisitor's operations by them had long been rife) were quick to make good on their simmering enmity. Those who did not immediately desert Monke's old inner circle and its successors quickly found themselves ostracised in the Conclave or the brunt of revenge attacks, damaging intrigues or more formal Inquisitorial scrutiny. At one particularly turbulent Grand Conclave Synod, the Libricaran doctrine and Monke's personal record was mercilessly attacked by speaker after speaker with the tacit backing of none other than Lord Inquisitor Caidin himself. The implication and result could not be in doubt; the Libricar and their doctrine were no longer welcome among the mainstream of the Calixian Conclave and those few Inquisitors that bitterly remained attached to its calling soon found themselves relegated to defacto status as outsiders, viewed with deep suspicion by their peers.

Despite this reversal of fortune, the Libricar's presence in the Calixis sector did not end. It was merely forced underground, its survival aided by the remnants of Monke's well-hidden private network and web of contacts and those that remain loyal to the doctrine are more militant than ever in their convictions.

CURRENT CONSPIRACIES

"You have strayed and been found wanting."

–Libricaran pronouncement of death

After suffering the nadir of their influence in the Calixis sector some decades ago, the small but fanatical Libricar presence in the Conclave Calixis has been slowly and carefully plotting its return and cautiously expanding reach. Until recently no more than a handful of disparate outcasts who have either hung on bitterly after the harrowing of the late Lord Inquisitor Monke's former allies or come to the doctrine on their own. However, while few in number, The Libricar are starting to organise and meet in secret once more to affirm their accords. This quiet resurgence is in no small part due to a growing perception by some Inquisitors (particularly independents of an Amalathian mindset) that the Calixian Conclave has become ever more divided and plagued by schism and infighting over recent years, while the threats to the sector have only multiplied and grown. Although by no means a coherent movement yet, nor with any great overarching plan, these new Libricar are notably distinct from their forbears in the caution they take in how loudly they profess their cause and their immediate willingness to circumvent Inquisitorial procedure and authority to enact their judgments.

The Barsapine Project

Although the Calixian Libricar have no true leader as of yet, the front runner for the role is an up-and-coming member of the Ordo Hereticus called Constantos Trevelyan. A former loyal servant of the noted Spectarian Inquisitor Globus Vaarak (himself one of the sector's most respected Amalathians). Trevelyan came to prominence during the Tranch War where he garnered notice for his single minded pursuit of the scattering witches and mutant rebels of the Pale Throng. It was in fact his experience with the corruption on Tranch that swung him to the Libricar cause, although this is a fact he has kept largely hidden. Charismatic and meticulous, Trevelyan has been in recent years been given the rank of Planetia Inquisitor for the minor hive world of Baraspine after destroying a Pale Throng uprising there and executing the infamous malefic sorcerer who sponsored it. Since taking up his post, he has quietly and covertly begun the project of building up a power base there and converting a significant percentage of Barsapine's Conclavian Council to his favoured doctrine. His plan is slowly progressing, and through a diligent mix of overt and fully sanctioned Inquisitorial vigilance and secret 'star chamber justice' administered by a Moritat assassin sub-cult he has nurtured there, the "Barsapine Project" is bearing fruit.

The Kaede Sanction

One of the first actions of the newly allied Calixian Libricar has been to mark the flamboyant Inquisitor Vownes Kaede for death. Although nominally a puritan, Kaede's eccentricities, cavalier attitude to external authorities, and repeated flouting of his fellow Inquisitors when it comes to spiriting young psykers away for service, not to mention his public and repeated criticism of the Libricar cause have all served sign his execution warrant as far as they are concerned. He is the epitome of a 'Rogue Agent' in the Libricars' eyes, wrongly tolerated by his fellow Inquisitors. Rather than come after him publicly and denounce him in conclave as they might have once done, instead the Libricar have opted to slowly pick apart his organisation and leave him vulnerable for a final death stroke. As a result several Libricar sympathisers have already moved against him and begun the task of infiltrating Kaede's support network and tracking his movements. In recent months one of his notoriously militant Acolyte bands was drawn out and ambushed while investigating a Heretek cult in the Sinophian hinterlands. They were slaughtered to a man, and the hot-blooded Kaede has vowed to avenge their deaths—little realizing the true nature of the culprits responsible or the trap being laid for him. Nor is his the only name on the Libricar's death list.

THE LIBRICAR AND OTHER INQUISITORIAL FACTIONS

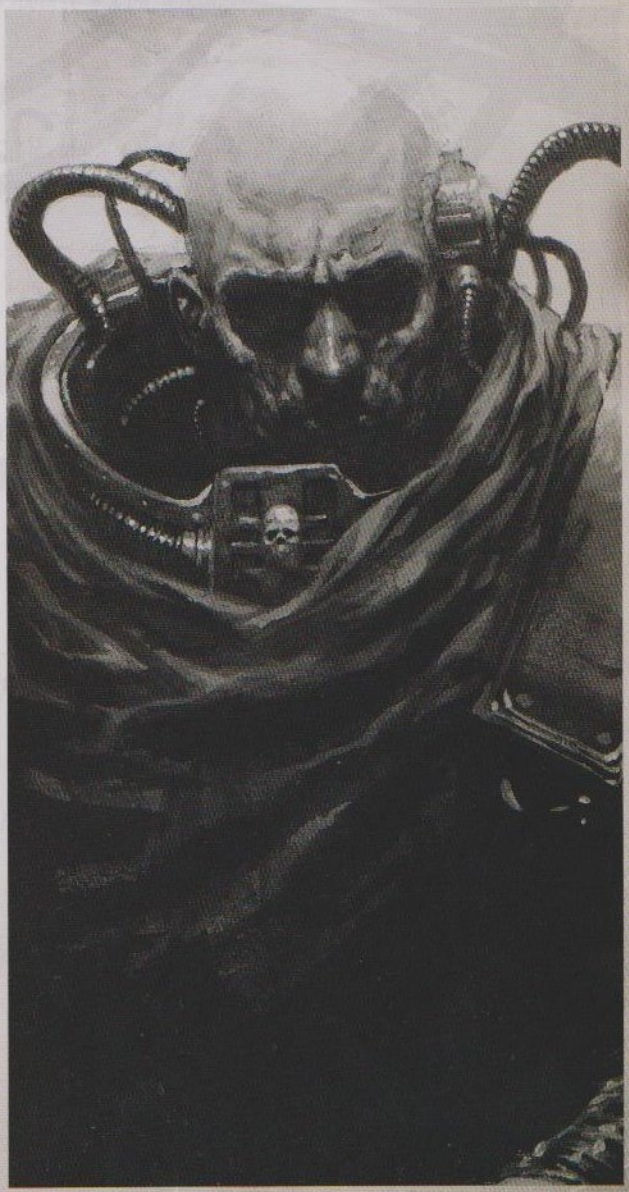
Without exception, all the major Inquisitorial factions considered Radical by the mainstream are as openly contemptuous of the Libricar as they themselves are of the other radicals, seeing them as petty and spiteful counter-reformers, mindless fanatics unworthy of an Inquisitor's rosette. Nor do they garner much open support from the puritan mainstream as a whole, with the Amalathians in particular singling them out for antipathy. The Libricar, for their part, have a strange relationship with their ideological forbears. This ranges from disgust at their weakness to a burning desire to 'prove them wrong,' while they also have little time for what they see as the deluded ramblings and wishful thinking of the Thorians. Of the other radical factions, all are considered woeful and worthy of the Libricar's ire for the simple crime of attempting to 'second guess' the will and divine plan of the Golden Throne. In particular, the Recongregators are singled out for the Libricars' righteous fury, as they are the arch-proponents of revolution and change.

In the Calixian Conclave, the disdain and outcast status the Libricar suffer has long become almost institutionalised to the point where even some known radical Xanthites are likely to get a fairer hearing than a known Libricar. This in turn has lead some of those who have come to embrace the Libricar doctrine to almost revel in the role of Inquisition outsider, and the strange freedom and enforced self-sufficiency such a position can bring despite its dangers. Other Libricar equally have learned to keep their own councils with the like-minded in secret.

ACOLYTES OF THE LIBRICAR

The Libricar pick their Acolytes by no selection criteria other than the love of the God-Emperor and the willingness to embrace wholeheartedly the faction's doctrinal standpoint on what must be done to preserve the Imperium. The assumption of the Libricar doctrine may also be arrived at naturally regardless of an Acolyte's master or their own past leanings, as the answer it offers can easily appeal to those who have been forced time and again to confront the paradox of defending a system but despising the weakness and corruption of those who populate it.

Within this broad base can be found Acolytes of every calling and speciality. The Libricar emphasis of justice without favour and the strict adherence to the Emperor-ordained traditions of Imperial power speaks most readily to those with a background in the Adeptus Arbites, members of the more independent orders of the Ministorum, as well as idealists and bitter pragmatists regardless of their origins.



THE OCULARIANS

"He that knows the future, controls the present;
He that controls the present, owns the past."

–Maxims of the Sigilite, Cantos CXII

Of all the factions of the Calixian Inquisition, the Ocularians (literally 'they who see') are among the strangest and most unfathomable, even to their peers. They are united not simply by doctrine but by obsession—knowledge of the future; of predictions and omens, patterns of events, divination and destiny, and above all, in keeping their own secrets. The faction's detractors range in their accusations from charges that the Ocularians waste their attentions on meaningless and futile attempts to predict future threats to the Imperium while blithely ignoring present dangers, to attempted witch hunts raised by hard-line puritans against Ocularians they believe have courted damnation in their desire to know the unknowable.

Ocularians are a sect whose provenance, exact origins and age are shrouded in a tangle of myth, apocryphal data, and outright contradiction. Those few that know of the Ocularians in any detail consider them to be a paranoid faction of diviners and scholar-Inquisitors whose obsession with prophecy and prognostication has long skirted outright heresy. Ocularian Inquisitors and their tightly nit coteries of Acolytes, (who feature a preponderance of Adepts and Sanction Psykers among their ranks) are generally regarded by the Conclave Calixis's powers-that-be as a useful if often erratic resource. The Ocularians' abilities and skills make them asset enough to remain tolerated despite their eccentricities and adherence to internal secrecy. This status quo does not however sit well with many of the Conclave's puritans however, and over the centuries internecine strife has occurred on numerous occasions. The Ocularians often emerge as the victor, much to the shock of the firebrands who have challenged them.

The true nature of the Ocularians' power, their history, and goals are more subtle and more terrible than even the most rabid Witch Hunter would dare believe.

FATE FORESHADOWED

The principle dogma of the Ocularian faction is that foreknowledge of the future or at least the likely variable paths of what is to come is the single greatest power in the universe. As such the Ocularians pursue this foreknowledge with a fanatic's zeal and leave no stone unturned and no avenue unexplored in pursuit of this goal. They glean their knowledge from a myriad of sources, ranging from the intimate and arcane study of history and the circadian rhythm of the Imperium's daily life, to the divinations of the Imperium's own sanctioned psykers an the reading of the Emperor's tarot. They also use more esoteric analysis of the eddying warp time-echoes picked up by Astropathic choirs and the threads of ancient prophecies disentangled from myth and falsehood. For many Ocularians even this breadth of study is not enough, and they seek more direct and malign sources of information in their obsessive quest for knowledge of what is to come; delving in to forbidden lore; studying the works and knowledge of the heretic and the alien, torturing blasphemous revelations from the mouths of xenoseer and corrupt warp-dabbler alike. The most extreme go as far as to become baleful practitioners of sorcery themselves, wheedling the truth from a daemon's whispered lies. All knowledge found within this treacherous sea of fact supposition and falsehood is compiled and correlated, and the data sifted by the faction's oath-bound savants and logisters in search of pattern and relevance. The results of these occult permutations are the meat and drink of the Ocularian Inquisitors, who guard their hard-won secrets jealously and draw their plans and intrigues with a spider's cunning and knowledge that allows them to stay several steps ahead of any that would oppose them.

A SECRET HISTORY

THE WELL-WORN MASK

The face the Ocularian faction presents to the rest of the Inquisition is a lie, but like all the best deceptions it is one that is founded on elements of truth. Few in number, and all but unheard of outside the Calixis sector, the core of the Ocularian faction is made up of a small group of seemingly disparate and unconnected independent Inquisitors, relatively few in number and without close allegiance to the major Ordos. These Inquisitors' private organisations and personal



talents are specialised in the fields of information gathering by 'unconventional means' as well as matters involving prophesy and divination. Given their insular nature and tendency to rarely operate directly in the field, even the term 'Ocularian' on some lips is used more as a label or insult than as a given term for a coherent faction. These open members of the sect are usually exactly what they appear to be, and are very useful for disseminating such knowledge deemed expedient or critical by the wider faction to give the Inquisition as a whole. These 'open' Ocularians often endure the suspicions and scant regard of their peers without complaint, but few even in the Holy Ordos guess that as far as the Ocularian faction goes they are the proverbial tip of the iceberg.

Secrets and Lies

To the Ocularian mind, it is not enough to possess knowledge of what is to come, that knowledge must also be slavishly guarded if it is to retain its power and advantage. To that end, secrecy becomes a way of life and death among Ocularian Inquisitors and their servants to an extent that makes them appear paranoid and evasive even to other members of the Holy Ordos—itself quite a feat in an organisation that thrives of secrecy and intrigue. Ocularian Inquisitors soon learn to shroud their activities through intermediaries and pawns, and where needed obscure their own goals and concerns—even against their fellow Inquisitors—with elaborate cover-stories, blackmail, and deliberate misdirection. They are not afraid to resort to callous murder and contrived accidents where they feel the mere threat of exposure is present. Within their own ranks the secrecy only deepens, and within an Ocularian Inquisitor's retinue and organisation, there will be innumerable levels of code and clearance and invisible webs of alliance and allegiance. Cells will be formed within cells, and even the most mundane information will be conducted through a system of impenetrable ciphers and secret ritual more akin to the workings of a mystery cult than an agency of the Golden Throne. Paranoia and distrust, even of one's comrades, are virtues Ocularian Inquisitors value and seek to instil in their most promising Acolytes. It can also be a survival trait as most seek to test their own servant's reliability through crisis and temptation (better a dead servant that a treacherous one). Often, Ocularians privately instruct individual Acolytes to watch and report on their fellows and their master's other agents.

The Parliament of Whispers

The uniquely tangled and secretive organisational structure of the Ocularian faction makes it impossible even for the Ocularians themselves to know their own full disposition, number, and strength, let alone for an outsider to possess such knowledge. For every open Ocularian Inquisitor or one guessed to be such by their peers, there is perhaps another who holds their true allegiance in complete secrecy, acting either as a Independent or even as a seemingly loyal member of one of the other Holy Ordos or other radical faction. In truth, these Inquisitors are fanatics to the Ocularian cause, whatever livery or mask they wear. Even taking into account their hidden membership, the Ocularian faction is small in proportion to the Inquisition itself, accounting perhaps for considerably less than one in a hundred Inquisitors within the ranks of the Ordos, but its power and reach is surprisingly great for all that. Knowledge truly is power, and knowledge is something the faction has acquired in great abundance over the millennia. Indeed, so great is the amassed lore the Ocularians possess, their greatest challenge can sometimes be sifting and processing it successfully to a given end. The faction's eyes are everywhere in the Calixis Sector (and perhaps even beyond it) and though scattered, its members—particularly those whose true allegiance is hidden—often hold positions of considerable influence. These Ocularians sit like spiders at nexuses of information flow and political power both in the Holy Ordos and Imperium's temporal authority. Particularly favoured haunts of the faction's agents include attachment to battlegroups of the Imperial Navy, oversight of Astropathic temples, and covert identities taken up at the heart of prominent worlds for just these reasons.

Divination in the Imperium

Within the Imperium there are many recognized arts of divination and divination, some accepted and controlled, others proscribed and repressed as the blackest witchery. That the future can be foretold at all is a matter of some contention, with opinion ranging from the gullible superstitions of the common mass of citizenry to the jaded disbelief of some of those wealthy and powerful enough to embrace the lie that they control their own destinies. Those educated in matters of high statecraft or the dark sciences of the empyrean know the truth; that actions, emotions, and events each have their echo in the warp, echoes that sometimes defy the human perception of time and space to reveal what has yet to come to pass. In these ghostly images and flickering shadows can sometimes be glimpsed the threads of what is, was, and perhaps what shall be. But among these echoes, interpreted by a hundred different psykers and sensitives in a hundred different ways can be found little that is unequivocal or without doubt, and each glimmer of truth must be plucked drowning from a sea of after-echoes, phantasmagoria, and mockery of daemons. The true measure of the augur, it is said, lies not in the vision but in its interpretation, and to put one's trust wholly in any one foretelling or prophesy is to court disaster. As such there are many within the Imperium's power structures, not least of all the Inquisition and the Ecclesiarchy who reject the diviner's arts entirely, either as dangerously unreliable or as treacherous warpcraft whose use has no place in the hands of the righteous. For others the potential advantage it holds makes it an invaluable resource, albeit one that must be always treated with deep suspicion and the upmost consideration before it is acted upon. For the diviner however, regardless of whether they are sanctioned by the Scholastica Psykana or a feral world bone-caster, divination has its own omnipresent risk; for in staring into the abyss, they risk the abyss staring back.

The Arts of Divination

The following contains a brief sampling of the various arts and ritual practices that the diviner's craft can be channelled and the future revealed, as defined by the Chamber Prognosticate of the Scholastca Psykana Calixis.

- **Ætheromancy:** By the direct sensory experience of the Warp. Rated as one of the most effective and most dangerous means of divination known. Proscribed outside of the ranks of the chosen of the Astropathica and the Navis Nobilite.
- **Antinopamancy:** By the use of the entrails of the living. Condemned as heretical under high Imperial law. Repeated persecution is untaken against recidivist practises in the Malfian Subsector.
- **Arithmomancy:** By the use of ritual data-cogitation or interpretative numeric analogues. Practiced by certain sects of the Cult Mechanicus, most notably the Paracellsan Order.
- **Astragalomancy:** By the use of dice. Particularly prevalent among those of void born ancestry or society. Indigenous local tradition strongly held on Fenksworld.
- **Caponomancy:** By the smoke of the pyre. In particular the religious traditions of Maccabeus Quintus holds great sacred worth in the interpretation of pyre smoke, both of the honoured dead and of purifying heretics for different purposes.
- **Lithomancy:** By the use of psychoreactive or aetherically attuned materials. Toleration varies often by material used. The stones of Sleef and fragments of Eldar Wraithbone are considered the most potent objects associated with this craft in the Calixis sector.
- **Oniromancy:** By the interpretation of dreams. The dread world of Dusk is famed for the prophetic powers of its fickle and dangerous darkling kin.
- **Onomatomancy:** By the use of 'true names.' Long forbidden by Inquisitorial authority for its links with malefic sorcery and the command of daemons.
- **Sciomancy:** By the configuration of shadows. Banned and suppressed within the Calixis sector by the edict of the Tyrantine Cabal.
- **Spatalamancy:** By the use of skin and bones. Common on numerous feral worlds (such as by the Deathsingers of Iocanthos) and in the underhives of more populous worlds such as Scintilla [Ref: **Nagomancy:** the binding of warp entities and the "souls of the dead" into talismans and fetishes of skin and bone by this practice is considered Malleus Malfecta.].
- **Theomancy:** By the hand of the divine, such as through the interpretation of the sacred texts of the Ministorum or the use of the relics of the saints. The most widely respected and accepted (and complex) form of divination sanctioned by the Imperium—the reading of the Emperor's Tarot falls into this category.

Given the paranoia and secrecy favoured by Ocularians it is no wonder then that the relations between the faction's membership of Inquisitors are at best labyrinthine and subject at worst to secret internal bloodshed and rivalry, with relative power within the wider Calixian Inquistion little indication of status within the faction itself. The most powerful Ocularian Inquisitors are skiled at the arts of blackmail, manipulation, and hidden patronage, and often influence others outside the faction while leaving no clue as to who they truly serve. Between these shadowy Ocularians, matters of interest—dark lore and the details of future history yet to pass, or dire prophecies to be thwarted or controlled—flows via forbidden and occult means. This system of correlation and dreadful design is known by those initiated into the Ocularian's fold as the Parliament of Whispers.

Wheels within Wheels

It is not enough for the Ocularians to know the future. They must control it, for what use is such foreknowledge if it is not exploited? The purpose to which the Ocularian's accrued esoteric knowledge and prognostications are put is a central issue for the faction and indeed the most common cause of rivalry and discord within its ranks. For some, particularly the diverse covens of mystics and secret colleges of adepts that populate its ranks, the quest for knowledge is a goal in-and-of-itself; the revelation of the patterns of the future and past a higher calling than any other. However, for their masters the prime goal is the use to which the revelation is put. To the Ocularians the future is mutable, containable, changeable, and sacrifices must be made so that the Imperium prospers. To the Ocularians the superiority of their way as opposed to that of other Inquisitorial factions is self-evident; the likes of the Recongregators and the Thorians are trapped in the blind dogma of the present or the remembered sins and glories of the past, all engaged in the folly of trying to fight fires already blazing, or worse, demolish the burning house to extinguish the fire, rather than the wise course of crushing the spark before the flame can catch.

It is here, in the playing of the Ocularian's long game, in their strange intrigues and obscure interventions spurred on by shadowy foreknowledge, that the nature and personalities of the individual Ocularian Inquisitors come to the fore. Most remain steadfastly loyal to the Inquisitions first rule; the defence of mankind, and use the knowledge they glean of things to come, true or false, (or potentially either) to combat the Imperium's enemies. In this, they believe they are following the direct example of the Emperor himself. To this end an Ocularian master extends their hand and on a distant world a child dies who one day may grow up to raise revolt, or a voidship's course is changed to take it out of the grasp of a pirate attack and save the life of the

potential future Imperial Saint. While at another's contrivance a series of grain shipments are diverted and starvation scourges a world, cutting back a burgeoning overpopulation that would otherwise have bred a plague that would have spread to ravage a dozen other spheres. There exists, however, a handful of Ocularians whose pursuit of power and foreknowledge has taken them into far darker territory, and whose obsessions have turned into madness and megalomania. To act on such knowledge of things yet to come can corrup the strongest soul. Ocularians chose who lives and who dies on a grand scale, not merely in response to a direct threat as many Inquisitors must, but by simple expediency and in accordance to the ebb and flow of possible events. In short, Ocularians shepherd what is to be. Such individuals, particularly those who have succumbed to the temptations of sorcery and made their own deals with darkness, can swiftly become tyrants more akin to spiteful and petty gods than Inquisitors, deciding the fates of untold millions according to their own insane whims or as a part of some plan to further their own twisted personal vision of human destiny. The Ocularians are themselves well aware of this danger, and have fought shadowed conflicts with each other in the past to bring down such 'renegade elements' in their ranks. In truth, the risk of any single Ocularian growing to wield too much power is one of the reasons the Parliament of Whispers cultivates such secrecy and paranoia both within and without the faction's own ranks.

The Dead

When the faction moves to act it does so with appalling callousness and casual brutality that belies its popular reputation within the Inquisition as a group of hidebound scholars and inveterate entrail-gazers. The secret arm of the Ocularian faction by which it chooses to carry out its red-handed work the Ocularians refer to, not without justification, as 'the dead.' These elite destroyer cells are commanded by a secret cabal of Inquisitors either believed lost by their peers or operating far from their assumed territory incognito and in absolute secrecy. They have no interest in glory or show, only in the efficient and where possible secret destruction of their targets. These cells operate with no regard of rank or station, or the collateral damage their target's death might entail. Their chosen weapons are mind-cleansed assassins, infl-traitors, enslaved witches, psychic puppets, saboteurs and whatever ignorant and disposable 'assets' might be best manipulated for the task at hand, and often prefer to arrange 'accidents' wherever possible to destroy their targets. Although few in number, they are backed by the Ocularian's extensive knowledge and the faction's predicative powers and long reach. 'The Dead' are a force that has covertly toppled whole worlds into destruction and brought down the great and the powerful in the past in order to enact their master's occult designs.

The Long Game

If the future can indeed be predicted within the variance of possibility, time itself holds patterns that can manipulated and fate can be changed, The Ocularians also well know that they are far from the only players at the table of human destiny, and while for know, their efforts have been largely limited to the Calixis sector and the dark space beyond it, the Parliament of Whispers dreams of the day its reach extends across the length and breadth of mankind's domain.

Just as they feverishly acquire knowledge and prediction, and jealously guard such foreknowledge they can obtain, the Ocularians also strive with merciless intent against those that would master the future to their own ends. Their principal opponents in this long game are manifold, and range from rogue psykers to rival Imperial factions to the manipulations of the accursed Eldar. But of all their foes, the first and most hated among the Ocularian's rivals are the servants of Chaos, and those in particular bound to the Great Ruinous Power known in many blasphemous texts as Tzeentch, the Weaver of Fates. To the Ocularians, this entity and its myriad servants are liars, hungering to mislead humanity and devour the future whilst offering empty promises of freedom and false knowledge. The servants of Tzeentch are anarchic influences that mangle the threads of time and destiny into obscene and destructive forms by their mere presence. Whilst the Ocularians sometimes allow a recidivist element or even a Chaos cult to flourish temporarily under observation in order to serve some greater goal before being culled in due course, this licence is never given to any cult or conspiracy where the Archlord of Change's servants or influence are suspected to be involved. Tzeentchian minions are a serpent too dangerous to be safely watched or put to the question, and must be destroyed as immediately and thoroughly as possible when discovered, and if the tools used to carry the termination out are several stages removed from the Ocularians themselves, so much the better.

The Price of Knowledge

The path of the Ocularian is one strewn with dangers both subtle and direct. Quite aside from the perils that any servant of the Inquisition must face in their sworn and sacred duties, the Ocularian must fear discovery as well. Exposure brings the risk of censure, suspicion, and potential destruction from fellow members of the Inquisition, the attention of the faction's enemies, and any Ocularian deemed a potentially sufficient security risk can also expect the Parliament of Whispers to order their deaths without hesitation or qualm. The greatest danger facing any Ocularian, be they Acolyte or Inquisitor, is without doubt the consequences of the quest for foreknowledge they undertake. Knowledge of what is to come is a perilous thing itself, slippery and treacherous even in the hands of those wise and experienced enough to understand its implications. No mortal mind can fully predict all the outcomes and consequences of the actions they may take in pursuit of some destiny or prediction that may be no more than twisted lies. Even the act of merely sifting the sea of data the Ocularians have access to risks madness through its sheer maddening vagueness and surfeit, and many is the

fine mind that has succumbed to lunatic obsession over the fulfilment of some obscure prophecy or been driven to utter insanity by patterns in the world around them that are no more than the fabrications of a deluded and damaged psyche. Worse still than the danger to an Ocularian's sanity their path entails, is the slow corruption of their soul. Although the swift, bright burning fall of the Xanthite or Oblationist into the grasp of Chaos is rare in the ranks of the Ocularians, slow corrosion by the Warp is an all too common hazard. This threat is particularly dangerous if the Ocularian is themselves a psyker, and even more so if, in fulfillment of their desire to know what is to come, they turn (however reluctantly) to the dark arts of the sorcerer. In these cases the path to damnation may be slower and more winding, but is usually no less certain for that.

CURRENT CONSPIRACIES

"The inability of the human mind to correlate all of its contents is mankind's saving grace and most potent weapon, for the truth is indeed a terrible thing to know."

–Attributed to the Arch-Remembrancer
Hasred Wedlore

The conspiracies and concerns of the Ocularians within the Calixis sector are many. According to their secret fractal-ciphered records, the Ocularians stood shoulder to shoulder with the sector's founders, worked their patterns of destiny in the shadow of the man who would become Saint Drusus, oversaw the fall of the ten traitor captains, and by their own lore have long stood sentinel over the dark marches of the Hazeroth Abyss to ensure things were not disturbed there that otherwise would one day set a thousand worlds burning. Regardless of the truth or falsehood of these claims they make within their own ranks, the Ocularians continue their vigils and their machinations in the Calixis sector to this day. They take care to work as far as possible in total secrecy, their actions hidden even from their fellows in the Holy Ordos, standing outside and aloof from what the see as the petty squabbling and infighting of their peers. Given to intrigues than might last generations, long-distance interference, and seemingly random interventions that may pre-empt or nudge the course of events one way or another, much of the Ocularians influence in the sector is hidden or hard to detect simply by its disconnected and often bizarre nature. Few but the Ocularians are able to glimpse the pattern among the confusion.

The Widening Gyre

To some observers the Calixis sector might seem as a relative realm of stability in a wider Imperium riven by star-spanning wars and endless bloodshed, but the Ocularians have long known the truth of the many sins and terrible dangers that fester here, a fact that they see as central for their faction's very cause and existence. The Parliament of Whispers has seen a steady increase in the number and potency of the threats than have risen up in Calixis over the years. They have seen a spreading, devouring stain of unknown cause that they have come to refer to as the Widening Gyre. With each day, it seems to consume more possible avenues of the future. By their divinations and esoteric researches, there is the indication of some coming darkness that threatens to engulf far more than a single sector of humanity's domain, an event that many prophecies and shadowed visions of what is to come reflect as a total blackness in which nothing, even light survives. Conspiracies and cults, daemon visitations, and xenos infiltrations have seemed to intensify at a startling rate in the Calixis Sector over the last two centuries—perhaps as part of this threat, or simply an unhappy coincidence. The Parliament of Whispers—whose power extends across this reach of space—has been blindsided repeatedly or seen events move simply too fast for them to control. Caught off guard, the Ocularians have seen their predictions fail and their vaunted wisdom prove inadequate to the threats that have appeared like thunderbolts from a clear sky—a situation they refuse to tolerate.

In response to these failings and the growing threat, the Ocularians have recently sought to greatly strengthen their covert and martial assets in the Calixis sector. They have accelerated plans for expansion into neighbouring sectors and are actively supporting ever more drastic means to ensure they may influence events more rapidly than they have been elsewhere accustomed, bringing with it a new militancy and willingness to kill that few can guess at. The Parliament of Whispers has decided that the entire Calixis Sector is expendable, if needs be, in order to safeguard the fate of the wider Segmentum and perhaps the Imperium itself, and it is laying its plans accordingly.

The Shadow of the Hereticus Tenebrae

The interest of the Ocularian faction in the baleful phenomena known as the Tyrant Star predates the foundation of the Calixis sector, and over the centuries, it has amassed in secret a store of information, prophecy, and direct evidence on the subject that the Tyrantine Cabal cannot guess at—and would kill to possess. As to just what 'Komus' is, the Ocularians do not claim to know, at least not fully. But they have some very terrifying suspicions indeed, and for many in the faction's ranks, it is the prime suspect as the so-called 'widening gyre' that threatens this area of space. To this end, the Ocularians have further focused their attentions on the Tyrantine Cabal and the secret Collegium Tenebrae in particular, and they have not liked what they have found. Formerly dismissing the Cabal as hopelessly divided by factional infighting and better suited to cleaning up after catastrophe than averting it, several of the Ocularian's hidden masters have more recently come to see the Cabal as a risk factor in itself, a fertile breeding ground for dissention, plot, and corruption. A force that in the future could itself become as great a threat to the sector as any it attempts to counter. For the moment, the Ocularians are making inroads into the organisations structure and operations, and has already succeeded in having several of its hidden Inquisitors join the Cabal's ranks while its more open members have made use of a few minor revelations from the

Ocularian's store of knowledge—which has led to the Cabal slavering for more. As for the Ocularian's ultimate purpose for the Cabal, only time will tell whether they will seek to manipulate its destiny into something more fitting with the faction's purpose or lead it unknowingly to destruction. Perhaps the Ocularians are playing with a greater fire than they know.

The Child of Midnight

Within the Ocularian faction, there are numerous smaller splinter groups varying in size and influence who have taken up their attentions and manipulations in the pursuit of a particular pattern of foreshadowing, or more rarely the fulfillment or thwarting a single prophecy. Once such splinter group is based around the elderly Inquisitor Katuwe Orne and his former Acolytes, several of whom have since risen to the rank of Inquisitor or occupied other positions of power themselves. For nearly three centuries, Orne's obsession has been with averting a prophecy he first learned of amid the deep vents of the warp-touched world of Sleef while battling a necrophagic witch-cult that had travelled there after foretelling of the birth of a prophesied child. This so-called 'child of midnight' would be a true abomination, an alpha-plus level psyker with the power to enslave millions and carve an empire of its own out of the Imperium's bloody carcass. Orne's vision on Sleef has led him to spend his life's work against this dark future. The relentless path he has taken has seen thousands put to death.



His detractors argue that Orne's actions were without just cause or recourse to saving souls for the Black Ship's due. Now laid low by advanced age and infirmity, he has been forced to give over much of his body to augmetics in order to survive. Orne seldom strays now from his private estates in Hive Tarsus on Scintilla and can work now only though intermediaries and those few of his former servants that share in his fanatical purpose. But despite his eccentricity and infamous bile, he remains an acknowledged authority on Calixian witch-lore and the sector's prophetic cults past and present. He is also known to keep one of the finest coteries of mystics and diviners in the Segmentum. Orne is an open proponent of the Ocularian doctrine in the Conclave and (unknown to his often deriding peers) one of the masters of the Parliament of Whispers. In secret, the hidden strength of his faction still travel from world to world at Orne's direction, their hands dipped in blood, ensuring the child of midnight is never born.

The Legacy of Blood

A name mentioned in whispers even among the Holy Ordos is that of Inquisitor Silas Marr. Attendant on Solomon's notorious Chancellery Court, Marr is a mysterious figure who seems to sit entirely outside of the power structure of the Calixian Inquisition, and follows no known dogma, faction or sub-Ordo. Whilst some high in the Conclave accord him the respectful title of 'Lord,' others refuse to even acknowledge his existence, at least publicly—some hint darkly of the near-mythical Ordo Sicarius and worse. Nor is Marr a member it would seem of the Ocularians, hidden or otherwise, but he does know them, and has long entertained an alliance of sorts with the Calixian arm of the faction. Like a spider at the heart of a vast web of agents, Marr possesses a seemingly limitless resource for information gathering whose true extent and backing remains a mystery even to the Parliament of Whispers. Marr trades facts and figures, correlations and covert murder with the Ocularians in return for the more esoteric services of their diviners, and it seems, his tolerance. One of Marr's key concerns in recent times, and one use to which he has extensively tasked the Ocularians to aid him, is in the matter of the bloodline of the infamous and long vanished Rogue Trader House of Haarlock. The matter of the Haarlock Legacy is a truly dark one, and already several of the Ocularians' finest diviners have gone mad or died simply by bending their gifts toward its end. The Legacy seems to be a whirlpool that is rapidly drawing in cults and conspiracies that it touches, and it is spreading death in its wake on ancient worlds across the Calixis sector. It is an affair in which Marr himself is interfering through various cat's-paws within the Inquisition itself, but to what end even the Ocularians do not know and await in dread to discover.

The Ocularians and other Inquisitorial Factions

Outside of their infiltration of other Inquisitorial factions in order to monitor and study them (with an eye on maintaining its own secrecy and uncovering information of interest to its foretelling of the future), the Ocularian faction prides itself (rather speciously) on having little to do the internal politicking and dogmatic wrangling of the wider Inquisition. The Ocularians see themselves as above such petty matters and consumed in pursuit of a higher calling than their brethren, content for the faction's more open membership to be underestimated and even scorned by their more shallow minded (as they see them) peers. This having been said, the faction's own intellectual tendencies make them more naturally inclined toward a broadly Amalathian perspective. Most Ocularians see themselves, on the whole, as pre-emptive protectors of the Imperium's future, rather than being akin to the more revolutionary elements such as the Recongregators or Istvaanians who advocate massive and destructive change. There are, however, exceptions within the Ocularian's ranks who would wield their foreknowledge of what is to come to more radical and dangerous ends. These individuals often conceive of plans and deeds that would make the most firebrand revolutionary baulk in order to achieve what they believe is needed to command the path of human destiny. Where the Ocularians are most at odds is against those Radical factions who tamper with dark forces or turn their hands against the Ocularians themselves. In particular, they single out those of the Xanthite (and to a lesser extent Oblationist) persuasion as dangerously blundering into matters they cannot control or comprehend. Ocularians, perhaps arrogantly, believe that only their own measured and self-limiting approach can safely handle the powers of the Warp in the Inquisition's service.



Unless it is a deliberate deceit to hide their affiliations, few, if any, Ocularians are thought of as part of the mainstream by any means by their peers in the Inquisition. Furthermore, many, perhaps owing to their embracing of divination and other esoteric arts, are not overly concerned with the trappings of the Ecclesiarchy's dogmatic approach to the Imperial Creed, preferring more personal styles of worship. This has left some of the faction's membership (open and otherwise) subject to accusations of witchery, corruption, and sorcery. As a result, events have marked several notable Puritans (such as Witch Finder Rykehuss) as Ocularian enemies, to be dealt with when a suitable opportunity arises.

The Acolytes of the Ocularians

The Ocularians choose their Acolytes carefully. Secrecy, deception, and deniability are all bywords to live by, far and above the subterfuge rife in other parts of the Inquisition. Ocularian Inquisitors rarely reveal their full goals or plans even to their most trusted servants and comrades, and most maintain an impenetrable web of conspiracy, counter-plot and falsehood to mask their true activities. Also, they will take great pains to hide the extent of their own organisation and resources even from their own followers. As a result, it is possible for an Acolyte to serve an Ocularian master, prosper and rise through the ranks—perhaps even gain the rosette of Inquisitor themselves—and never once suspect their patron's true allegiance or creed.

Within each retinue of Acolytes, the Ocularian Inquisitor will maintain a core of agents and servants who they believe are worthy of sharing at least part of the truth with, and indeed sometimes seek to subvert Acolytes from the retinues of other Inquisitors covertly to their cause. Although the faction has use for members of every calling, the nature of its dogma and its bias towards esoteric learning and the diviner's gifts has a natural tendency to bring more adepts and sanctioned psykers into its ranks than say, clerics or initiates of the Cult Mechanicus. The Ocularians prefer to control other, more disposable or direct servants with blackmail or psychic puppetry if necessary.

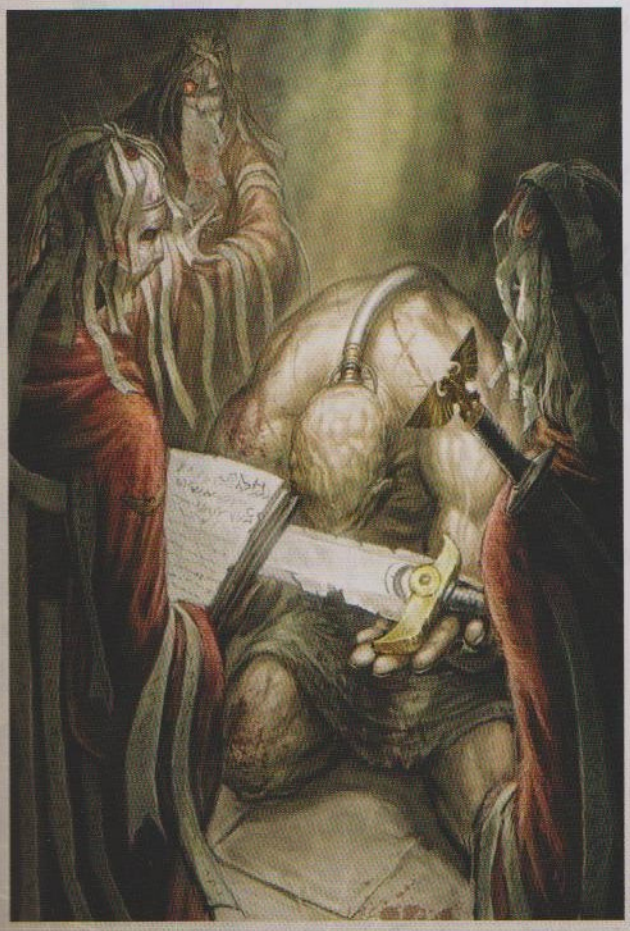
Chosen Acolytes will have the Ocularian's mysteries, ciphers, and true calling revealed to them slowly over time. Like the pieces of a puzzle, it is up to them in no small part to arrange into order. Those that show promise—and most importantly embrace the doctrine of foresight as ultimate power—will have new avenues of power and knowledge slowly opened up to them. They will be tested and watched at every stage for any hint of disloyalty, incipient weakness, or corruption. Those Acolytes who pass this trial and embrace the Ocularian's higher calling will join the faction proper and become players of the long game. These Acolytes will serve either in secret or in the open, depending upon where the Parliament of Whispers deems their talents lay. Many will find themselves placed as double agents, hiding their true allegiance behind the mask of another Inquisitorial faction, and that behind perhaps another mask, and so on. Such deceit is a vital need in the secret war to control the tangled web of mankind's future history.

OBLATIONISTS

"I am damned: it is a truth that I cannot escape. It is the greatest pain I have ever born, but it is also the truest sacrifice I have ever made in the service of the Emperor and the Imperium."

–from the confession of Inquisitor Lord Godella Morn, 745.M40

Born in the fires of the "War of Brass" that wracked the Calixis sector in late M40, the Oblationist faction is an oath-sworn society of bitter fanatics who wield warp-forged weapons, bind daemons, and command the power of sorcerers with a self-hating fury that sees all in the Inquisition but their own creed as utterly impure, corrupt, and deserving of destruction. Their infamy long outstripping their numbers, the notorious Oblationist Inquisitors and their trusted servants have determined to sacrifice themselves in the cause of the protection of the Imperium, regardless of the cost. Consumed with vengeful wrath and fanatic certainty, they gather profane artifacts, hoard forbidden knowledge, and wield the powers of the warp whilst tolerating no others to use such methods. Their intolerance of all other Radicals has much in common with the most Puritanical factions; they believe that only the Oblationists may wield the weapons and knowledge of the enemy and remain true in the service of the God-Emperor. They are unbending in their belief and ruthless in all aspects of its application.



PURE YET DAMNED

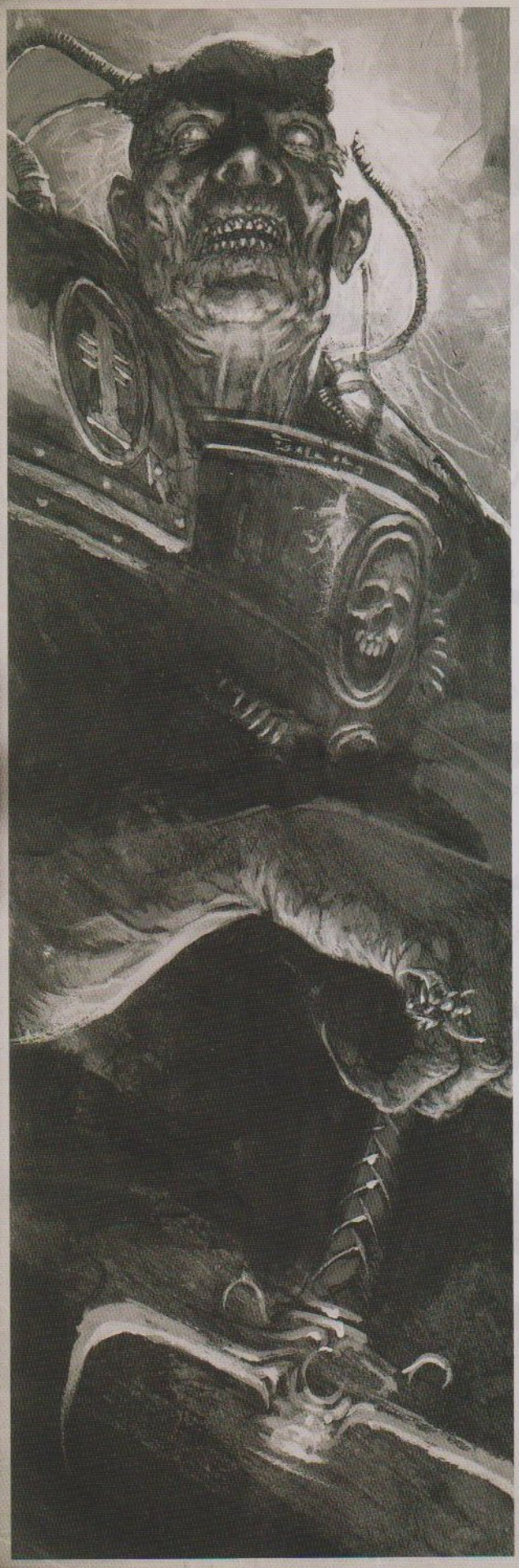
At the core of the Oblationist creed is the total conviction that the power of the warp is corrupting without exception or degree: all touched by it are damned. Yet these powers are the most powerful weapon against the enemies that conspire to consume mankind. The Oblationist sees the decision to wield daemon weapons, bind unhallowed servants, and learn the arts of the sorcerer—or abstaining from such methods—as a choice between damnation and the sacred duty to the God-Emperor. To this choice there are two possible responses: to withhold one's hands from the weapons of the enemy and remain pure and impotent, or to damn oneself by taking up those weapons. To the Oblationist, this is no choice at all; their own purity is nothing but a tool to be used or sacrificed in the service of the Emperor. A pure servant of the Emperor, who offers his very soul in His cause, may bend the weapons of Chaos to serve Mankind. Oblationists believe that others should not use Chaos, and that only those who sacrifice their purity to wield Chaos against itself in the knowledge that they are damned can truly serve the Emperor.

The Annihilation of Self

Becoming an Oblationist is an act of self-annihilation in which the past is burnt away, faith voided, and a new life begun in bitterness and the ashes of purity. Taking up the weapons of the enemy is an act that damns any that dare to experiment. Oblationists believe that their own damnation is an inviolable truth, and so see that in daring to take up the weapons of the enemy their lives are forfeit and their souls tainted. This is a sacrifice they gladly make in the God-Emperor's name.

From the moment an Oblationist takes up the weapons of the enemy, they believe they are separated from the one thing that gives their life any meaning; purity in the sight of the God-Emperor of Mankind. They are undone, and their souls shattered by what they believe they must do. In the creed of the Oblationists, the moment at which a servant of the Emperor willingly accepts damnation, and the loss of their soul, is a moment at which they must accept that they are dead. All their hopes, fears, and dreams are annihilated in the act of willing damnation. From this moment on, all that they were is gone, and they rise reborn as a damned thing of fury and righteous purpose.

Service of the Oblationist creed is one surrounded by ceremony and secrecy, their hidden rites maintained and passed down by those few who survive long in the creed's pursuit. Commonly, their ceremonies are surrounded with the mournful trappings of a funeral and replete with images of death and the damnation of the soul. Some Oblationist Inquisitors present their would-be aspirants with an unholy relic as a final test and expose them to powers both malign and terrible and see if they survive: pitting them against a bound daemon that can only be defeated by taking up an unhallowed weapon, or possessing their body with a daemon that they must force out of themselves. All of these ceremonies, however varied, culminate with the Oath of Oblation: an oath to suffer no other who is not "of the Oath of Oblation" and has truck with the unholy or profane, and to destroy



the unclean without mercy by any means and method. Many Oblationists take new names at the point that they make the Oath of Oblation to represent the passing of what they were and their rebirth among the damned.

Those of the Oath

Unlike many other factions within the Inquisition, the Oblationists function as a secret cadre of Inquisitors and their most trusted servants. At any given time, there may be no more than a handful of Oblastionist Inquistors in operation in the Calixis Sector, and the majority of those are often believed dead by their former comrades in the Ordos. Others unknowingly serve Oblationists, but trust is only ever given to those "of the Oath," and only this select number are spared the brutal judgement of the Oblationist creed. For any other who succumbs to the temptations of the warp, the heresies of the witch, or the lies of the alien are summarily sentenced to death. Even those within the Inquisition who fall to Radicalism are considered beyond redemption or toleration, even though they may use methods that Oblationists may use themselves; if an Inquisitor employs the tools of the enemy and is not "of the oath," then they are just another heretic who must be destroyed.

It is through the Oath of Oblation and the sect's other hidden rites that the Oblationist faction perpetuates its creed and traditions. One Oblationist Inquisitor will draw his apprentices from amongst his Oathed servants, school them in the nuances of the Oblationist creed, and—if they prove true in their service—he will raise them to the rosette and make them full Inquisitors. In time, these new Inquisitors will oath acolytes to the Oblationist creed, and the cycle continues, creating as it does a fine web of master-to-apprentice bonds that are what allows the Oblationist faction to survive and (on occasion) act to a common end.

Inquisitors often operate alone, relying on their own acolytes and vassals, and only rarely are drawn to work together in a cell or close knit cabal. In this matter, Oblationists are no different, and in fact usually shun the company of their fellow Inquisitors and rarely become drawn into the concerns of an established cabal or conclave. Oblationists are loath to trust and are suspicious of the purity and intent of all who are not bound by the Oath of Oblation. They do, however, on occasion operate in concert with other Inquisitors who are "of the oath," though this is often only possibly because of bonds of trust that have been hard won over time: the Oath of Oblation may bind them to abstain from destroying one another, but it does not demand the bestowing of trust.

Fury and Daemonology

Those who are bound by the Oath of Oblation are driven by a fury that can tolerate neither sin, nor deviation, nor lapse in purity. This righteous anger is fuelled by the bitterness of having lost that which others throw away. The Oblationist has damned himself and destroyed his purity so that he can serve the Emperor, while the lost and damned that he hunts have fallen not for duty, but because they are selfish, deluded, and weak. Not only are they blasphemous, but they have scorned

the purity that the Oblationist craves and can never again have. The creed and nature of Oblationists offers heretics no second chances, no redemption, only judgement and death. The primary aim, therefore, of Oblationist operations is to root out the heretic, witch, and daemon and destroy it. Given that even knowing of the heretical methods the Oblationists use could in itself cause corruption, their operations are carried out in secret so that the heresy is consumed as if by an invisible inferno that leaves no trace of its passing except the total destruction of an enemy of the Imperium.

The tools of an Oblationist and his Oathed servants may wield include those of the heretic, alien, and witch. However, above all, Oblationists are masters of sorcery, binding daemons, and the wielding of warp-forged weapons against their enemies. These weapons and knowledge have been taken over millennia from the hands and minds of heretics and are passed down from one Inquisitor to another, often at the moment that they take the Oath of Oblation. Oblationists use more than just daemon swords or tomes of dark lore to achieve their ends. Many use heretics as pawns or even unwitting servants, for these individuals are simply another form of blasphemous tool that they must use to perform their duty—but in the end, they too must be judged and purged when they have served their purpose.

OBLATIONISTS AND THE HOLY ORDOS

Oblationists are untrusting, solitary figures whose existence is likely to become threatened if their true allegiance becomes widely known in the Conclave. As a result, they prefer to pursue their own ends in isolation from their fellow Inquisitors, as public espousal of this creed courts immediate destruction at the hands of more mainstream puritans within the Holy Ordos, and the attentions of other, darker rivals. This means that most Oblationists claim no direct association with any single Ordo and pursue a lone wolf existence as roving Inquisitors which aids them in maintaining their independence of action. This is also, in part, a consequence of the implicit arrogance of the Oblationist creed which labels all others within the Ordos as either vile heretics, ineffectual weaklings, or deluded at best. Those that do not hide behind the shroud of a false death pay only lip service to wider Inquisitorial authority. They interact with Inquisitorial politics or power-play as little as possible, and seldom meet even with those of their own faction unless they see a pressing need to do so. True fanatics, they believe that diluting their sacred efforts with the concerns of other, less enlightened Inquisitors is a waste of time that is fast running out.

Of those few Oblationists that do maintain association with one of the Ordos of the Calixian Conclave, most can be found within the Ordo Malleus or more rarely the Ordo Hereticus, but keep their true creed a guarded secret from their fellows. The Malleus Oblationists view threat of Chaos as the Great Enemy that stands above all others in the path of human survival. The destruction of daemon-cults is an obsession for these Oblationists that overrides other lesser hatreds, and of course the resources of the Ordo Malleus also offer them opportunities to obtain new and greater weapons to wield against the enemies of the Imperium. In the past, a handful of Oblationists who are particularly concerned with the corruption of their brethren find their seat amongst the witch hunters of the Ordo Hereticus. There are, however, a few Oblationists who see the enemy without as a force of subtle corruption and as a powerful threat. These Oblationists turn their daemon-forged blades and creed of bitterness against the conspiracies and dark legacies of alien races both living and dead.

MONODOMINATION

Monodominants are a Puritan faction of the Inquisition that believes the only way the Imperium of Mankind may survive is if everything else is destroyed. To the Monodominant, there can be no tolerance of heresy, no matter its degree or kind, and the only possible punishment for heresy is death. Monodominant Inquisitors are utterly ruthless, unforgiving, and militant. They will meet any form of sin or deviation with swift and final judgement. It is a philosophy that allows for no margin of toleration and places Monodominants into dispute with any other Inquisitor who does not share their uncompromising view. Often, Monodominants come into direct conflict with any Inquisitor who is Radical in their outlook. The Monodominant and the Oblationist factions would find that they see threats to the Imperium and the solution to those threats in a remarkably similar way—were it not for the Oblationist Radical methodology that makes them enemies.

A SECRET HISTORY

Unlike many other factions, the origins of the Oblationists can be traced back to a single individual and a single moment in time. In 738.M41, the so-called "War of Brass" erupted, engulfing the Calixis Sector in one of the worst conflicts seen since the days of the Angevin Crusade. The hive worlds of the Gelmiro Cluster fell into sedition following the charismatic leadership of a figure calling himself the "Emperor of Brass," debasing themselves into the worship of the Ruinous Powers. Heavily militarised, the renegades quickly sponsored and armed rebel groups on worlds throughout the sector. When counter-attacked, these groups revealed the hand of dark forces drawn from the Eye of Terror in their number. For five years, the entire sector was dragged into bloody warfare, and the Calixian Inquisition itself suffered heavy losses in the fray. During the aftermath, the Calixian Conclave became riven by schism and division in its own ranks.

Following the War of Brass, the chief tenants of Puritanism in the Calixian Conclave were shaken to the core by the excommunication and execution of Inquisitor Lord Godella Morn. Morn was a noted Monodominant who had based every endeavour of her long and distinguished career on unbending Puritanism and intolerance of any deviation or heresy. The event that was to trigger this crisis of belief was

the discovery that Morn had been practicing sorcery and the malefic arts in secret for centuries as a secret Xanthite of fearsome ability. She had made pacts with dark forces to grant her ever-increasing power. Her denunciation before a gathered Conclave of Inquisitor Lords drawn from across the Segmentum was extraordinary: far from denying the accusations, Morn confessed that she had embraced the corruption of the Warp and used the tools of Chaos, xenos, and heretics as her own. She also, however, fiercely professed her belief in the tenants of Monodomination. She was, she said, an "Oblationist" rather than a fallen Xanthite; she had willingly damned herself so that she could act on her beliefs "in truth rather than in wishful dreaming." Inquisitor Lord Morn faced her excommunication and execution by immersion in molten brass without flinching.

The heresy and death of Godella Morn sent a shockwave through the Calixian conclave of the day. Inquisitors of all ranks could not comprehend how such a stalwart puritan could countenance such a heretical doctrine as she had professed. Many, after reflection, came to the conclusion that Chaos is infinitely subtle and its arts can claim the brightest and most pure, and saw Morn's fall as an object lesson and memento mori. Many Radicals secretly laughed, venturing that the truth of their philosophies come to all in time, and that Puritanism can only be indulged by those blind to the war that the Inquisition wages. The story of Morn's fate and her professed beliefs, however, had a profound effect on a small core of Puritans in the Conclave that was both traumatic and transforming: Inquisitor Lord Morn had been of such complete dedication to her task that her words and actions could only be the product of madness. Yet Morn had shown no sign of madness. Quite the contrary, she had seemed rational and clear throughout her excommunication and went to her pyre willingly for her crimes. These Inquisitors argued that if she was not mad, then her arguments and final testament must be considered, and as they saw her consumed in molten fire, many faced the grim realisation that she must be right—the choice they faced was between wilful damnation and ineffectual idealism. In that moment, in the death of Inquisitor Lord Morn and her challenge to the paradox of Puritanism, the Oblationist faction was born in fire, death, and sorrow.

Death in the Ordos

The first generation of Oblationists to come after the excecuted Lord Inquistor Morn were like most other factionists; individuals seized by conviction and individual flair. Most were previously staunch Puritans—the force of Godella Morns proclamation, that the power of the warp was utterly corrupting and that those that used it, even in necessity were damned, were taken as central pillar of the radical path they had committed themselves to. Many of the nascent Oblationists were consumed by the powers that they tried to wield—going mad or falling into shadow and thralldom to dark gods. Those that survived were secretive fanatics of the most unforgiving kind. They fell upon each other with sorcery, occult weapons, and hatred. Each saw the other not as bound by the same creed but as a corrupt and worthy only of death. Many Inquisitors and acolytes, seen as tainted by this new brand of fanatic Radicals, were slain.

The survival of the Oblationist creed amongst the Calixian Inquisition stood for some decades on a knife edge, poised either to consume itself in its own fanaticism or grow and strengthen enough to exist beyond its violent birth. The change that allowed Oblationists to survive came in the form of a nameless Inquisitor who saw what must be done to end the bloodbath. Firstly, this unknown founder hid his identity and the true nature of his conviction beneath a mask that has never been discovered, a lesson he passed on to others. Secondly, he saw that there was only one way for Oblationists to not slaughter each other, and that was by binding them together by a common oath that put those who had taken that oath outside of the necessity of being purged. Finally, this nameless visionary saw that neither secrecy nor unity could be achieved with any who called themselves Oblationists at that time. There was only one answer: they must all be killed. One by one those who had cleaved to Oblationism were eliminated in a slow campaign of discovery and murder that spanned two centuries. In the end, the ground was cleared—only one, nameless Oblationist still existed. That nameless one tutored others in the creed of the Oblationist and taught them the dark arts that they must wield. In so doing, each apprentice in Oblationism was bound by an oath; the Oath of Oblation. In secret, master taught apprentice and bound him with oaths, and in turn, the apprentices became masters and bound others to the Oath. Thus, through murder and secrecy, Oblationism survived.

The Purgation of the Serrated Query

Oblationism is rare and relatively new creed, and its adherents did not appear within the bounds of the Calixis Sector until many centuries after the final battles of the Angevin Crusade. One of its first acts (once it had gained some measure of stability) was to begin a secert war of annihilation with one of the oldest and most intransigent recidivist organisations within the sector—the Serrated Query. Inquisitors Ixon and Cordul had dedicated their careers to the complete destruction of the Serrated Query. Having hunted them across the stars, the pair came to the Calixis Sector and found a royal nest of their prey. Upon arrival, they joined the fledgling Oblationist sect to seek the means to do what they had never been able to do before—meet and vanquish the cult on its own terms. With the help of their new allies, the two Inquisitors worked in silence and shadows. They unleashed a flock of their most trusted and deadly servants and charged them with the destruction of every last member or associate of the Query.

This shadow reaping occurred at the turning of the 801st year of the 41st millennium, and for several months, none within the Serrated Query would have realised that a murderous force was bearing down on them like the silent fall of a headsman's axe. The oathed acolytes of Ixon and Cordul needed knowledge, the kind of knowledge that takes months or years to gather. Rather than waste time, they went to work obtaining it from those most likely to have it—the Inquisitors and acolytes of the Calixian Conclave. Kidnapping, torture, theft, and the psychic flaying of truth from minds, were the primary tools employed in this pursuit. So efficient were

acolytes were so efficient that they obtained all the necessary information for the real operation whilst the Calixis Conclave struggled to respond.

The servants of Inquisitors Ixon and Cordul had all they needed and moved like a murderous ghosts through the Query's membership and allies. Nobles, merchants, and crime bosses vanished. Merchant craft and war ships were destroyed. The corrupt pawns and secret allies of the Serrated Query went into hiding against the onslaught, only to be assassinated and hunted down in seemingly impossible circumstances. So grave was the damage to every level of the Serrated Query in the Calixis Sector that their complete extinction seemed inevitable. Then, just before the final death blow could be struck, the onslaught stopped. Overnight, the two Inquisitors and all their secret acolytes had vanished as if consumed by some great predatory beast disturbed from its slumber by their activities.

CURRENT CONSPIRACIES

"The Strong are Strongest Alone."

–The Tyrant of Badab

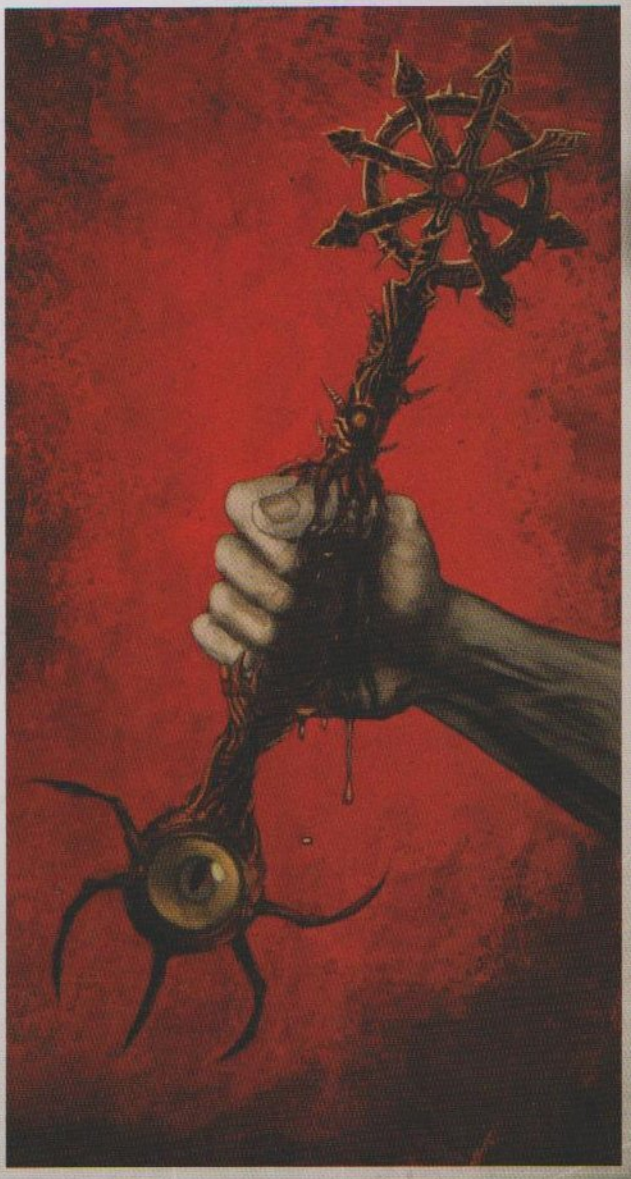
The Oblationists are very few in number, and adherents to their creed tend towards a narrowness of view that is like the focused blast of a lascannon; searingly bright and destructive, but brief. There are few active Oblationists at any one time, and therefore, the efforts of these Inquisitors and their acolytes are more concentrated and definite than many of those of other more numerous factions. Like many others, the Oblationists are concerned with the manifestation of the Tyrant Star. However, their focus is not that of others who are racing to understand, tame, or thwart the baleful power of the Black Sun. Instead, the Oblationists' current conspiracies focus on matters that are central to the obsession of their creed—the destruction of the corrupt within the Holy Ordos and the slaying of the greatest beast that threatens the domains of the God Emperor of Mankind.

The Annihilation of the Calixian Conclave

To a significant proportion of the Oblationists, it is a clear and manifest truth that the Calixian Conclave and its associated cabals, covens, and factions are becoming increasingly corrupt and led into damnation and disaster. The tendrils of corruption they see are imbedded deep within the flesh, minds, and souls of almost all the Inquisitors within the sector, and nothing short of a total purge will rid the taint. The true nature and cause of this slowly spreading taint is unknown to the Oblationists, but understanding it is not required. Realising that it is there is enough for them. For the most extreme Oblationists, there is only one possible solution—the Calixian Conclave must be annihilated. There may exist some few who are untainted or who do not realise they are thralled to ruination, but that is not enough to call into question what must be done. It is a bitter undertaking, but Oblationists are eaters of ash and sorrow, willing to do what must be done and pay the price of damnation and pain. Such an undertaking is not achieved swiftly, for those of the Oath in the sector are few and cannot hope to hunt down and kill all of their brother and sister Inquisitors one at a time. So, in the dark, the most fanatical and destructive of their number are seeking to bring about cataclysmic events that they hope will necessitate drawing together the conclave in one place and time. At that moment, the Oblationists will be ready to do what they must, for the sake of all.

The Pursuit of the Servants of Twilight

Oblationists have made it their cause to hunt a quarry that they believe threatens the existence of everyone and everything within the Calixis Sector. This enemy is considered by even their fellow Inquisitors to be a phantom, a myth, or a nightmare tale told by those who are themselves things of nightmare.



This quarry may have no true name, but those who whisper its legend call its agents the Servants of Twilight. The Servants of Twilight haunt the dreams of heretics and monsters, and are said to be possessed of terrible power. Theirs is the power to see your every thought, assume any form, kill at a glance, and steal the sun from the sky should they wish it. To most within the Holy Ordos, the Servants of Twilight are nothing more than a tale that has grown in the telling, and been lent credence by heretics using it as a cloak for their own designs. To some, however, the Servants of Twilight are no myth but the greatest of threats hidden beneath the absurdity of the tale. The Oblationist pursuit of the Servants of Twilight is championed by Antonia Mesmeron and her disciples, and it is for this elusive quarry that the Daemonhunter is willing to risk exposure and destruction at the hands of fellow Inquisitors. Whilst these cults are considered by most as nothing more than a story or, at best a cover for some more established threat, Mesmeron understands the terrible truth—as only one who has ripped that lore from a daemon's lips can.

The Oblationists and other Inquisitorial Factions

The Oblationist creed only allows for any in the wider Holy Ordos who have not taken the Oath of Oblation to be considered either feeble and wilfully blind to the truth, or corrupted and damned by their radicalism. As such, the relationship of the Oblationist faction to any other within the Inquisition is at best one of contempt on their part and usually one of antagonism, if not outright hostility. The two factions that can easily be counted as the Oblationists' most obvious and violent enemies are the Monodominant Puritans and the Xanthite Radicals. Oblationists share Monodominant fanaticism and intolerance of all forms of sin, corruption, and deviancy. To Monodominants, however, the Radical methods of the Oblationist make them just as corrupt as any other Radical, and their professions of sacrificing their purity are nothing but the excuses of a heretic who lies even to himself. Oblationists, in turn, are wary of Monodominants, but see them as well meaning but naive children who cannot see the sacrifices that serving the God-Emperor requires. Xanthites, by contrast, are corrupt and vile things who claim to be able to wield the powers of the warp and remain pure. To the Oblationist—who is eaten by the bitterness of having sacrificed his purity—the arrogance and blindness of Xanthites provokes as much anger as their methods. Ironically, these methods are much like those of the Oblationists themselves.

Other Puritan factions such the Amalathians or Thorians view the Oblationists as crazed and supremely dangerous fanatics who are blessedly a minor feature of factionalism with the Inquisition. In turn, the Oblationists barely see the concerns of these factions as worthy of comment. The same indifference cannot be said to exist between other Radical factions and the Oblationists. Most Radical factions who make use of proscribed knowledge, blasphemous allies, or forbidden technology view the Oblationists with a mixture or fear and contempt. They have fought a number of vicious battles for survival against an Oblationist's onslaught, Xanthites being the faction's favoured prey above all. The philosophies and designs of the Recongregators and Istvaanians are less inflammatory to Oblationist—not usually being tainted with direct manipulation of the powers of the warp or xenos profanity—but this makes them, to the Oblationists mindset, merely the weakest form of heretic, still worthy of cleansing for their sins but hardly priority targets in the main.

Acolytes of the Oblationists

The Acolytes of Oblationists can be divided broadly into two camps: those who have taken the Oath of Oblation and those who have not. Those who are not of the Oath may know that they serve the Inquisition as Acolytes but are ignorant of the secret Radicalism of their master or mistress. These Acolytes operate in cadres that usually resemble those of a Puritan Inquisitor and will include those of staunch faith in the Emperor, heroic nature, and who have no tolerance of that which is heretical or corrupt. These Acolytes are kept separate from their Inquisitor's other, more trusted brethren who have taken the Oath of Oblation and wield forbidden weapons and knowledge. In time, should the unknowing Acolytes prove to be of the correct rigour of faith and dedication, they too may be chosen, and the truth revealed to them.

The second variety of Oblationist Acolyte are those bound to their master's Radical creed and have taken its cause as their own. Formed into groups called Oathed Cadres, these groups act as the Oblationists' strong right arm. These cadres are made up of holy warriors clad in warded armour and bearing daemon-bound weapons, sallow priests who study the profane and wield the powers of sorcery, and fanatic assassins and burnt-out savants all but crippled by the secrets they have bear. To most Oblationist Inquisitors, the men and women of their oath-sworn cadres are both their loyal apprentices and unflinching comrades in arms, individuals worthy in their master's sight who have followed him willingly into damnation out of duty to the God-Emperor—not mere disposable servants to be sacrificed or squandered without cause.

Beyond both the unoathed and sworn Acolytes of an Oblationist, the faction is often apt to use unwitting hirelings and mercenaries as both agents and, where needed, cannon fodder. These ignorant servants are nothing to the Oblationist Inquisitor but an expedient set of tools with which he can accomplish an end. Favoured minions in this regard include hired guns, criminals, and even heretics, mutants, and witches. Their real master's nature unknown to them, each is led to believe that he serves instead a powerful criminal faction, noble house, or even a cult rather than the Holy Ordos. Although these recidivists and mercenaries may be the service of an Oblationist for years, even decades, they are ultimately expendable. Once their usefulness has ended, most will be simply eliminated by the Oblationists' Oathed Cadres or betrayed to the authorities. After all, the cause they serve does not excuse their crimes.

PHAENONITES

"In blood consecrated, in grief blessed, in iron bound, in tears bathed and with souls fed! Bless'd engine of woe, I abjure thee: Awake!"

–The Incantation of Anima Malifica

This malevolent Xanthite splinter faction, reviled even by their fellow radicals, has long been declared excommunicate traitoris by the Ordo Malleus. Once thought utterly destroyed in more recent years, the heretical Phaenonite creed has reared its head again and taken dangerous new shape in the Calixis Sector. Unlike some Radical factions whose existence is at least tacitly tolerated within bounds by their peers in the Holy Ordos, the Phaenonites stand as a declared enemy of mankind. To harbour one of their number, even for an Inquisitor, is an inviolable death sentence. Cast out and persecuted for their unthinkable blasphemies and their unprincipled callousness towards the Imperium's citizenry, the renegade sect has been charged with the breaking of commandments laid down in the Imperium's very early days and of turning their faces from the God-Emperor's divinity. The fact of this faction's survival—despite the might of both the Holy Ordos and the Adeptus Mechanicus being turned against them—is a testament to their insidious nature and the crucible of dark power at their core. Just what governing force or intelligence first founded and perhaps is still guiding the Phaenonites' actions remains unknown even to the high councils of the Inquisition.

The faction's first powerbase at the very edge of what would later become the Calixis Sector was brutally smashed and their ranks purged from the Inquisition and the Adepta with great effusion of blood. However, their cancerous creed did not die. The Phaenonites' long-slumbering evils have come again, drawn to a sector already beset by troubles and conspiracies, ill-prepared to confront their subtle and dark powers.

Since rumours first began to be heard of their appearance, the Phaenonites have very slowly gained fresh converts to its dread cause both within the Inquisition and among other powerful hereteks and renegade groups within the Calixis Sector. In their current incarnation, the Phaenonites operate as pure conspirators, insidious whisperers, and murderous shadows. Hiding their presence and actions behind shrouds of secrecy and deception, they are swift to conceal their true nature behind the persona of loyal members of the Inquisition, or by simply leaving no witnesses alive to tell of their passing.

There are few Radical factions of the Inquisition more hunted, more loathed, or more deadly.

Since their excommunication and purging more than two millennia ago, Phaenonism is thought to have become a growing influence in the Calixis and Ixaniad Sectors, where their operatives have been engaged slowly spreading their corrupt influence and questing after dark lore and forbidden artefacts to further their power. One thing is certain; if the Phaenonites are slowly being reborn, it is a matter of dire import for a Calixian Conclave already consumed with intrigues and threats aplenty of its own. Where the Phaenonites pass, history has shown that hell and death follows with them.

THE ART OF DESTRUCTION

No mere group of shadowed conspirators and outlaws, Phaenonism is also an ideological doctrine, and its followers believe fanatically in the fundamental rightness of their cause. Inquisitors (Radical or otherwise) are by their very nature usually men and women of conviction, and the Phaenonite creed is centred on the mastery of the warp via technology for a reason beyond the power it may grant—for the future fate of all humanity. For those that come to it, the Phaenonite path offers the only viable way that mankind can survive the horrors and growing threats that assail the Imperium on all sides. For them, the weapons and tools of the past and the prating ideologies that would offer no more than a retreat into superstition and fear are antiquated and useless. A truly visionary way is required to ensure the future dominion of existence rests in human hands.

At the core of the Phaenonite philosophy is the harnessing of the warp and the enslavement of the daemon by use of arcane technological processes whose nature has been long forbidden to the Imperium. The doctrine—which as an outgrowth of the Xanthite ethos which focused on a technological method rather than an entirely occult one to achieve their goals (as the Xanthites are wont)—rapidly and quickly mutated into something far worse, taking onboard the



most extreme doctrines of Monodomination. The Phaenonites quickly cast aside the creed both of the God-Emperor and the worship of Chaos, and instead came to the conviction that mankind's destiny lay as a fusion of man and machine, united and made immortal by the limitless and protean energies of the warp. If the Phaenonites can be said to have any god at all it is ambition, for they do not bend their knees to worship but crave instead to be worshipped, to crush the cosmos beneath their heel and become lords of all that is or will be.

The Phaenonites see the Imperium reborn under their leadership and see humanity shaped in their hands as clay on the potter's wheel to become the ultimate masters of machine, flesh, matter, and spirit. For this to come to pass, the Phaenonites know that the body politic of the Imperium must be decapitated and replaced, and the deluded slaves of the Ruinous Powers must be destroyed entirely to make way for their new order.

Recognising that their numbers are few and their enemies many, the outlawed faction's first goal has been to acquire and develop superior machineries of destruction in order to accomplish their ends. This quest has lead them to gather the darkest of hereteks and renegades to their hidden forces and pursue knowledge and malevolent invention unfettered by the dictates of the Imperium, the ancient traditions of the Adeptus Mechanicus, or the restrains of morality and sanity. In doing so, they have fast forged for themselves tools and weapons of shocking power and also great risk even to themselves. These weapons are made all the more dangerous by the Phaenonites who use them with all the subtlety and guile that might be expected of members of the Inquisition.

Weapons of the Phaenonites

The Phaenonites' power is best manifested by their brutally efficient armaments and their skill in wielding them. To this end, their organised cells have a tendency to stockpile weapons and equipment, and the members boast a high degree of individual augmentation, both of a mundane and more esoteric quality. As a result, Phaenonite Inquisitors and their Acolytes rarely take to the field unprepared, often concealing their most fearsome wargear, daemonically-infused cybernetic systems, and warp-augmented weapons until they are needed, giving them an unforeseen and terrifying advantage over their foes.

Although they have been known to make use of ancient Terran and xenos designs, the principal obsession of the Phaenonites is the fusion of technology with the occult lore they have acquired, thereby investing it with the power of the warp—a development they consider ultimately superior to all other systems. Though dangerously unpredictable, this often-nightmarish category of devices is referred to as maletek by the Adeptus Mechanicus and can prove extremely effective and difficult to counter. Such technology can range from bolt ammunition that unleashes mutating Chaotic energies to aetheric signal generators capable of disrupting psychic powers and decimating psykers over a wide area. One of their more recent developments is rapidly becoming a signature—the Maletek Stalker. It is an assassination engine, a human killer or death cultist which has been augmented with proscribed bionic systems and graven with runes of occult power, combining a human's mastery of lethal skill with unyielding metal and a daemon's fury.

A Secret History

The Death of Phaenon Prime

The Phaenonite Schism can be traced to a recent and specific point in space and time; the rebellion of the Vanderveken Trinity in 367.M39 during the bleakest periods of the Angevin Crusade. The Cluster was situated in an otherwise desolate area of space at the edge of former domains of the perished Madragora sector, along the Spinward edge of Ixaniad and what several bloody years later would be formerly recognized as the Calixis Sector.

A trio of systems centered around the isolated hive world of Phaenon Prime suffered from pirate activity, xenos slaver raids, and much worse—the region was often cut off from aid by warp squalls—its situation only worsened during the crusade years as what little Imperial protection it received was cut away to aid in Angevin's wars.

Increasingly embittered, Phaenon Prime's Lord Commander declared the trinity's secession from the Imperium during the Crusade's weakest ebb. He bargained that the authority's preoccupation with the bloody toll of the ongoing conquest of the Calyx Expanse would protect him from swift retribution. The renegades soon crushed any resistance from their neighbors with the aid of ships from their new pirate allies, and in an orgy of bloodletting, he threw down the blessed icons of the Ministorum and raised the foul idols of Chaos in their place. However, the traitor governor of Phaenon Prime had badly miscalculated the Imperium's response.

Already on the way to reinforce the floundering Crusade effort was an Inquisitorial taskforce under the command of the notorious Xanthite and warlord Kobras Aquairre. Along with his own private warfleet and a strike cruiser of the Charnel Guard Astartes Chapter, Aquairre was quickly re-diverted to quell the rebellion with extreme prejudice. Smashing aside the raider ships and crippling the planetary defenses, the Lord Inquisitor's judgment on Phaenon Prime was as harsh as it was merciless, and he deployed the Life Eater virus without delay. A hive world of fourteen billion souls was slaughtered in punishment for their pride and blasphemy unto the last living thing. In the aftermath, Aquairre deployed a force of several Inquisitors from his personal staff and their retinues as well as an Adeptus Mechanicus detachment from his forces to the now-dead planet in order to discern what could be found from the wreckage. He was particularly interested in the daemon-tainted war machines deployed against the crusaders during their assaults. Kobras Aquairre swiftly moved on to join the war for Calyx, restless as ever for new conquests and fresh horrors with which to do battle. By his order, Phaenon Prime was given over as a dominion of the Holy Ordos. After the Crusade once again gathered strength Rimward and pushed into the terrors of its Hazeroth and Adrantis phases, the planet—emptied of life and conveniently isolated—quickly began to be used as repository for captured weapons

Beyond the Emperor's Grace

Unlike many of the other Radical factions presented here the Phaenonites have been rendered Excommunicate Tratoris by the High Lords of the Inquisition itself. This fact makes the Phaenonites far more than suspect Radicals whose individual actions might lead to their destruction by the Holy Ordos; it casts them squarely among the foremost of the Imperium's enemies, unprotected in any way by the rights and authority that an Inquisitor or their servants would usually possess. In short, for the Phaenonites, there is no 'benefit of the doubt,' no right to dabble with what for others is forbidden, and no right of trial before the Conclave. If any member of the Holy Ordos, from Lord Inquisitor to the lowliest Acolyte, falls under the accusation of being a Phaenonite or of harbouring or aiding them—however unwillingly—they can expect only death and the hands of their fellow Inquisitors. In becoming a Phaenonite, or even in serving one, an individual (no matter what their rank or connections) has essentially embraced a sentence of death. They must be prepared to stop at nothing and balk at no act of violence or betrayal in order to maintain their secret and in doing so survive.

Likewise, if others confront a Phaenonite or uncover their intrigues during the course of a wider investigation, they must be prepared to face an enemy of great subtlety and power who will stop at nothing in order to defend themselves and will never submit to the Holy Ordos for judgement. With nothing to lose, Phaenonites are more than willing to unleash their darkest arts in order to make good their escape or to carry out their mission, regardless of who or how many die in the process.

and prisoners to be studied by the cabal of Xanthites drawn to the distant, dead world.

The Phaenonite Schism

Within a space of only a few decades after Phaenon Prime's establishment as an Inquisitorial base, disquieting reports began to reach the senior Inquisitors both in the Crusade forces and the nearby Ixaniad sector that darkness and heresy had taken hold on the dead world. Troubling reports of the impiety and strange doctrines being espoused there were placed by Adepta and Inquisitors using the world as a way station, whilst covert investigation by agents of the then newly founded Calixian Conclave reported that a number of self-professed 'Phaenonite' Inquisitors based there had begun traveling through nearby sectors and slowly gaining converts to their cause. With measured subtlety, the Calixian Conclave chose a known 'renegade' among its numbers—Inquisitor Phibes (an ardent Xanthite whose actions had earned him official censure in the past)—to infiltrate this growing faction and uncover the truth. Phibes and his acolytes conducted their intrigues for more than three years, traveling between



Kobras Aquairre

One of the most feared and controversial figures in the history of the Calixian Holy Ordos, Kobras Aquairre was almost unique in holding both the ranks of Lord Inquisitor Malleus and the Warrant of a Rogue Trader, the latter belonging to him by a bloodline reaching back into the age of the Imperium's founding. For nearly five centuries, his flagship *Omega Thule*—itself a pre-imperial relic—led Explorator expeditions and crusades of purgation throughout the far reaches of the Segmentum Obscurus. Under special sanction from the Segmentum High Conclave, Aquairre hunted down such renegades and arch-traitors who believed that by fleeing the Imperium's limits they had also escaped its wrath. Drawn to the Calixis Crusade in its later phases, he is known to have fought a bitter bloodfeud with the Rogue Trader lines of Haarlock and Majessus for the spoils of the war. After the sector's founding, he made it his base for further excursions into the Koronus Expanse. Increasingly erratic and some say insane, his fleet was reported lost against unknown xeno-forces after he ventured deep into the blighted area of space known as the Rifts of Hecaton at the edge of the Halo Stars circa 011.M40. His ultimate fate remains unknown, but many dark legends cluster around his name still.

Phaenon Prime and the still turbulent corners of the newly founded Calixis Sector where the Phaenonites' agents were at work. For a long period of time, Phibes was considered missing and presumed dead. However, he returned unexpectedly to the newly constructed Tricorn palace on Scintilla with the hounds of hell at his heels, his flesh burned down to the bone and kept alive only by the fruits of his own warped genius. His testimony to the Conclave revealed the awful extent and enormity of the Phaenonite's crimes and heresies; chief among which were the denial of the Emperor as divine, and the pursuit of warp-tainted sciences and the horrors of the Dark Age of Technology. Phibes also revealed that the Phaenonites had infiltrated and taken over several fledgling Chaos cults, Heretek cabals, and renegade warbands that had been thrown up on the edges of the new sector to further their dark aims. The Phaenonites had been the hidden forces behind numerous pirate attacks and raids on Adeptus Mechanicus facilities in order to feed their requirements for fuel, ammunition, and other such vital supplies. Phibes explained that Phaenonite agents had suborned several fledgling governments in the sector and used ongoing pacification conflicts at the edges of the Halo Stars in order to conduct their blasphemous experiments. There, they had secretly tested corrupt weapons directly against human Imperial colonists. Worse yet, they had armed the forces of the archenemy from behind veiled intermediaries in order to test the efficacy of their designs.

In response, the Phaenonites and any who aided them, whatever their degree or station, were declared Excommunicate Traitoris by the a specially convened Grand Council of the Calixian Conclave in 427.M39. This sparked an immediate schism and open warfare within its own ranks and that of the Conclave Ixaniad. A bloody and merciless purge within the local Inquisition soon followed along with a supporting Carta of Extermination ratified by the Chamber Inquisitorial of Holy Terra whose writ still holds to this day.

As for Phaenon Prime, some within the Malleus judged that the corruption of so many hardened to the wiles of the Warp so quickly could be not be coincidence. Some dark force dwelled there, they believed, although whether it had always been so or that something that had been brought there to fatally spread its influence like a virus remained unknown. In any case, the Priesthood of Mars were happy to grant the Calixian Conclave's' request. By the dictate of the Fabricator General himself, they marshalled the power of their city-sized voidships and tore a moon from its natural orbit to strike Phaenon Prime, smashing the planet to fragments.

The Shadow of the Dark Mechanicus

The Adeptus Mechanicus hold their darkest hatred for those renegade forces of their own brethren that turned on them during the Horus Heresy, traitors who live on to this day as the Dark Mechanicus. The forbidden histories of those terrible days show that the destruction wrought by the traitors on Mars and in a dozen other spheres of war was unparalleled, and have left a stain of the soul of the Omnissiah's priesthood that has never been cleansed. In the aftermath of the Warmaster's fall, many of the Dark Mechanicus who survived found sanctuary with the various Traitor Legions and in dark corners of the Imperium where their terrible arts have prospered and their undying hatred of the Imperium has festered down the millennium. The forbidden psycho-sonic weapons of the Emperor's Children, the gene-atrocities of the hated Fabius Bile, the malign perversion of the techno-viral technology used to create the terrible Obliterators—all have been laid at the Dark Mechanicus' door. Hellish forge worlds bestrode by cyber-daemonic overlords deep within the Eye of Terror ceaselessly churn out the weapons and munitions that arm the forces of Chaos and fuel the dreaded Black Crusades.

The Phaenonite faction looks on the Dark Mechanicus with jealous eyes and covets its ancient and twisted designs for their own use. They also see the Dark Magi themselves to be an object lesson in the inherent weakness of the tech-priesthood, regardless of who or what its serves. The Phaenonites believe them to be no more than deluded and enslaved pawns of Chaos, no better than their parochial counterparts of the machine cult. To the Phaenonites, the Dark Mechanicus and the Traitor Legions both are small-minded fools who have squandered the power in their grasp and now dance to the sound of the laughter of the Chaos Gods, who gave them all they desired until it choked them.

CURRENT CONSPIRACIES

"If a man dedicates his life to good deeds and the welfare of others, he will die unthanked and unremembered. If he exercises his genius bringing misery and death to billions, his name will echo down through the millennia for a hundred lifetimes. Infamy is always preferable to ignominy."

–Fabius Bile at the Desecration of Kanzuz IX

The current goals of the Phaenonite faction are threefold; infiltration, expansion, and acquisition, all geared towards the end of regaining their fallen might and ultimately to exceed it. From their small remaining seed, they have long planned to spread their Radicalism to the Calixian Inquisition and subvert it from within, until one day the shadow can consume the substance—fitting venegeace against the force that once all but destroyed them.

Driven almost to extinction by Inquisitorial purge two millennia ago, the few Phaenonites that remained were scattered and much reduced, but it was a fatal mistake for the Calixian Conclave believe that they were powerless and effectively destroyed. Cast out of their stronghold, the survivors fled, bearing with them terrible weapons and forbidden lore from the shattered Phaenon Prime, some taking refuge deep within the anonymity of distant sectors whilst others took to the limitless voids beyond the edge of the Halo Stars, there to purse their nightmare sciences beyond the writ of the Imperium to interfere. Nor were all their agents ever fully rooted out and purged. Instead, sinking into secret obscurity, they watched and waited. With spider-patience, these agents slowly spun their webs. So the sleeping cancer of the Phaenonite conspiracy slept deep in the marrow of the Calixis body politic, and as the sector grew and history took its course, the Phaenonites became lost almost to Inquisitorial myth. Their transgressions were deleted from the records, their enormities replaced in the minds of the Conclave by a succession of more immediate threats and conspiracies down the centuries. So matters remained, until events came into configuration to herald this monstrous faction's return.

Evil calls out to Evil

Drawn back from the outer darkness, the agents of the ancient Phaenonites returned in subtle force to the Calixis Sector by the actions of one man; the renegade Explorator Archmagos Umbra Malygris, whose recent rebellion had riven the Calixian Cult Mechanicus with civil war. An insane genius and master of arcane technology beyond all measure, the Phaenonites had hoped to make an alliance with Malygris and perhaps offer him safe haven elsewhere to carry out his work. The Phaenonite cell quickly re-established contact with those who had kept their ancient faith. Identifying and making alliance by insidious corruption and malign force with Calixian Inquisitors who might be suborned to their cause, the Phaenonites mounted their own shadowy pursuit of the renegade Tech-Priest. Although the Phaenonites made contact with Malygris, he proved to be too dangerous and erratic for even the Phaenonites to manipulate or control, and crossing the dark Archmagos's path nearly resulted in the Phaenonite cells complete destruction. In fact, the operation partly exposed the Phaenonites' returned presence to the Calixian Conclave for the first time.

The Spread of the Phaenonite Taint

Even though their primary mission had failed, the Phaenonites decided they had indeed made a wise choice in coming to the Calixis Sector. They found it rife with corruption, conspiracy, and dark lore, its Conclave turbulent and sown with factionalism and discord. This afforded the Phaenonites many opportunities to hide in the shadows, further their pursuit of power, and expand their influence. Soon, the surviving cell members and their agents were in pursuit of the plethora of ancient secrets that lay buried beneath the Calixis Sector's civilised façade on the damned worlds at its fringes



footsteps of older races than man. In the short span of years since then, the Phaenonites have sunk their claws into both the Calixian Conclave and the Adepta, corrupting some, converting others and outright murdering and replacing a few. Few in actual number, there are perhaps no more than perhaps a dozen true Phaenonite Inquisitors in the Calixian Conclave and none openly known as such by their fellows, but these are the tip of the iceberg for the Phaenonites' organisation. They have in a short span of years proved frighteningly adept in building up their powerbase, and possess resources extraordinarily extensive for a faction of their size, bankrolling several minor noble houses and free trade captains, and now have agents highly placed both in the Commercia and the Cold Guild. They have also proved more than able to deal with opposition in the shape of local cults, and other more wisely spread conspiracies and rivals for the main part, able to call both on their own dark might, and the veneer of Inquisition authority when needed.

The Infiltration of Idumea

The greatest inroads the Phaenonites have made into the governance of a Calixian world have been into the Machine Cult on the minor Forge World of Idumea. Long disadvantaged by its location on the edge of the Hazeroth Abyss and lack of strategic importance, the Forge Masters of Idumea have for centuries considered themselves to be sidelined and undermined by the central authorities of the Lathe system, a disaffection the Phaenonites have been quick to exploit. Much of Idumea's upper echelons were hopelessly entrapped by the Phaenonite conspiracy, corrupted by the offer of forbidden lore and coerced through a concentrated program of targeted murders and sabotage. The Forge World itself now houses numerous secret facilities for the faction, as well as serving to provide a steady supply of manpower, experimental subjects, and a hidden port.

The Phaenonite infiltration of Idumea and its activities on nearby worlds have caused the Phaenonites an unforeseen problem—the Amaranthine Syndicate. The Syndicate is a mercenary alliance of far traders and smugglers operating within the deeps of the Hazeroth Abyss. At first, it seemed a perfect target for the Phaenonites attention. However, as they moved against the group, it quickly became apparent that they had made a grave error. The Syndicate proved already to be the cat's-paw of another, darker force more than able to take on and destroy the Phaenonite agents with almost contemptuous ease. Rather than fight a war against a power whose nature and extent they did not fully understand the Phaenonites are now giving the Syndicate a wide birth where they can until they can find out more. This reversal has placed them in an invidious position, and so now they must thread a tightrope of bringing other, more legitimate Inquisitorial authorities to bear on what is a clear threat not only to them but to the sector itself, and do so without exposing their own true nature in the process. Regardless, the Phaenonite conspiracy's pride and power has been directly challenged, and it will see the Amaranthine Syndicate and its mysterious backers destroyed at any cost. The Syndicate is not the only group with unseen masters stalking the dark stars beyond the Imperiums's borders that be called on if needed…

The Altar of Genocide

A fragment of dark lore that has obsessed several of the Calixian Phaenonite's since the faction's arrival in the sector concerns what some sources name as the 'Altar of Genocide.' Referred to repeatedly but obliquely by the fragments of techno-arcane lore left behind in the wake of the insane Archmagos Umbra Malygris, the 'altar' is reputed to be a hidden vault containing the master templates for all of Malygris's dark creations, as well as dread artefacts recovered or seized in his long career as an Explorator out beyond the Emperor's light. The myth has brought the Phaenonites into conflict both open and covert with other seekers for its nightmarish treasures that have included rival Inquisitors, Explorators, and—most bloodily—the rival heretical tech-cult, the Logicians. A widespread and powerful conspiracy of uncertain origin, the agents of the Logicians have battled the Phaenonites elsewhere and quickly recognised their rivals for what they were. Since then, the Logician presence in the Calixis Sector has plotted to expose the Phaenonites' presence to the Holy Ordos, hoping that the Inquisition will do them the service of wiping out this hated rival, whilst the Phaenonites have likewise plotted to do the same in return from within the Conclave.

The Forgotten Apocalypse

There is an ancient myth attached to the cold and darkly fabled stars at the edge of the Segmentum Obscurus of an ancient war with no remembered name fought in the depths of the Imperium's history. This war was unequalled in ferocity, and so terrible that every mention of it has been purged from the Imperial record, save perhaps for a few fragmentary references in most heavily restricted archives of the Holy Ordos, the cycles of certain Astartes battle sagas, and ancient Mechanicus data-canticles. This myth, discredited and dismissed by many pursuers of dark lore, has become an obsession of many among the Pheanonite faction. They seek both the possibility of supreme power and an apotheosis of their own desires in the ancient secrets left over from that war.

Scattered fragments of stories hoarded by heretics and other apocryphal sources tell of a great and terrible conflict, erupting by some accounts in the mid of the 32nd Millennium, a legendary time of anarchy for the post-heresy Imperium. According to the legend, a strange artefact—a vast labyrinthine contrivance seemingly spun of dust and magnetism—was encountered by Explorators somewhere deep in the Halo Stars beyond what was then as the Calyx Expanse (though other sources place it in the dread Mandragora region or even as far a-field as the Unbeholden Reaches). This great and mysterious artefact they designated the 'Echoing Vault.'

This vast artefact—perhaps an embassy from an unknown realm of existence—unleashed a wave of horror never before seen on an unsuspecting and unprepared mankind. The xenoforms which mercilessly ravaged forth, if in truth they could be called such, were creatures of such abhorrent terror they are referred only obliquely in the records as 'The Harrowing.' These entities disobeyed known physical laws, and close proximity to them alone was enough to kill or drive the unprotected mind insane. The Harrowing mercilessly

ravaged all in their path, and no force could stand against them. In a few short years, the deaths of a thousand inhabited spheres—both human and xenos—were laid at their feet, along with unprecedented losses for the Adeptus Astartes and the Inquisition lead forces trying fruitlessly to check them. According to a version of the legend favoured by dark hereteks, ultimately the Holy Ordos found only a fusion of archeotech and sorcerous lore could hold the Harrowing so that the Imperium could strike; although at supreme risk to the Inquisitors that employed them. Suffering defeat, the Harrowing fled back across the carcasses of dead worlds to the Echoing Vault, where it is said the Mechanicus employed a forbidden weapon of the Dark Age of Technology to destroy their foothold and seal the breach between dimensions through which they had passed.

So terrible was the conflict and its implications that afterward, all records of it were purged from Imperial histories, and its remaining traces all but lost in the turbulent years that followed. Some heretic adepts point to the sudden weakening of Imperial power in those long forgotten days and the vast deserts of lifeless worlds on the eastern Fringe as proof of the Echoing Vault's existence. Most (including many in the Holy Ordos) scorn this legend as either outright fabrication, misinterpretation, or a lie designed to cover some other, darker truth. However, in more recent years, some within the Calixian Tyrantine Cabal have drawn parallels with this long discredited legend and the phenomena known as Komus, the Tyrant Star, whilst others instead favour different explanation of the myth—a mangled misinterpretation of a Chaos incursion, a short lived warp rift or even some long forgotten Tyranid precursor hive. Some few who know of the story wonder if somewhere in the vastness of their silent other realm, removed from both euclidean realspace and the empyrean seas of the warp, the Harrowing yet wait patiently for their hour to return.

The Phaenonites and other Inquisitorial Factions

The Phaenonite faction holds the rest of the Inquisition in murderous contempt, as only those that have been persecuted and hunted beyond reason can. Of the other factions, Radical or otherwise, they reserve a particular hatred for the Xanthites. This group both gave birth to the Phaenonite splinter doctrine and were at the forefront of their past denunciation and destruction. Phaenonites also loathe the Thorians, who for them, personify the Imperium's greatest failings. Phaenonites are also singularly dismissive of the Recongregators, who they see as holding a naive and weakling dilution of their own position. If the Phaenonites were to find a common cause with any of the other Radical fractions of the Holy Ordos, it would be perhaps the Istvaanians, as their goal of strengthening the Imperium through conflict and the use of any means necessary to do so resonates with the Phaenonites own practices. Recently, the Phaenonites have come into intelligence regarding the 'cult' known of the Sleepers of Solomon and its possible links to a hyper-extremist Istvaanian faction. Although they have yet to make any concrete contact, the Phaenonites are highly interested in the motives and methodology if their intelligence proves to be true.

For the other factions of the Calixian Conclave and its high authorities, the Phaenonites presence is more rumour than fact. Save for their exposure when battling Malygris' followers, they have done all they can to preserve their secrecy and security.

Several Inquisitors have, in fact, encountered them in the past, but have been unable to firmly ascertain their nature. More than one such Inquisitor holds definite suspicions as to the Phaenonite's true identity. As the Phaenonites grow in power and numbers, however, so does their chance of discovery. If their presence were to be evidenced in the sector, they can expect opposition and inquest from the whole Conclave thanks to their excommunicate status and legendary horrors. In particular, the Phaenonites will become the sworn quarry for numerous prominent Xanthites, witch hunters, and above all, the Oblationists who would stop at nothing to see them destroyed if they knew of their existence.

ACOLYTES OF THE PHAENONITES

Most of those who serve a Phaenonite master have no idea that they are doing so. Most such Inquisitors hide under the guise of an independent operator or offer lip service to one of the major Ordos only to better conceal their true allegiance or spy on the wider Conclave. Some few claim to be operating under special secrecy and keep their entire operations hidden from the Calixian Conclave. This last group are in fact true renegades, Phaenonites either believed dead or on the run from Conclave authorities for their crimes. They rely upon distance and concealment for their safety. Life for acolytes (ignorant of their leader's terrible secret), in service to such masters can be harsh indeed. They are considered to be entirely disposable tools to be used as the Inquisitor wills it.

As such, the Phaenonites have use for acolytes of every background and persuasion to some extent, with the exception that they never bring the Sororitas into their service and only have interest in Clerics whose faith is less than sincere. Their favoured agents, however, are killers of one sort or another. Former Guardsmen and murderous scum are chosen for their brawn and moral adaptability respectively, while tech-adepts who have strayed from the Machine Cult's teachings are particularly valued as potential assets for the Phaenonite's 'great work.'

The most talented, promising, or simply the most callous acolytes in a Phaenonite Inquisitor's service will find themselves singled out for special attention to bring them into the true fold, either by conviction, manipulation, or (if necessary) mental reconstruction. These chosen acolytes are then branded with an warp-infused electoo that marks them as belonging to their master, body and soul. It is likely that further darkly tainted augmetics and other 'improvements' will follow.

Radicals Minoris

"When you can persuade no one else of the existence of something that you only can see, you are called mad. When everyone can see something that you cannot, you are called a fool."

–Inquisitor Marr, in discourse with Inquisitor Herrod

The ways in which an Inquisitor may fall to Radicalism are as varied and filled with potential as the thoughts and dreams of all mankind. That some paths are trodden by many, or seduce others to their ways, is simply a testament to the manner in which ideas and beliefs propagate: damnation desires company. Away from the creeds of great and infamous factions are a thousand paths to Radicalism journeyed by a few servants of the Holy Ordos. Though they do not gather wider note, they are no less potent than the convictions of the Istvaanian, the philosophies of the Recongregator, or the methods of the Xanthite. These obscure branches of Radicalism are termed lesser forms of Radicalism, or Radicals Minoris as they are referred to by the Conclave. Though they may be called 'lesser,' the many obscure paths of Radicalism are no less terrifying in what beliefs they are based on, or in what methods they advocate. In fact, within lesser forms of Radicalism, one is likely to find the most disturbing concerns and conspiracies.

These lesser forms of Radicalism are often limited to one, or at most a handful of Inquisitors and usually spring from a particular set of circumstances or influences that have pushed an Inquisitor to Radical doctrine or methodology. Many lesser forms of Radicalism are, therefore, either focused entirely on one threat or confined to a particular set of circumstances, and end with either the death of those concerned or the removal of the circumstances that gave rise to it. Should the circumstances or threat that pushed an Inquisitor down a new path of Radicalism become of wider importance to the Imperium, it will likely attract others, and the strand of lesser Radicalism will become more widespread and propagate beyond its originators.

THE SEEDS OF LESSER RADICALISM

The circumstances that lead an Inquisitor to Radicalism are as varied as those who serve within the Holy Ordos. There are, however, common threads of circumstance and disposition that sit at the root of much Radicalism, whether it is that of the lesser Radical or the greater factions. These are the seeds of Radicalism that make servants of the Golden Throne contemplate what many would consider heretical or grant credence to the seemingly paradoxical.

Obsession

For those who must devote their lives to hunting out heresy, the possibility of falling into blind obsession is constant. It is a small step from dedication and concentrated effort to obsession with the threats that one must fight. In time, obsession can consume an Inquisitor, making him blind to his increasingly irrational decisions and turning his reason to madness. It is not uncommon for an Inquisitor who has spent his life persecuting a particular form of heresy, or trying to uncover a deep conspiracy, to become so consumed by his quest that he will contemplate anything to bring it to a conclusion. He may also begin to see his obsession as the only true threat to the Imperium and all others as insignificant beside the truth that only he can see. In the eyes of such obsessed Inquisitors, all other threats are subservient to the need to defeat the great and consuming threat—which only they can see.

The threats that obsess some Inquisitors become magnified in their minds until they take on vast and terrifying proportions. The elusive recidivist can become a fiend possessed of unimaginable power whose plots, if they come to fruition, will shake the foundations of the Imperium. The object of the obsession might exist only as a myth or as a construct of the Inquisitor's own mind, assembled from unconnected fragments of rumour and legend. Occasionally, however, these individuals are right, and the great and secret threat does exist. On such occasions the obsession of an Inquisitor can save the bodies and souls of billions and shield the Imperium from catastrophe.

Necessity

There comes a point when a servant of the Holy Ordos faces a choice: whether to commit heresy and in so doing prevent a greater evil, or to remain unsullied but in so doing allow a great heresy to be done. Faced with such choices, many Inquisitors choose to abstain from becoming tainted with Radicalism, and of these, many in turn have their souls eaten away by doubt at their choice. Others decide to commit an act of Radicalism to prevent a greater evil. This crossing of the line between Puritanism and Radicalism is driven by necessity and a duty to the God-Emperor. In such moments, Radicals are created by the cruelty of circumstance.

Many who take this step believe themselves to be Puritan even after they have used the most Radical methods. This self-deception is built on the fact that these Inquisitors are not pursuing Radicalism as a strategy or treating with it as an encompassing philosophy; rather, they are descending into a personal Radicalism one step at a time. Those who turn to Radicalism out of what they see as necessity may become more deeply Radical with time as they face other hard choices and decide to take tread further down the path of Radicalism before them. Once the fall begins, it is easier to fall further than to claw oneself back over the lip of the abyss. These Radicals will begin to rationalise and justify their choices by clinging closer and close to the fact that their actions were necessary. A few may find a place of comfort amongst one of the Radical factions, but many more will walk a solitary path



into darkness, seeing no wider significance to what they do than that of the circumstances that have led them to it.

The Tenebrae Collegium

Beneath the surface of the Tyrantine Cabal lurks a secret heart that contemplates the unthinkable. The Tyrantine Cabal's purpose within the Calixian Conclave is to investigate appearances of the Tyrant Star and to counter its baleful influence in the Calixis Sector. It exists at the sufferance of Lord Inquisitor Caidin, and its membership is not strictly fixed; Inquisitors whose operations might intersect with those of the Tyrantine Cabal may rotate into its roster. This appearance of facilitation and cooperation between Inquisitors is a lie. Hidden at its heart are the Shadow Agents of the Tenebrae Collegium, created by the late Inquisitor Cassilda Cognos. This secret empire consists of Inquisitors and Acolytes who are bound to hold the interests of the Tyrantine Cabal above all other concerns, to pursue knowledge of the Tyrant Star, and to keep that knowledge safe at all costs. The Collegium has created and seeded agents amongst the Acolytes of Inquisitors throughout the Calixian Conclave. These secret Shadow Agents serve the Tenebrae Collegium as their true and secret master.

The Tenebrae Collegium was a product not only of Cassilda Cognos's genius, but of her obsession with the Hereticus Tenebrae: she, more even than Anton Zerbe, saw the Tyrant Star as a threat of incalculable proportions that would eventually bring a catastrophe in which any weakness by the Holy Ordos would cause disaster. She became obsessed with the divisions, infighting, and difference of purpose within the Calixian Conclave. Cognos believed that this moment of crisis would come, and the Inquisition would be paralysed by its differences. This could not be allowed to happen; unity of purpose in the face of the Tyrant Star would be achieved by any means. On this obsession, she built the Tenebrae Collegium so any who did not respond as needed could be removed and control imposed on the Calixian Conclave, in the event of a reckoning on the part of the Tyrant Star. The Shadow Agents produced by the Collegium and seeded in secret into the Acolyte cadres of Inquisitors throughout the sector, are a weapon ready to execute dissenters and enable the Calixian Conclave to be controlled by the Collegium should the crisis foreseen by Cassilda Cognos should ever come.

The Matter of Solomon

A web of conspiracy exists in the underhives of Solomon that has resisted attempts to dig it out from its roots for more than a millennium. The Sleepers—to given them their popular name—have long lived in local legend as the face of the night's terrors on Solomon, and their existence has become a part of the fearful landscape of this blighted hive world, a tale to frighten children that is both disturbing and very real. What little that can be ascertained is that the cult (if cult it truly is) resists all attempts to track it down to the source, and the local authorities have largely given up trying to do anything but contain it. The Inquisition, however, is aware of the truth that this seeming complacency hides a genuine fear of the Sleepers on the part of Solomon's ruling elites, and the evidence of failed operations to find them in the past has long been suppressed. In its choice of victim, the Sleepers seem only to abduct people from the fringes of society and those who stray where they shouldn't, further enhancing their mythic status. The cult's abductors, known as "husks," in the local slang for their pale and malnourished state, are little more than living human automatons. When caught or killed, they remain completely silent, untraceable, beyond interrogation, and utterly blank to the strongest psychic probing as to their origins. Who the real Sleepers are is a question that has concerned the Holy Ordos for generations, but not something it has ever been able to discover, although several Inquisitors have gone missing in trying to do so. One persistent theory, the origin of which is difficult to place, holds that the Sleepers are in fact a highly secret Radical faction of the Inquisition itself; some stories claim Istvaanian in doctrine. Their goal, it is said, is to create a state in the human mind where the horrors of the universe can no longer touch it, and their experiments in fear and madness have been going on for more than a thousand years without end.

Seculos Attendous

Seculos Attendous is a small but growing Radical faction within the Calixian Conclave. Its adherents believe that the dogma and accumulated power of the Ecclesiarchy is the most dangerous threat that mankind faces. These Inquisitors have become obsessed with the stream of massacres, tyrants, and conspiracies that the Ecclesiarchy has produced in the long millennia of its existence. Having fought the spawn of the Ecclesiarchy's inherent corruption, those of the Seculos Attendous inclination see the Ecclesiarchy itself as the true enemy. Those Inquisitors who share in this obsession dream of removing the Ministorum from the Imperium. They work against the Ecclesiarchy's power and influence, trying to limit both and destabilise it with the ultimate goal of removing its calcified dogma altogether.

Seculos Attendos is a young faction, born within the Calixis Sector. It has just a handful of associates, and the particulars of its doctrine are still not fully defined. The point of commonality between Seculos Attendos Inquisitors is the obsession with the power and iniquity of the Ecclesiarchy. Most of these Radicals have a deep faith in the divinity of the Emperor but see the Ecclesiarchy as nothing but a means of hoarding wealth and power built on a lie of piety. There are, however, several other positions that are alive within the nascent faction. Some secretly doubt the divinity of the Emperor and point to his dictates during the Great Crusade as evidence. To these most Radical members of Seculos Attendous, the secularism the Emperor once fought for was the ideal to which the Imperium should be returned. In time these differences may lead to this young faction destroying itself as particulars of doctrine overcome the unity of a common obsession.

Carta Extremis: Erya Nephthys

By the power and grace of the God-Emperor of Mankind, and the authority and majesty of His Holy Inquisition, I call thee, Erya Nephthys, diabolus and lay on your soul the crimes witnessed in this carta: that you did forsake your vows to protect the realms and vassals of the Golden Throne, that you did consult the Dismal Texts, did wield the knowledge you found there, that you did take up the tools of the damned and that by your hand they were turned on your brothers.

By the judgement of your peers and beneath the eyes of the Golden Throne you are called to account for your crimes, and in that account be submitted to the possibility of condemnation. And, if being condemned, the faces of your brothers will be turned from you, and you will be reclined to such punishment as is right when all is weighed in the balance. Thy soul is beneath the hammer, thy body beneath the axe, and thy eyes at the point of the sword. May all be weighed by the wisdom of Him who is most great and mighty, the Emperor on Terra who protects all.

Aequit Constantinides Caidin

Lord Inquisitor, Convenor of the Calixian Conclave,
Protector of the Haletic Expanses

53857777 Mqi



Inquisitor Whitlock's Endeavour

Inquisitor Hastur Whitlock was a respected Inquisitor within the Calixian Conclave who became obsessed with the insidious threat of the so-called halo devices. These alien artefacts promise immortality—but at the cost of making men monsters, corrupted in flesh and mind. Halo devices are occasionally retrieved from dead worlds within the Halo Stars, and a vile trade in these items has spread within the Calixis underworld and its corrupt elite. More scholar than warrior, Inquisitor Whitlock had not taken to personal action for decades until in 750.M41 his close friend Arbitrator Judge Calimnus was killed by Durila Sclinx. The feared Crime Marquisa of Landunder had been transformed by a halo device and escaped after her murder of Judge Calimnus, never to be heard from again. Whitlock was stricken by the loss of his trusted friend, and in response the aging Inquisitor threw himself into discovering all he could of halo devices. This he did with an all-consuming focus that drove him to ransack every record accessible by the Holy Ordos, call in every favour and contact he had, and hunt down every underworld rumour that lurked in the dark.

With every step of his journey into the obscure xenos lore of halo devices, Whitlock was filled with increasing dread and a crawling fear. Dire possibilities plagued his mind: which evil and long-dead creatures made these devices? For what purpose did they work such changes on the flesh of humans? Did some greater darkness wait out amongst the lifeless worlds of the Halo Stars? Seeking to unravel every strand of its vile trade, Whitlock tore every shred of information from each heretic he discovered, killed those involved without mercy, and hunted those transformed by halo devices. In a decade, he had scoured a path of fire across the sector that would shame the purges of the most militant Puritan. When he could learn no more from heretics, he turned on his brother Inquisitors, pursuing those he suspected of harbouring deeper lore concerning halo devices and killing some he suspected of tolerating their use and proliferation. In 807.M1 Hastur Whitlock was declared rogue by the Calixian Conclave and an order to bring the errant scholar Inquisitor to heel was issued under the authority of Inquisitor Lord Caidin. Inquisitor Whitlock, however, had disappeared several years before; every indication suggested that he had passed beyond the bounds of the sector and into the Halo Stars themselves.

The Condemnation of House Vipus

The slaughter of one of the oldest and greatest noble houses of Scintilla is a tragedy worse than any will ever know, for none will know that it could have been prevented. House Vipus was a line of old blood that had been a rock of political and economic stability in the Golgenna Reach since the end of the Angevin Crusade. Descended from the core worlds of Segmentum Solar, House Vipus had the close council of the Lord Sector, counted connections in many branches of the body Imperium, and had amassed great wealth. The assembled clan, gathered together on the Feast of Saint Drusus, were slaughtered in their grand estate within Hive Sibellus by cyber-berserkers unleashed by servants of the Brotherhood of the Horned Darkness. In a single night, all within the Vipus estate were butchered at the will of the Horned Darkness so that they should not cause difficulty to one of the Brotherhood's many ambitions.

What none but a handful know is that Inquisitor Xerxes, Thorian terror of the Ordo Malleus, had known of the Brotherhood's plan to slaughter House Vipus and condemned them to death by doing nothing. An infil-traitor agent of Xerxes had been burrowing into the dark heart of the Brotherhood, gradually ascending the cult's leadership circles, and delivering unprecedented intelligence on the Brotherhood's intentions and membership. Xerxes had used this intelligence to counter a number of the daemonic cult's activities, always being careful to make each counter operation appear as a lucky chance or fueled by different sources of information. When, however, Xerxes learned of the intended massacre of House Vipus, he faced a profound dilemma. The Brotherhood had begun to suspect that a traitor lurked within their ranks. If their plan was foiled, there could be no doubt. Xerxes had to choose between losing a source of information of incalculable value or condemning an entire noble house to death. Xerxes made his choice, telling himself that he did so for the good of the Imperium, and House Vipus was slaughtered.

The Lost Acolytes of Inquisitor Chalan

In the first year of the sixth century of the 41st millennium, Inquisitor Hruskell Chalan tasked a cadre of his most trusted acolytes to investigate a series of deaths on pilgrim ships passing into the Drusus Marches. The deaths had the hallmarks of malefic influence and possible diabolic intent. The victims had all been Ecclesiarchy preachers or members of religious brotherhoods set for the sacred places of Maccabeus Quintus and Sentinel. The acolytes dispatched to investigate the deaths were numbered amongst Chalan's finest and trusted to operate far beyond the direct control of their master. They spent over a year moving amongst the ships that ply the Drusian pilgrimages until they found what they had been looking for. It was more terrible than they could have dreamt. The deaths had been orchestrated by a priest who had fallen to the vile nihilistic creed of the so-called Pilgrims of Hayte, and had been transforming himself by sorcery and murder into a doorway for a daemon to enter the physical world.

The acolytes' discovery was made at the moment that the fallen priest had killed 21 pilgrims as they knelt for him to lead them in prayer. It was also the final act of the fallen priest's hateful ritual. Even as the servants of Inquisitor Chalan discovered the priest casting aside his warp-forged murder blade, his form was filled with the power of the dark gods, his flesh ran like hot wax, and a daemon smiled down on the blood-soaked chapel. The daemon laughed as the servants of the Inquisition emptied their weapons into its new form, and then incinerated half the acolytes with a gesture. Despite these losses, the daemon was banished, but the acolytes of Inquisitor Chalan can never return to their master and remain lost amongst the dark margins of the Calixis Sector—when faced with annihilation and the impotence of their weapons, one acolyte took up the fallen priest's discarded murder blade, its edges carved with the ruinous marks of the warp, and plunged it into the daemon's smile.

Revelation and Conspiracy

Inquisitors are unique within the Imperium in that they can contemplate ideas and hold beliefs that would be considered heretical and dangerous were they held by any other under the Golden Throne. As peers of the Imperium, they have the luxury and privilege of contemplating the incredible and possess the power to act on their conclusions. A lifetime spent guarding against knowledge that would break the minds of most humans can lead Inquisitors to exercise their privilege in considering some ideas that, at best, might be seen as highly unconventional and, at worst, utter madness. These musings can lead an Inquisitor to a moment of personal revelation in which he sees a threat, possibility, or opportunity that to any other would appear paradoxical or absurd. Many such revelations are concerned with altering the nature of the Imperium or the relation of mankind to the enemies they face, or endorsing a new path of human development. These aberrant beliefs are sometimes called paths to ascension.

Conspiracy and secret plots are the common means by which the revelatory goals of lesser Radicals are achieved. They work in shadow, on their own or with a few who share their views and goals. So wide in implication are some of the paths to ascension that those who conspire to further the Imperium's progress down them must use every tool available and take what allies present themselves; if they do not, then few others can hope to triumph. Though the Radical at the centre of such a conspiracy may be only one, his power can stretch across the stars and into the every crevice of Imperial authority. It might even be reasoned that the greatest Radical conspiracies are those that are never discovered, which remain the secret of their lone adherent, who sits at the centre of an empire of truth and lies, guiding matters to some inscrutable end.

Xenos Hybris

Xenos Hybris is a radical conspiracy of Inquisitors within the Calixian Conclave that believes that mankind must learn from the achievements and mistakes of alien races, and that only by cooperation and mutual understanding can both man and alien survive the galaxy's myriad threats. Xenos Hybris is confined to the Calixis Sector and the Inquisitors who operate within it, but it is representative of a profusion of minor factions and concerns that are focused on the lure of greater wisdom and potential offered by the alien. It is also a typical of a lesser Radicalism born of the revelatory belief of a few; Xenos Hybris exists as a consequence of the danger of mankind's ignorance and intolerance of the alien that those within the faction believe that only they can see clearly.

The number of Inquisitors who cling to the Xenos Hybris beliefs are few, but they pursue their goal of human-alien advancement with blind focus that may well create a catastrophe before it achieves the faction's ends. Agents of the Hybris delve into the long-dead secrets of aliens who once walked among the stars of the Calixis Sector, court xenophile hereteks to produce hybridised xeno-human technology, and kill any who stand in their way. Though most Hybris Inquisitors have a scholarly nature, they are still ruthless fanatics who are single-minded in the rightness of their cause. Most Hybris Inquisitors, of course, exist within the Ordo Xenos, but they do also have adherents from both the Ordo Malleus and Ordo Hereticus. For the most part, these Inquisitors of other Ordos are concerned with what alien lore can be brought to bear with denying the daemons of the warp and with understanding how to bring unity to the fractured Imperium of Man.

Polypsykana

The Polypsykana are a minor ascensionist faction that believes mankind is destined to evolve into a psychic race and that this transformation should be facilitated and guided. The beliefs of Polypsykana Inquisitors are not unique to the Calixis Sector or to the present times; similar beliefs and theories constantly boil beneath the surface of the Inquisition as a whole. Despite its individual features, the Calixian Polypsykana faction is but one manifestation among many. Like most factions obsessed with the psychic ascension of mankind, Polypsykana Inquisitors see this final evolution of humanity as inevitable, so long as it is not directly prevented from occurring. Those most likely to attempt to prevent the spread and rise of psychic power are those who see the witch as an abomination to be cleansed—and the most dangerous of these are their fellow Inquisitors.

Polypsykana Inquisitors and their agents are primarily concerned with protecting psykers from the predations of their firebrand colleagues. The Calixis Sector has a higher than normal rate of humans born with psychic abilities—a fact that might be tied to the manifestation of the strange phenomena known as the Tyrant Star—and Polypsykana Inquisitors spend considerable resources watching for nascent psykers in the sector population and extracting fledgling psykers to safety before others can burn them at the stake for what they are. Polypsykana operatives have also poured energy into hastening the awakening of mankind to its psychic future by using eugenic techniques and developing powerful psy-active drugs.

MADNESS, DESPAIR AND PARADOX: WHEN THE STRONGEST MINDS FAIL

One can only stare into the faces of madmen, monsters, and things from beyond for so long before one begins to ask questions about the place of mankind in the universe. To many, the answer is simply a return to faith in the Emperor and the future of mankind. Others, however, descend into madness, their minds haunted by snatches of revelation and nightmare. Members of the Inquisition above all others are trained and conditioned to resist the strain such experiences place on the mind—but there are times, whether by sudden extraordinary pressure or slow, ineffable corrosion, when even the strongest mind may snap. In some, this damage to the psyche can manifest in ways that might be referred to (at least on the surface) as Radicalism. The Radicalism manifested by these individuals can only be loosely called such, as their actions

are driven by a broken mind whose perceptions have been twisted by the laughter of a dark universe and the product of their own delusions. Inquisitors who fall to madness, while very rare, are exceptionally dangerous, as their personal power is such that their only check and balance, for the most part, is the judgement of their peers.

Some Inquisitors find themselves, after centuries of service, filled with despair at the futility of the war they fight. As their soul is consumed by doubt and helpless, they see the darkness pressing close, mankind's enemies multiplying and growing stronger while mankind only grows weaker. Such despair can breed desperation and acts of savagery. The most rare and dangerous response to a lifetime of horror is to become convinced that there is some hidden purpose or pattern in every facet of the past, present, and future.



CLASSIFICATION: DARK OMEGA
DATE: 5301814.M41
AUTHOR: **NAME CLASSIFIED**
SUBJECT: Transcript of meeting between Inquisitor [classified] and Golgarog Varta suspected to be a Shroud Master of the Pale Throng
RECIPIENT: Inquisitor Marr

The following transcript was obtained by me following your suggestion to focus my efforts not on of those who are the usual dabblers with radical methodologies, but on those of whom there is no hint of any kind of Radical inclination. Indeed, Inquisitor [classified] could not be considered any less likely to be having dealings with a known heretic, least of all one so vile as Golgarog Varta.

The records set down here is a transcript of a sound capture obtained by covert methods. For context, I will note that the meeting took place in a disused hold of the Misericord on 5.250.814.M41, and the manner of both parties would indicate that this was not the first time they had met. Throughout the transcript Inquisitor [classified] is designated 'I' and Golgarog Varta is designated as 'V'.

[transcript begins]
V: Well met, my fair friend.
I: What do you want?
V: My dear and most magnificent Inquisitor, how could I ever not wish to be in your company?
I: Get to the point, and I may just restrain myself from gutting and burning you as you deserve.
V: Why must you always be so? We are not so different; we both have ends we wish to achieve and find in each other the means to achieve those ends. That you wish me burned as a mutant, a witch, a heretic, and rebel, and that I wish you slowly torn apart from within for the lies and tyranny you uphold, should not stop us having our friendly little conversations.
I: Get to the point.
V: Very well. In 50 standard divisions of a year, a group of my kind, which has already infiltrated in the Magnagorsk hive on Fenksworld, will overwhelm the Arbitrator Court House, the holdings of the Lord Magnagorsk, and the primary Administratum Basilica in a single attack. Their intention is to kill all within as a call to others of our kind to rise up and burn the hive. It will be the Tranch rising all over again, quite glorious in fact. That is, if you do not stop it.
I: How can they hope to achieve that? A heavily armed insurgency could never penetrate so high into the hive so quickly.
V: It will be done by less than ten of our kind: they have amongst them five of the Most Gifted.
I: Throne!
V: You will not find them by searching for them: they are too good, even for you, but they use a merchant as a go between. His name is Colitar, Gerontius Colitar of the Colitar Cartel. Follow him and he will lead you to them.
I: Anything else?
V: A thank you would be nice, but I suspect I won't get it.
[receding sounds of movement and footsteps—When voice capture returns, the voices are raised as if calling over a distance]
I: Why are you doing this: betraying your own kind?
V: We each have our wars to fight, my fair friend, or did you think that it was only I that was doing a service for you?
[transcript ends]



IV

The Shadow War

- Consorting with the Unclean
- Blasphemous Allies
- Shadow Tactics
- Expanded Skills & Talents
- Psychic Powers
- Shadow Gear

Chapter IV: The Shadow War

"Heresy is never seen as such by those under its thrall; it masquerades as necessity, obligation, and duty."

–Inquisitor Deliko Konrad

There comes a time when the tools of the enemy are the only ones at hand, when the only means to win the day is to change the rules, when achieving success requires partnership with the lesser evil. Servants of the Inquisition tread this slippery slope every day, some inching up towards the path of the Puritan, and others creeping down the trail of Radicalism. Is it worth corrupting one to save the souls of ten? Can one sacrifice ideals in the name of expediency and then regain the high ground of morality?

This section contains rules for Resources, the means and requisites for finding them, the price they demand, and an assortment of them found in the Calixis Sector.



Consorting with the Unclean

Resources

Unlike Contacts from **The Inquisitor's Handbook**, an Acolyte has no ongoing relationship with a Resource. They are persons, organizations, items or locations that may be just as hard—or harder—to locate the third time as they are the first. An Acolyte does not need to know a Resource, though he needs to know of them, and the Resource does not need to know the Acolyte in order to provide a service. As they are not beholden to an Acolyte, Resources do not have an Experience Point cost associated with them, even though they do have a price. Any Acolyte can access Resources, so long as they possess the means to find them. However, once found, they demand a reckoning for their assistance. The price is seldom in Thrones, and may be more than an Acolyte's morals will allow them to pay.

Resource Tests—Who or What

There are two means of locating a Resource. An Acolyte might know of it through associates and peers, essentially knowing someone who's heard of it. Or he might have knowledge of a potential asset from data and reports, having read about it in his research. These two methods correspond to the Fellowship and Intelligence characteristics, and the basic mechanic to access Resources is a Characteristic Test corresponding to the appropriate characteristic.

Price of Admission

Just as a junior Arbitrator doesn't know the usual suspects of the Sibellus underhive, raw Acolytes seldom have the knowledge or colleagues necessary to locate the more questionable assets of their trade. Thus, an Acolyte must meet the prerequisites before attempting to locate a resource.

This might be a Skill, such as Forbidden Lore (Psykers) to locate a witch, a Career (it takes an Assassin to find a noted mercenary), or even a home world (those from the Schola Progenium would know of a killer that once stalked its halls). An Acolyte must possess all the listed requisites to even attempt finding the Resource.

Modifiers

Every Resource has a base modifier that reflects its scarcity, but a wide variety of other attributes affect the likelihood of locating the Resource. This inherent modifier uses the basic Test Difficulty of **Table 7–3** on page 185 of the **Dark Heresy** Rulebook. It may be Easy (+30) to discover a low-level criminal, but Very Hard (–30) to track down an infamous heretek savant.

Further modifiers are added for other circumstances involved in the search. An Arbitrator might receive a bonus for locating a famed investigator, but suffer a penalty on his search for a crime boss. The Pilot (Spacecraft) or Trade (Merchant) Skills would be a plus in locating a sprint trader, but virtually useless in finding a medicae working outside of Imperial notice.

Likewise, it may be much harder to come across an information broker on a feral world, or easier to discover a rogue Tech-Priest on a forge world.

Timing

The result of the Resource Test indicates how long it takes to either obtain or arrange a meeting with the item or individual. A simple success indicates some form of connection to the Resource, but it will take time to go through intermediaries or arrange meetings. Additional Degrees of Success represent a closer connection and better access.

Table 4-1: Successful Resource Tests

Result in Degrees of Success	Resource Available In
Success	2d10 Days
1	2d10 x 12 Hours
2	2d10 x 6 Hours
3	2d10 Hours
4	2d10 x 10 Minutes
5+	2d10 Minutes

On the other side of the coin, simple failure means the Resource is unavailable or out of contact. However, additional Degrees of Failure can bring the wrong sort of attention, making it difficult or even downright hazardous to continue the search. As most Resources involve proscribed individuals or materials, their aid should never be sought lightly, and asking the wrong people can bring unwelcome notice.

Table 4-2: Resource Test Failures

Result in Degrees of Failure	Effect
Failure	No have access to this Resource
1	Cannot make another Resource Test for 2d10 hours
2	No other Resource Tests for 2d10 x 6 hours
3	May not search for other Resources for 2d10 x 12 hours and have attracted Individual Attention*
4	Additional Resource Tests are impossible for 2d10 days and have earned Group Attention*
5+	No Resource Tests for 2d10 days and have gained Organization Attention*
** See Below*	

Unwanted Observation

It's highly unlikely that the Acolytes are the only ones searching for the person or object in question, and inquiries in the wrong ears can bring the scrutiny of many unwelcome eyes. The GM should factor this into the effects of **Table 4-2: Resource Test Failures** rather than treating it as an additional penalty for failure. Thus, the reason the Acolyte can't look for another Resource is because a local Arbitrator is tailing the group, rather than the time penalty in addition to the unwanted disruption. The GM should never make his players feel they've been penalized for trying something original to solve their problems.

There are three types of unwelcome attentions, and they can be abstract ("You don't feel you can ask about the shadow cult again for 36 hours because a bounty hunter has been watching your rooms."), or fully roleplayed if the group feels up to the task!



Individual Attention

The inquiries of the Acolyte have attracted the notice of a single person appropriate to the situation. If the Resource is an ex-Arbites officer, it might be the brother of a criminal he brought to the Emperor's justice, or a bounty hunter who had a professional grudge. If it's a dockyard worker with questionable morals, then it could be a cargo inspector, or an ex-customer looking for a "refund." Knowing that the Acolyte is looking for the same prey, the individual will watch his activities for a period of time, delaying further inquiries.

Ambitious GMs can use this result to add a feel of tension and intrigue to following encounters, or as a hook for an entirely new adventure. On the other hand, the attention should not be too disruptive unless the players are excited about the new plot twist, and they should not be made to feel like their search was not worth the consequences.

Group Attention

This time the search has come to the attention of a larger group, such as an underhive gang, a small team of mercenaries, or an enforcer squad. The GM can work out the particulars of the group in question according to the guidelines for individuals. The group should be appropriate to the Resource in question, and can certainly be used as a plot hook at some later point if desired.

Unlike an individual, however, groups should have some effect on the Acolyte's actions outside of their search. These effects should not be crippling to an Acolyte's actions, but should disrupt ongoing activities in annoying ways. An enforcer might turn up while the Acolyte conducts an unrelated business deal, causing the merchant to shy away. As a GM, it's important not to go overboard with this and discourage the players.

Organization Attention

In this case, the Acolyte's questions have reached high levels indeed, coming to the attention of an Arbites precinct, a merchant house, or even a rival Inquisitorial faction. This result may require more thought on the part of the GM to select something appropriate and determine how it will fit in with the rest of the campaign.

The focus of an entire organization should also be correspondingly difficult to elude, but its effects should remain inconvenient rather than debilitating. Although this attention can provide significant additions to the plot, the GM should never blindly add it to the detriment of the game.

NEVER THE THRONES

Resources demand payment for their services, and in most cases it's not anything as simple as money. After your players have made their Resource Roll, you should start thinking about appropriate payment. Generally the more personal the price, the more interesting the resultant moral quandaries. If the price of a Resource is an illicit drug, then it can be far more interesting if it's a drug the Acolyte has been keeping in reserve for an emergency. If the cost involves a betrayal, then the GM should ensure he has one in mind that relates to the Acolyte's background.

Dealing with xenos is not quite as simple as paying a price and walking away with the goods or services required. Sometimes the transaction might involve the exchange of Thrones, or some other valuable good such as weaponry or slaves. However, even in such cases, the price is still a portion of self and soul. Many times, the price might be unusual or mysterious, a facet of an alien mindset little understood by humanity. Examples of such include the tears of a child, the song of a soldier or the whisper of a promise long forgotten. Other times, the cost is more severe, demanding much more from the Acolyte, such as payment in blood, slaves, or even worlds. Whether the Acolyte pays the price is up to him.

In short, establishing the specific price for a Resource offers a number of opportunities for developing a character's background, establishing his history, or cultivating a new wrinkle to his story.

Resource Format

Each Resource has a name and description explaining some of its background for the GM. They also possess the following standard entries:

- **What It Provides:** This gives information on what a Resource can do for an Acolyte if properly compensated, such as provide illicit drugs or heretical information.
- **Prerequisites:** These are required Skills, Talents or even Careers necessary to even know the resource exists. For example, you must possess Common Lore (Underworld) to know of a criminal organization.
- **Resource Test Modifiers:** There is a base modifier that represents the rarity of the resource; it's far more difficult to locate a rogue psyker than it is to find a shady merchant. This entry also contains additional modifiers provided by Skills, Talents, Careers, or associations that might help or hinder the search. An Acolyte with the Wrangling Skill has a better chance of knowing about an animal smuggling ring.
- **Price/Cost:** Every Resource has its price. Occasionally that cost is in something as common as Thrones, but often it's something far darker.

Kabal of the Crimson Woe

The Kabal of the Crimson Woe is a small band of Eldar—nefarious alien corsairs and pirates—that operates throughout the Calixis Sector. The Kabal strike at shipping with impunity, seizing loot and taking prisoners, leaving rescuers to find naught but deserted ships floating through space, nary a bloodstain or warning message to provide evidence of what has passed. They have also been known to raid settlements on frontier worlds, carrying off colonists as slaves, never to be seen again. The Kabal take particular delight in striking at targets right under the noses of their enemies, attacking heavily defended planets or ships under escort.

The Kabal have been known to undertake work as mercenaries, attacking targets of interest to other parties. The Kabal can raid settlements or attack spacecraft, operating as

discreetly or overtly as required. Far more useful is their talent for snatching particular individuals as part of their raids, using an attack as a diversion, or simply ensuring that the chosen victim vanishes. These cruel Eldar have a special fondness and aptitude for torture, and they can be contacted to obtain information from prisoners. Those with qualms about such activities are best advised not to ask how the Kabal have come to possess such accurate information, of course.

Dealings with the Kabal is never a clean-cut transaction, however, as they have a habit of attacking other targets of opportunity along the way, or turning on their employers after the payment has been made. It takes a canny and ruthless individual to maintain the upper-hand when dealing with the Eldar, and woe betide any who let slip that they are attempting to deceive the Kabal. A special punishment indeed is reserved for those unlucky few who have tried.

What It Provides: These corsairs can destroy small settlements, attack a shipping lane, or kidnap and torture specified individuals.

Prerequisites: Forbidden Lore (Xenos) +20.

Resource Test Modifier: +20.

Price/Cost: The Kabal of the Crimson Woe accepts payment in live human captives.

The Cortax

A rough alliance of roving alien mercenaries for hire, the soldiers of the Cortax are available to the highest bidder, sometimes changing sides more than once or twice over the course of a conflict or even a single battle. Yet, for all their seeming fickleness, the Cortax are a highly sought after force within the Calixis Sector, for they provide an easily deniable, cheap source of soldiers with little in the way of morals or qualms about their victims. And, for Inquisitors seeking to forment conflict and war without any consideration for the eventual winner, such as the Istvaanians, the Cortax's readiness to change sides mid-way through a war only serves their purpose all the more.

What It Provides: These mercenaries can invade a planet, raid a settlement, or attack a spaceship.

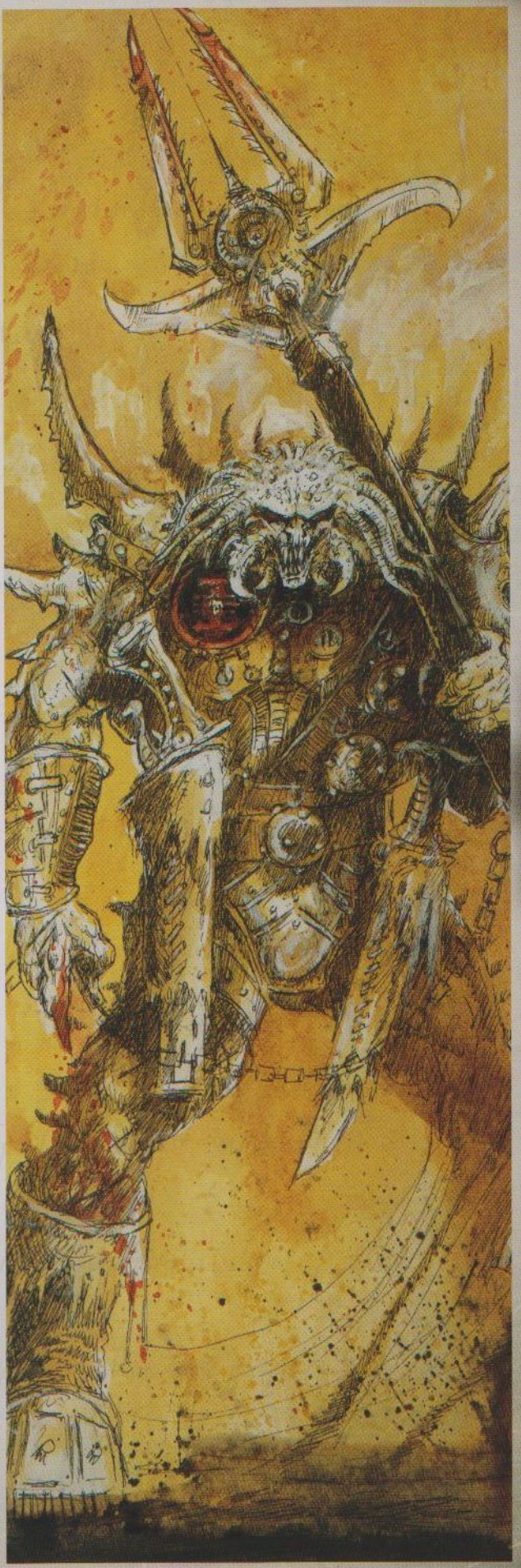
Prerequisites: Forbidden Lore (Xenos).

Resource Test Modifier: +10.

Price/Cost: The Cortax accepts payment in weapons or Throne Gelt.

Turning Resources into Contacts

After utilizing an asset several times, an Acolyte may develop a relationship and become interested in turning the Resource into a Contact as defined on pages 218–223 of The Inquisitor's Handbook. If appropriate, they can pay the necessary XP cost and change their association to this closer bond—though they may find that having heretical allies can have interesting side effects if discovered by more Puritan eyes.



The Axebiter Tribe

Orks are a singularly violent race who exist for the love of war and battle alone. They are a perpetual scourge on the galaxy, raiding and rampaging wherever they can, and they pose a threat to many civilised worlds whenever they gather in great numbers. There are those Radicals within the Ordo Xenos who seek to manipulate Ork-kind, rather than simply destroy it, whether by bribing them to attack worlds outside the Imperium, attempting to divert their invasion fleets, or by actually seeking to utilise them as a mercenary force. Such Inquisitors are often short-lived, for Orks are duplicitous, their warlike instincts overriding any sort of honour or duty to those who have bought their services.

Fortunately for the authorities of the Calixis Sector, greenskins are rare in that region, existing as feral tribes on a handful of worlds and only appearing in greater numbers when an invading force crosses over from the neighbouring Scarus Sector. There also exist scattered remnants of past invasions, Ork warbands who pose more of a threat than the feral tribes, but much less of a threat than a full-blown invasion.

One such tribe are the Axebiters, a warband belonging to the Blood Axe Clan. The Axebiters are rather more cunning and sneaky than most Orks, and are at least open to the concept of dealing with humanity, if not entirely sold on the idea. Several Radical Inquisitors have attempted to deal with the Axebiters in the past, whether attempting to secure their services to act as mercenaries or to make a deal with them to divert their raids into another area of space. The Axebiters are certainly not above making deals with the Inquisition, accepting payment in the form of Imperial munitions of various sorts—the more destructive and explosive, the better. Unfortunately, as such Inquisitors have discovered, dealing with the Axebiters is a short-term prospect at best. Sooner or later they tire of the deal and either turn on their master, killing the Inquisitor and his Acolytes, or turn their newly acquired guns and tanks on the next Imperial planet they come across. Neither outcome is entirely beneficial to the Inquisition, but entirely in keeping with the low cunning prevalent amongst Ork-kind.

What It Provides: This tribe of Orks will act as mercenaries, attack a planet, hold off attacking a planet, or raid shipping lanes.

Prerequisites: Forbidden Lore (Xenos).

Resource Test Modifier: +10.

Price/Cost: The Axebiter Orks accept payment in guns, ammunition, grenades, or vehicles.

The House of Corvus

The House of Corvus is young noble house of Scintilla. From its seat in the Citadel of Morn in hive Sibellus, it labours to increase their power and prestige amongst the haughty and insular elite. The House of Corvus has only existed for seven decades. Before its coming to Sibellus, it was simply a branch line of Traak, a merchant clan from far Mandragora sector. Its fortune made by unknown means, it has established itself with every trapping of old Sibellian nobility: its name, its symbol of a crows wing, its great and echoing mausoleums waiting for the dead, and the death-masked vassals all are a lie of established nobility—a lie of which the House of Corvus is all too conscious.

Desperate to become a respected and acknowledged power, the House of Corvus pursues wealth and power with a brutal and unsubtle hunger. These strutting bullies of the Scintillan elite use the methods of the gutter crime lord—extortion and theft from those weaker than themselves. As much as they crave to be feared and respected, they fear the true powers of the Calixian elite. The House of Corvus has long sought a key to true power that will place it above its enemies and grant its members the status they crave. Therefore, the nobles of the House of Corvus desperately seek the treasures of the Haarlock legacy, spurred on by their need to keep the knives of their enemies from their throats.

What It Provides: House Corvus can provide money or pay for mercenary muscle.

Prerequisites: Peer (Underword) or Peer (Nobility).

Resource Test Modifier: +0.

Price/Cost: The House of Corvus requires some advantageous introduction or contact to be made that increases its prestige.

The Beast House

The Beast House, detailed at great length in **Disciples of the Dark Gods**, is adept at acquiring all manner of xenos beasts, including sentient creatures, as well as their technology for use in the fighting pits of the Red Cages. For a sizable sum, an individual can commission the Beast House to acquire a specific creature. For an even greater sum, the individual can keep the alien afterwards. These fees are justified by the Beast House's discretion, as well as its unfailing ability to deliver goods as promised in pristine condition. How the Beast House acquires live aliens is a closely guarded mystery, but its network of contents must surely extend to proscribed xenos cultures.

What It Provides: The Beast House is able to obtain a live example of almost any alien species, as well as many forms of alien technology, especially melee weaponry.

Prerequisites: Forbidden Lore (Cults, Heresy, or Xenos) +20.

Resource Test Modifier: +30.

Price/Cost: The Beast House requires either an extortionate sum of money, the patronage of a powerful individual (and certain favours owed by him in advance), a large number of slaves for the Red Cages, a rare and exquisite specimen to fight in the Red Cages, or some other despicable payment.



The Library of Knowing

Located on Fenksworld, this resource lies outside the remit of Imperial authorities, which can be both blessing and curse to those of the Ordos. Direct access is completely controlled by the planetary governor, currently Lady Cardea Vaahkon, and her family and retainers.

However, once inside its confines, the Library offers one of the most complete and unadulterated collections of texts accessible within several sectors. Although the Library possesses a number of works that would be considered heretical in some circles, Imperial authorities have been unsuccessful or unwilling to fully censor the Library's contents. The Library is such a valuable asset for so much of the sector's intelligentsia that it would be difficult even for the Inquisition to garner the support to shut it down.

The Vaahkon family grants access to the Library as a favour that is only rarely bestowed. However, access is also granted to those who bring a rare or unusual text.

What It Provides: A resource for investigations on virtually any subject The Library possesses great swathes of knowledge and lore, including some rare texts on the warp.

Prerequisites: Adept Career.

Resource Test Modifiers: Base Modifier –10; Noble Born +10, Peer (Academics) +5, Charm +5.

Price/Cost: Either an extraordinary text or the assurance of a returned favour.

Giggling Hemlock

Though none would ever call him by this name to his face, Cicutus Okeanos enjoys near-legendary status amongst the professional killers of Calixis. He employs binary poisons as his modus operandi, and if rumour is to be believed, he has never touched a ranged weapon in his long and illustrious career. His targets, should they be unfortunate enough to learn of his attentions before their demise, have walled themselves in fortresses, surrounded themselves with bodyguards, or rigorously screened all their food to no avail. Giggling Hemlock has patience without limit and will take the time necessary to introduce his toxins where least suspected.

Cicutus is a short, pudgy man with a round face and pasty skin, and typically wears the robes of a scribe when in public—instantly forgettable in areas where there are hundreds of others dressed similarly. However, his speech is sparse, precise, and punctuated by giggles at odd or inappropriate times, thus giving rise to his moniker.

Part of his price is that potential employers share a drink with him. He will let them know in advance, with a giggle, that this is to introduce the first half of a binary poison into their system. In actuality, he is a very astute judge of character, and only introduces the poison if he feels there is a real risk of betrayal.

What It Provides: Assassination or the introduction of a disease or other foreign substance into a target.

Prerequisites: Chem-Use and Common Lore (Underworld).

Resource Test Modifiers: Base Modifier –20; Assassin Career +5, Trade (Apothecary) +10, Master Chirurgeon +10.

Price/Cost: Hemlock insists upon a fee commensurate with the importance of the target, he also demands that his employers share a glass of ploin juice with him as detailed previously.

Korvakae

There comes a time when the value of an individual's network of connections exceeds the value of his body at the bottom of an underhive sump. Korvakae, commonly known as "Ears," has sown a network of criminal cells on many worlds throughout Calixis. She both travels and makes use of private astropaths to maintain her network, but few doubt her breadth of knowledge in criminal matters. She sells information to a select and influential clientele—those with the power or authority to remove individuals permanently.

Korvakae is a slender female whose noble bearing makes her seem tall even though she stands only 1.68 metres high. She has short-cropped blonde hair, and dresses in clothing whose simplicity betrays their elegance and often exorbitant price.



She deals only in information at the highest levels and typically requires payments in secrets. She will only deal with those who have no secrets to trade if they pique her curiosity in other ways, and even in those cases the cost in Thrones is high. On the other hand, she will not accept monetary payment from those who possess valuable information.

What It Provides: Information about nearly any criminal organization in the Calixis Sector.

Prerequisites: Common Lore (Underworld) and Peer (Underworld).

Resource Test Modifiers: Base Modifier –10; Scum Career +5, Arbitrator Career +5, Forbidden Lore (Underworld) +10, Good Reputation (Underworld) +5, Interrogation +5.

Price/Cost: Korvakae only accepts a fee in Thrones if interested in the individual, but demands payment in secrets if she feels the person has them to give.

Jastus Volens

Working as Senior Archivist in the Library of Knowing on Fenksworld, Jastus has unique access to many texts and sources of information unavailable to even sources within the Holy Ordos. His knowledge spans virtually every lore conceivable, often without regard to the mores and prejudices of the Imperium. Knowledge has become a drug for him, and while he continuously craves more, he's very careful not to delve into tomes that might unhinge his sanity or worse.

The Mechanicus blessed Jastus with several optical mechadendrites in exchange for undisclosed information, allowing him to peruse a number of volumes at the same time. Combined with the thick spectacles covering his eyes, he looks almost more like a Tech-Priest than an archivist.

Payment must consist of a book or tome that is not in the library's collection, an alternate transcription, or a more complete rendering of an existing work. The GM must be the final judge of what work would count as suitable recompense.

What It Provides: Information from any Common, Forbidden, or Scholastic Lore excepting those pertaining to the Warp, Ruinous Powers, or heretical rites.

Prerequisites: Adept or Tech-Priest Career.

Resource Test Modifiers: Base Modifier –20; Peer (Academics) +10, Peer (Adeptus Mechanicus) +5, Total Recall +10.

Price/Cost: One book or tome as described above.

Explorator Team X–120B

Adeptus Mechanicus Explorator Team X–120B has been roaming the outer regions of the Calixis Sector for nigh on a thousand years, moving from planet to planet and system to system, cataloguing evidence of alien races found there. Entire generations of excavators and xenoarchaeologists have lived and died whilst on a single excavation site on a single world, studiously cataloguing every shred of evidence that they find.

Explorator Team X–120B carries everything it needs with it, from huge crawlers that house the expedition to entire libraries of reports, catalogues, theories and discoveries. The Explorator Team even carries with it its own cogitators and analytica, to best draw conclusions about newly discovered artefacts whilst in the field.

An Acolyte might have need for the Explorator Team whilst investigating a mystery on an ancient alien world, hoping to draw on the extensive knowledge of the expedition.

What It Provides: Access to alien technology, insight into alien ruins, or extensive xenology resources.

Prerequisites: Scholastic Lore (any appropriate).

Resource Test Modifier: +0.

Price/Cost: Contact from the outside world in the form of messages or news.

The Pale Sepulchre

A kilometre long, the *Pale Sepulchre* thrusts through space like a splinter of rough graphite, a fifty-metre high bronze and marble angel gazing into oblivion from its prow. Its complement is small and the truly living crew fewer still, but then its passengers are the dead and they have few requirements that need attending. Only the Keepers—grey robed scribes with faces like fine tallow, who book the 'passengers' in and out in gigantic leather bound ledgers—have an inkling of how many dead the ship carries, and they prefer not to say. The entire structure of the ship, its crew and its wandering course are based around the commissions that the captain holds with the families of his 'passengers': Those who wish their remains returned to their birth world or buried in the sacred ground of a shrine world are taken in their lifeless hundreds by the ship, while those who are a single breath from death can travel in cryosuspension to a final destination of choice. The ship has plied its solemn trade for centuries, passing quietly from world to world taking on its cargo with whispered assurances and discharging its commissions with respectful precision. It may take many years for a passenger to reach their destination—but then the dead are in no hurry.

Beneath the outer skin of the ship are the great Corpse Halls. It is here that the majority of the 'passengers' are kept, bound in shrouds and resting on towering brass racks. Only servitors whose fleshly parts are next to none venture into these outer cavities of the ship, for the Corpse Halls are partially open to the void, the flesh of the passengers preserved by the coldness of the spaces between stars. These deathly spaces take up most of the internal volume of the ship. Access to this space is only via airlocks from the corridors that run the length of the ship. The corridors themselves are dotted with air locks, like the valves in a human vein, lest an accident occur.

What It Provides: The primary attraction of the *Pale Sepulchre* as a way of arriving or leaving somewhere is that it will raise no suspicion. As everyone knows, it only carries the dead. This most secret method of travel places those who make the journey in a state of suspended animation within the Corpse Vaults.

Prerequisites: None.

Resource Test Modifiers: Base Modifier –10; Peer (Underworld).

Price/Cost: The Keepers accept a fresh corpse for every 'passenger.'

Blasphemous Allies

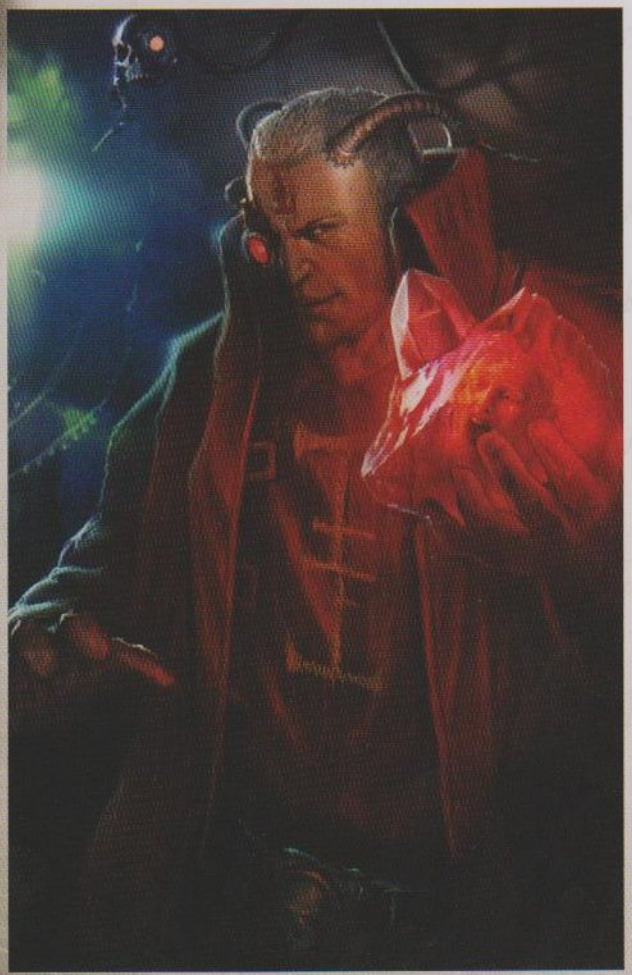
"This thing you call blasphemy was invented by your small-minded masters to define holes in their own doctrine."

–The Arch-Heretic Ingersoll

An Acolyte defines himself both by his actions and by the company he keeps. From the loyal cyber-mastiff to the treacherous feliraptor, even one's animal companions affects the perceptions of others. Some consorts have a much more inconspicuous presence, but can be doubly damning for it.

BEASTS

The various creatures and animals of the Calixis Sector can be more steadfast and loyal companions than many so-called allies. Properly trained, even wild creatures can become as devoted as a cyber-mastiff. However, not all members of the Inquisition view the use of xeno-beasts as orthodox, and depending on the type of creature, its mere presence can cause its master to be denounced as a heretic.



Expanded Wrangling

Even if one purchases a pre-trained animal from a carnivora, there will be a period of time where the animal and master will compete for primacy. Further training often takes many years, frequently strengthening the bond between the creature and its owner. However, whether breaking an untamed ursadon or teaching a bilge-rat a new trick, training is essential.

For any training, the GM selects the appropriate Difficulty, Duration, and Time Interval for the animal in question from **Table 4–3: Training Difficulty and Duration** on page 141.

The trainer must spend at least one hour a day with the animal during the Time Interval, and at the end of that interval, he makes a Wrangling Test and reduces the time remaining by one interval plus a number of additional intervals equal to the degrees of success. For each two degrees of failure, increase the necessary time by one interval. When the time remaining reaches zero, the behaviour has been trained.

Breaking the Beast

Bringing an animal in from the wild is a dangerous endeavour, requiring weeks of concentrated effort. More intelligent creatures may shorten this duration as they quickly learn to deal with humans and which behaviours reap rewards, but they can also use that comprehension to plot trouble—or escape. Before an animal has been broken from its natural behaviour, it will still act according to its instincts, including attacking the trainer, so precautions are advised.

Teaching the Basics

Once the creature is broken of its wild nature, the trainer may begin teaching the animal tricks and behaviours. These can be taught one at a time with any interval between instructions. Alternatively, if the group has a period of travel or inactivity, the GM can assume that the Acolytes spent the time training the animal, and grant the beast an appropriate level of training.

One of the more complex behaviours taught to an animal is how to effectively work with its master in combat. Until this valuable lesson has been learned, the chaos and confusion of combat temporarily causes the animal to revert back to its natural behaviour. However, aggressively-natured non-mounts will not automatically run if the initial Wrangling Test is failed. There is a 50% chance that the creature will turn on the nearest individual in the confusion of the moment and attack. If more than one individual qualifies, the GM rolls randomly to determine the target.

Mounts

Virtually any beast of appropriate size can be used as a mount if properly trained, but those not taught to deal with the sights and sounds of combat are far less reliable in a fight.

Table 4-3: Training Difficulty & Duration

Difficulty	Duration	Time Interval	Examples
Easy (+30)	1d5 Hours	1 Hour	Reinforcing natural behavior
Routine (+20)	2d5 Hours	1 Hour	Training simple tricks
Ordinary (+10)	1d5 Days	1 Day	Training moderate tricks or simple behaviors
Challenging (+0)	2d5 Days	1 Day	Saddle-breaking a mount
Difficult (–10)	1d5 Weeks	1 Week	Breaking a wild beast
Hard (–20)	2d5 Weeks	1 Week	Providing combat training
Very Hard (–30)	1d5 Months	1Month	Teaching very complex behaviors

Beasts of the Calixis Sector

Literally millions of creatures call the Calixis Sector their native ground, and an equal number have been imported, migrated, or wandered into the region. The entries below represent only the merest fraction of this diversity.

Feliraptor

Very difficult to capture, let alone adapt to a saddle, these massive felines are both rare and much sought after in the noble houses of Calixis. Adapted to cold environs, feliraptors have four main, motive limbs and two much smaller limbs high on their chest. Their oversized, furred paws have large retractable claws, and a razor-sharp set of teeth line their jaws, making them fearsome predators in the wild. Their fur tends toward light dappled greys, with rare darker colourations fetching top prices at beast moots.

They tend to bond with a single individual at a time, and can be quite hostile to others, even after relatively long associations. Despite their impressive resistance to injury, they are not long-distance mounts, and can fatigue easily if pressed into this role.

Feliraptor Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
35	—	45	40	35	15	31	15	—

Movement: 6/12/18/36 **Wounds:** 12
Skills: Awareness (Per), Climb (S) +10, Tracking (Int) +10.
Talents: Heightened Senses (Sight), Sprint.
Traits: Bestial, Natural Armour 2 (Fur), Natural Weapons (Bite, Claws), Quadruped, Size (Hulking).
Armour: All 2 (Primitive).
Weapons: Bite (1d10+7*R; Pen 0; Primitive), Claws (1d10+5*R; Pen 0; Primitive).
*Includes Strength Bonus
Fatigues Easily: For any tests related to Forced Marching or Running in Narrative Time (see pages 212-213 in Dark Heresy), this creature tests against half its Toughness.

Cerapede

Although this creature is an unusual companion, those that can see beyond this animal's unorthodox appearance find an intelligent and loyal cohort. Living in colonies of 100 or more, the cerapede is an extremely social creature, and adopts an entire group rather than a specific individual when "domesticated." Many unused to their appearance and behaviour may be alarmed by the cerapede's need for physical contact and intimacy, but groups who adopt one or more as companions often find their habits greatly endearing.

Sightless, they sense their surroundings by vibration and micro-changes in air density. Their great hardiness and armoured exoskeletons make up for their lack of ability to sense objects at a distance. Colonies form armoured mounds that are very difficult for predators to penetrate. This is not to say that they lack offensive weaponry; cerapedes have mandibles that can cut through even modern armour, and they are not afraid to use them in defence of their adopted colony.

Cerapede Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
30	—	25	35 (6)	25	15	25	20	—

Movement: 4/8/12/24 **Wounds:** 20
Skills: Awareness (Per) +10.
Talents: Unnatural Toughness (x2).
Traits: Blind, Burrower, Crawler, Improved Natural Weapons, Natural Armour 6 (Exo-Skeleton), Natural Weapons (Mandibles), Unnatural Senses (30m).
Armour: All 6 (Primitive)*.
Weapons: Bite (1d10+2*R; Pen 2).
* The Cerapede's underside is much more vulnerable and has only 2 points of primitive Armour.

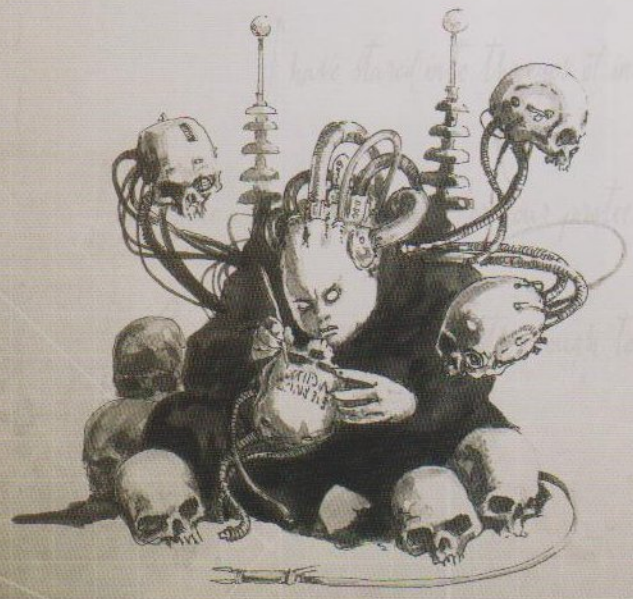
Shadow Tactics

"There is a war that is being fought beneath the skin of the Imperium. It is a war of forgotten warriors, fought with subtle weapons on battlefields that cannot be seen. It is the battle for the soul of the Emperor and the future of Mankind and one that we cannot afford to lose."

–Inquisitor Marr, in conversation with Lord Inquisitor Caidin

The shadow wars fought by the Inquisition are fought on the margins between criminality and righteousness, between heresy and necessity, between oblivion and salvation. In these forgotten wars, secrecy and lies pervade everything; acolyte cadres operate undercover and undeclared within the heart of hostile organisations. Trust can be given to no one and nothing. Sometimes such covert cadres may be operating deep within the Imperium to uncover heresies that are so powerful and pervasive that they have subverted all the arms and servants of the Imperium. Other covert acolyte cadres may serve an Inquisitor of Radical doctrine whose designs require them to work within the Imperium and in opposition to the forces of Imperial order.

In such shadowed operations, acolytes must rely on their skills, nerves and initiative to remain alive and complete their mission. Many also make use of specialised or adapted equipment that gives them a crucial edge in remaining undetected or achieving an objective unnoticed. Dubious tools—such as narcotics and assassination devices—are the weapons of such soldiers in the secret wars, where the hidden and unnoticeable is worth the firepower of ten thousand soldiers. Psykers who serve their Inquisitorial masters in secret will often bend their abilities in subtle ways to allow them to pass like ghosts through the masses of the Imperium.



Expanded Skills and Talents

A tool or technique can be used for more nefarious goals as well as those more noble. This section focuses on some of the more questionable uses of skills and talents, illustrating uses for less principled minds.

SKILLS

While Acolytes can certainly employ their skills for the Emperor's work, some feel the final result justifies any means. You can find some of these more Radical "means" below...

Charm

(Basic / Interaction)

Disarm

You are able to convince others of your honesty and sincerity, paving the way for later lies and betrayal. Various forms of deception become easier after captivating an audience with your charms.

A successful Charm Test reduces the Test Difficulty of a subsequent Deceive or Disguise Test by one level. Failure on the roll increases the difficulty by one level. As with Compel from page 226 of The Inquisitor's Handbook, you may attempt to gain a reduction of two levels by accepting a –20 modifier to your Charm test, but with an appropriate GM-dictated outrage if they discover the deception.

Chem-Use

(Advanced / Crafting, Investigation)

Chemical Interrogation

With a suitable supply of truth serums and other drugs, Acolytes can significantly increase their chances of success with an interrogation. Various substances can skew a subject's perspective and sap his will.

An Acolyte that makes a successful Chem-Use Test as part of an investigation gains a +10 bonus to his WP for the following Opposed Interrogation Test. This bonus does stack with the use of specific drugs, such as Explicator Serum on page 159.

False Façade

A skilled chymist can produce cosmetics and other materials to enhance disguises—anything from a paste that raises actual boils and lesions to skins that enhance prosthetics for

The Augustinian Conventions

Credited to a famed and infamous Inquisitor who operated in far and dread Mandragora Sector the Augustinian Conventions are a set of rules that guide the actions of acolytes operating under Special Condition, undeclared to Imperial Authorities or in environments that are hostile. Probably apocryphal the Conventions have circulated widely by word of mouth amongst the Holy Ordos and its servants and are held by many to encapsulate the fundamentals of surviving as a covert agent.

- Trust no one
- Nothing can be assumed
- The knowledge of the enemy is the equal or superior to your own
- A device relied upon will prove fallible
- Trust in the Emperor and his guiding grace; listen to his voice in your soul
- Even the ignorant can be tools of the enemy
- No lie must be without truth
- The enemy is everywhere
- The eyes of the enemy are on you
- Innocence proves nothing

mimicking mutations. Many such cosmetics include custom paints that perfectly match the surrounding environment. These concoctions can also provide an advantage in societies that see specific makeup or skin tones as more comely.

Given sufficient raw materials, success in a Chem-Use Test will enhance Disguise and Concealment Tests by +10. In situations deemed appropriate by the GM, this could result in +10 to Charm Tests instead.

Concealment

(Basic)

Concealing Objects

In addition to concealing others, as outlined on page 228 of **The Inquisitor's Handbook**, you can also use Concealment to hide objects, such as caches, dead drops or secret messages. You can also use it in conjunction with Booby-Traps (see page 229 in **The Inquisitor's Handbook**) to enhance their camouflage.

When hiding objects, signs, and messages in association with the Ciphers and Secret Tongue skills, you use the results of the Concealment Test to oppose any Awareness or Scrutiny tests made to see or find the material. The truly paranoid often leave a series of hidden, ciphered directions that eventually lead to a dead drop.

If used to hide booby-traps or other snares, use the Concealment Test in place of the Demolitions Test results. Note that if the result is worse, it still replaces the previous roll!

Disguise

(Basic / Fellowship, Interaction)

Studied Deception

Impersonation, as noted on page 230 of **The Inquisitor's Handbook**, is far more difficult than simple misdirection. However, with proper prior planning, even this daunting task can become less formidable. Long-term personal observation, remote monitoring, and background investigation can provide enormous assistance in assuming another's identity. Treat this as an Investigation (see page 186 of the **Dark Heresy** Rulebook), where the difficulty relates to the number and familiarity of those deceived:

Situation	Difficulty	Time
A few remote acquaintances	Challenging (+0)	72 Hours
Several casual colleagues	Difficult (–10)	14 Days
Many closer friends	Hard (–20)	1 month
A crowd of family & relations	Very Hard (–30)	1d5 Months

The GM may adjust the difficulty up or down depending on the reclusiveness of the target, but never to less than Challenging (+0). Success in the investigation reduces the difficulty of Impersonation by two levels of difficulty.

Long-Term Imitation

There may be times when an Acolyte must maintain a deception for day, weeks, or even months. While astonishingly difficult, it can yield amazing rewards for the bold or foolhardy.

The GM assigns Disguise Tests at difficulties and intervals appropriate to the situation. Use the Studied Deception chart as a guide for difficulty, with tests varying between once a day for a recluse or once an hour for a very public persona. The individuals encountered may still have their individual reactions to the test, but the GM should keep track of the accumulated total of degrees of success and degrees of failure. Should the total degrees of failure ever exceed the degrees of success by more than five, the Acolyte's cover has been blown.

Until that time, individuals bested by individual Disguise Tests will treat the Acolyte as if they were the individual being mimicked.

Interrogation

(Advanced / Investigation)

Deceptive Questioning

Interrogation need not always be a short process, taking days instead of hours, and also can employ far more subtle methods than chirurgical instruments. If an interrogator has the luxury of time on their side, they can utilize subtle psychological tools to help their quest for information, controlling all access to the outside world and the subject's perception of reality.

If the interrogator changes the time necessary for each test from 1d5 hours to 1d5 days, decrease the level of difficulty by one step. The consequences for failure, however, remain the same.

Breaking the Will

The goal of interrogation can be things other than information. Over a period of time, captives begin to form a bond with their captors, deprived of any other meaningful sensory input. If you wish to use this technique, the subject must be held in isolation and the duration of the tests will be extended to 1d5 hours as with Deceptive Questioning. These tests can also yield information, but the GM should keep a tally of the cumulative degrees of success and failure. Should the total of one ever exceed the other by 10, one of two things has happened:

If successes outweigh failures by 10 or more, the interrogator has broken his subject, who will now give up any information that they may possess. The target also gains 1d5 Insanity Points.

If failures total 10 or more than successes, the individual being questioned has managed to form an impenetrable barrier against interrogation, and no more information may be obtained.

Intimidate

(Basic / Interaction)

Coerce

While intimidation has an immediate effect when used to cow a threat, it can also be used to force an individual to commit actions they would otherwise never do. Obviously, the more abhorrent the act, the more difficult it will be to convince them to do it. Things like leaving a door unlocked or misfiling a paper would be far easier than setting a fire or sending others into harm's way. This sort of intimidation takes more time than the normal type, requiring 1d5 x 10 minutes of interaction to properly "convince" the subject.

The GM should apply situational modifiers appropriate to the task involved and the available means of coercion, but can use the following as a guide:

Modifier	Task	Coercion
+30	Looking the other way	Life-destroying evidence
+20	Misfiling a paper	Credible threat against relative
+10	Leaving a door unlocked	Information harming career
0	Losing a report	Threat of personal harm
–10	Turning a security system off	Personal embarrassment
–20	Breaking a piece of equipment	Information on associate
–30	Starting a fire; causing harm	Weak or unlikely threat

Medicae

(Advanced)

Prosthetic Deception

With your advanced knowledge of anatomy and physiology, you have the ability to make uncannily lifelike prosthetics to assist in disguises. While truly advanced deceptions, such as additional limbs or motive tentacles would require the appropriate use of the Crafting rules from pages 245–248 of The Inquisitor's Handbook, you can help craft a convincing disguise. Of course it always helps if you possess the correct (often proscribed) knowledge to make the deception truly authentic.

A successful Medicae test, along with 1d5 hours of labour, will create appropriate prosthetics—such as dental caps, dermal adhesions, and the like—to give the subject a +10 bonus to their Disguise tests. If the subject of the disguise is a mutant or Xeno, the GM may require that the medicae has the associated Forbidden Lore skill.

Torment

Medicae also have advanced knowledge of pressure points, nerve clusters, and other techniques that can greatly aid in interrogations. These techniques need not involve pain or harm to the victim; waking to find yourself completely paralyzed or unable to feel any sensation can be infinitely more disturbing than more "traditional" methods, and skilled physicians can induce these states and much more. Of course, using their skills in such a manner violates the oaths of the Officio Medicae and potentially their conscience.

As with Prosthetic Deception, advanced knowledge may be required for particularly strange or alien specimens, but success in a Medicae roll will grant a +10 bonus to an

Interrogation Test. This task requires 1d5 hours, causes a level of Fatigue in the target, and carries the same consequences of failure as interrogation in terms of damage and WP test bonuses against future attempts.

Scrutiny

(Basic)

Observation

An Acolyte can also use Scrutiny for extended studies of an individual's lifestyle, personality, hidden habits, and an assortment of other useful information. Sometimes simple observation can yield more information than interrogation or other more direct methods. In order for this technique to be effective, the watcher must keep himself completely hidden from the target, who would obviously change his habits if he became aware of the scrutiny.

Each Observation attempt requires 1d5 days, and the GM should assign a test difficulty in accordance with the obscurity or security in relation to the target. For each degree of success, the watcher obtains one piece of information about the watched, though this need not be the information they seek! The result should not be useless or trivial, and as GM this can be a careful balancing act, though also an opportunity to gently nudge the plot in the right direction.

Security

(Advanced)

Strategic Entry

Although the Security skill generally focuses on the tactical aspects of defeating a system, it also has its uses in finding weak points in the defensive system involved. Careful study of a building might reveal that one of the locks is of substandard quality or that sensors fail to cover the weed-choked culvert behind the facility. The skill can help determine where to strike instead of just how. This can also be used to find the weak spot in one's own defences.

Security Tests made in this manner should test against Awareness rather than Agility, and requires 1d5 hours. The GM can adjust the time necessary upward in increments of 1d5 additional hours for particularly large or complex systems.

Safeguard

You have studied the techniques and procedures necessary to keep your charge safe and secure. This can include electronic and physical security systems, as well as guards, and focuses on the overall picture rather than any individual safeguard.

Make your Security Test against Intelligence instead of Agility, and use the results of the roll for Opposed Tests against Strategic Entry attempts or general probes against your safeguards. This should not be used against any specific intrusion attempt, such as picking the lock on a door that happens to be part of your system.



Roleplaying Skill Tests

Many of the expanded skills presented here and in The Inquisitor's Handbook require minutes or hours instead of seconds. If your game group prefers to fast-forward past these extended tests, you need only make the roll and assume the time has passed. However, these tests offer a potentially rich roleplaying opportunity.

It's certainly possible to make an Observation roll, say three days have gone by, and simply let your Acolyte know that the target has been seeing a mid-hive joygirl and is purchasing obscura. However, with the same roll, you can roleplay the three days, involving the entire group, and have them tail their quarry through the lower underhive and encounter all sorts of unsavory folk looking either to sell some of their meagre goods to the PC's or to kill them in order to scavenge the corpses.

TALENTS

While the use of skills provides the most direct evidence of influence by the darker aspects of one's personality, talents can also have effects more suited to the shadows and alleys than the high halls of hive spires.

Air of Authority

The appearance of authority influences others in many ways. Those that act with confidence and resolve encounter far fewer questions than the insecure. By taking a –10 penalty to Deceive Tests, they can affect a number of targets equal to 1d10 plus your Fellowship Bonus.

Disturbing Voice

Cult leaders motivate their flock by fear far more frequently than by example, and while most Acolytes don't use these techniques, they can be rewarding for those adept at these methods. This talent grants a +10 bonus to Command tests if the Acolyte has intimidated the individual or group in the past.

Fearless

Panic need not only apply to combat. If the player and GM agree when the Acolyte takes this talent, it can apply to covert operations and deception as well as combat. The Acolyte lowers the difficulty of Security or Tech-Use (is made against a security system) by one level, but must make a Willpower Test to cease tampering.

Good Reputation

Though only briefly touched upon in the main rules, Good reputation can apply to radical groups just as easily as it can to more traditional ones. If your players continue to assist a less-than-reputable organisations, fighting fire with fire, allow them to further this relationship with an Elite Advance, though discovery of such a close bond by the wrong people could have dire consequences.

Blasphemous Talents

Good Reputation

The GM should expand the available Talent Groups from those given in the **Dark Heresy** rulebook on page 116 to include those both those given for the Rival and Enemy talents below and any appropriate to the campaign. By granting Acolytes a good reputation with the wrong people, such as heretical organizations or cults, they must balance their two circles, which can be quite complex at social gatherings where both may be represented. This can offer a wealth of roleplaying opportunities for your group.

Rival

Talent Groups: Academics, Adepta Sororitas, Adeptus Arbites, Adeptus Mechanicus, Administratum, Astropaths, Ecclesiarchy, Feral Worlders, Government, Hivers, Imperial Guard, Imperial Navy, Inquisition, Middle Class, Military, Nobility, Underworld, Void Born, Workers.

Essentially the opposite of Peer (see page 120 in the **Dark Heresy** Rulebook), this talent represents aggressive competition and some animosity with a particular social group or organization. You suffer a –10 penalty to all Fellowship tests when interacting with the group in question.

The GM and player may agree to award this talent when appropriate to the storyline. This talent may be removed with an Elite Advance and the approval of the GM if the player has taken suitable actions to earn the trust of the group.

Peer

As with Good Reputation, the Talent Group for Peer should be expanded to include all the requisite organizations for your campaign. By creative use of the Peer and Rival talents, you and your players can set up dynamic conflicts between power groups within or without their number.

Enemy

Talent Groups: Academics, Adepta Sororitas, Adeptus Arbites, Adeptus Mechanicus, Administratum, Astropaths, Ecclesiarchy, Feral Worlders, Government, Hivers, Imperial Guard, Imperial Navy, Inquisition, Middle Class, Military, Nobility, Underworld, Void Born, Workers

The opposite of Good Reputation (see page 116 in the **Dark Heresy** Rulebook), you are particularly despised by a specific social group or organization. You suffer an additional –10 penalty to Fellowship Tests when dealing with this group. This talent is cumulative with the Rival talent, for a total –20 penalty.

The GM and player may agree to award this talent when appropriate to the adventure or campaign. This talent can be removed with an Elite Advance and the approval of the GM if the Acolyte has redeemed herself with the group in question.

Hatred

This is another talent where the reversal of the standard groups can lead to interesting situations and excellent roleplaying opportunities. If a faction of the Inquisition or Imperial organisation wrongs the Acolyte during the course of a scenario, make the appropriate Hatred talent available to them after the session. They needn't accept the offer if they're willing to forgive, but should they desire revenge…

Rite of Awe

Radical Tech-Priests may choose an alternate use of this talent before they begin the liturgy. Instead of the normal effect, you can choose to receive a +10 bonus to your next Command or Intimidate Test on any target(s) within the area of effect.

Rite of Fear

Before beginning the rite, the Tech-Priest may choose this alternate effect: he receives a +10 bonus to his next Interrogation or Intimidate Test on any individual(s) within the 50m radius.

Unremarkable

In the shadow war, this talent becomes doubly effective, as the –20 penalty applies to all tests involving observation of you and study of your habits. However, outside your inner circle of companions, others may not recall enough about your looks or persona to effectively counter those imitating you!

From the Journals of Inquisitor Felroth Gelt, 209.702.M40

I cast down a false priest in the warrens of Tranch today. The cleric I faced spoke pious words, but his mien was arrogant, and he bore with him a chainsword tainted by the power of an unclean spirit.

Thrice I called upon him to surrender, and thrice he refused. I disabled him with the assistance of my vat-psyker, code-designate IV. Thus prostrated, the cleric was no further threat, but I felt compelled to ask him why he had turned against the Holy Ordos.

His answer concerned me deeply. The cleric's response: "I too serve the Inquisition..."





Psychic Powers

"Tell who you like: no one will believe you. I have given them every reason not to."

–words attributed to the "true killer" of Governor Silas Gal, executed for his murder in 789.M41

Psychic powers can have applications that are so subtle as to be unnoticeable but are none the less potent weapons in the covert war waged by servants of the Inquisition. A subtle minded psyker is a potent infiltrator and subverter who uses their power to pass with out trace and leave no recollection in the minds on those that see them. The acquiring and honing of such power may be specifically taught to a psyker who serves a radical Inquisitor or may be acquired through experience and grim necessity.

MINOR POWERS

All the powers presented here are minor psychic powers that may be taken by any psyker. All of these powers, however, focus on the use of psychic ability as a part of deception and infiltration and so will especially suit psykers that are part of an acolyte cadre that frequently operates covertly.

Cipher Seed

Threshold: 9
Focus Time: Full Action
Sustained: No
Range: Touch

You can attach an image or simple message to an individual, which is triggered into the mind of the designated recipient via touch. The psyker implants the image in the target, who then unknowingly carries it with him until touched by the proper individual. The image or message passes into the mind of the recipient upon contact. This allows for the passage of truly secure messages. The message can be a symbol or sentence of no more than 5 words.

Disintegrating Directive

Threshold: 6
Focus Time: Full Action
Sustained: No
Range: Touch

Placed upon a small item, such as a scrap of parchment or data wafer, you cause the object to disintegrate under a specific set of circumstances. For example, you might cause a letter to vaporize after being read, or a micro-bead to destruct after receiving a message. The item must be in your sole possession and cannot be connected to a larger whole when you use this power. Thus, it would work on a tiny gear, but not if the gear is still within a chronograph.

The Question of Psychic Adepts

The Adept Career Path presented in the **Dark Heresy** Rulebook includes Advances in two of its ranks (Loremaster on page 48 and Magister on page 49 of the Career Paths chapter) that give an Adept character the ability to become a psyker in middle of a campaign. These Advances were intended to represent these characters gaining psychic ability through studying occult mysteries and forbidden lore. It does, however, raise the question of whether these psychic adepts are sanctioned and where their power comes from. Three options for how you may want to deal with these questions are presented here:

Sorcery: The psychic powers open to Loremasters and Magisters are in fact knowledge of sorcery gained through forbidden research. Swap the Loremaster's Psy-Rating 1 Advance for Sorcery and add in Forbidden Lore (Warp) (Int) and Forbidden Lore (Warp) (Int) +10 as two advances for 100 points each. In the Magister rank, remove the Minor Psychic Power and Psy-Rating 2 Advances and swap the Psy-Rating 3 Advance for Master Sorcerer.

Sanctioned Psyker: When the Adept takes the Loremaster Psy-Rating 1 Advance, they are trained and sanctioned as a psyker. The character takes a suitable time out from play and gains the Sanctioned Psyker Trait (see page 26 of the **Dark Heresy** Rulebook).

Rogue Psyker: Rather than taking a psy-rating, an Adept who passes through the Loremaster Rank may become a Nascent Psyker (see pages 89-90 of **The Inquisitor's Handbook**). If the psychic power involved is suitably 'discreet,' the character may not even be aware that he possesses it, (although of course the player does!), and wield it subconsciously, simply believing it to be a 'knack' or good fortune, at least at the beginning…

Distortion

Threshold: 6
Focus Time: Full Action
Sustained: Yes
Range: Touch

You can make the features and voice of the subject into a shifting, unrecognisable distortion of its true nature, a disturbing sequence of random faces and voices. Those interacting with you will be totally unable to recognise you or even determine your gender.

Familiar Bond

Threshold: 10
Focus Time: Full Action
Sustained: No
Range: Touch

Typically used by wyrds, witches, or other unsanctioned psykers, you can create a mental bond with an animal that enables you to work in concert with the beast, which also acts as a Psy-Focus as detailed on page 151 of the **Dark Heresy** rulebook. The familiar acts on the same turn as its master, but unlike Cyber or Psyber familiars, it can act of its own accord, utilizing its innate intelligence and abilities. The death of a familiar can be quite traumatic for the psyker, causing a –10 penalty to all tests for 1d5 hours after the demise. A psyker may only have a bond with one creature at a time.

Haywire

Threshold: 10
Focus Time: Full Action
Sustained: No
Range: 25m

You focus disruptive energies into the heart of an electronic device, causing it to temporarily malfunction. The power effectively Stuns the target for one Round. Beings with mechanical elements, such as servitors or Tech-Priests can negate the effect with a successful Willpower Test. However, failure means their mechanical elements cease to function properly for one Round.

Overbleed: For every 10 points by which you exceed the Threshold, you affect one additional target.

Mutable Features

Threshold: 8
Focus Time: Full Action
Sustained: Yes
Range: You

So long as an individual's looks and facial features are well known, you can alter the perception of those around you, making them see you as that individual. Those observing you must make a **Challenging (+0) Willpower Test** to see through the deception.

Overbleed: For every 5 points by which you exceed the Threshold, the difficulty of the Willpower Test increases by one level.

Sense Mechanism

Threshold: 7
Focus Time: Half Action
Sustained: Yes
Range: 50m

By extending your vision into the Warp and perceiving the shadows of the physical universe, you can sense machinery and constructs within the area. This does not grant you knowledge of their function, but simply their form and location. The presence of living beings blocks the line of sight beyond them, as they possess a far brighter presence in the Warp than physical objects.

Overbleed: For every 10 points by which you exceed the Threshold, you can extend the range by 10 metres.

Table 4-4: Psychic Powers

Name	Threshold	Focus Time	Sustain
Cipher Seed	9	Full Action	No
Disintigrating Directive	6	Full Action	No
Distortion	6	Full Action	Yes
Familiar Bond	10	Full Action	No
Haywire	10	Full Action	No
Mutable Features	8	Full Action	Yes
Sense Mechanism	7	Half Action	Yes
Trusting Aura	7	Full Action	Yes
Truth Seeker	6	Full Action	Yes
Twitch	5	Half Action	No
Without a Trace	6	Half Action	Yes

Trusting Aura

Threshold: 7
Focus Time: Full Action
Sustained: Yes
Range: You
You subtly alter your persona to inspire trust in others. Those around you are naturally inclined to believe what you say or see your arguments as more reasonable. Gain a +10 bonus to any Interaction skill while sustaining this power.

Overbleed: If you exceed the Threshold by 10 points, the bonus increases to +20.



Truth-Seeker

Threshold: 6
Focus Time: Full Action
Sustained: Yes
Range: Touch
It is very difficult to lie to you while affected by this power. While affected, the subject must make a **Challenging (+0) Willpower Test** in order to utter a falsehood. Note that they may choose to remain silent rather than respond.

Overbleed: For every 5 points by which you exceed the Threshold, the difficulty of the test increases by one level.

Twitch

Threshold: 5
Focus Time: Half Action
Sustained: No
Range: 20m
You can cause a momentary inattention in another, causing them to glance to one side, scratch an itch, or similar distraction. The subject suffers a –20 penalty to Perception-based tests for their next turn.

Overbleed: For every 10 points by which you exceed the Threshold, you extend the duration of the distraction by one additional turn.

Without a Trace

Threshold: 6
Focus Time: Half Action
Sustained: Yes
Range: You
You leave no tracks or evidence of your passage, including technological systems such as pict-recordings or other data stores. This does not mean that your presence cannot be seen or detected at the present time, and you trigger alarms or pitfalls normally.

Shadow Gear

"The machine can betray you, but can also save your life. Do not trust them but take what they offer as divine endorsement of your mission."

–Interrogator Sand to acolytes under his command

Woe to the individual who fails to equip themselves for the shadow war. The same gear and weapons that work so well against the alien or damned soul may fail in more subtle environs. Weapons that slip quietly into a sleeve or have unusual capabilities, armour that conceals and disguises its nature, and specialised equipment and drugs are better suited for unlicensed interrogation chambers than the streets and tunnels of a hive city.

Ranged Weapons

"The weapon that kills without elegance is an abomination."

–Tobias Belasco

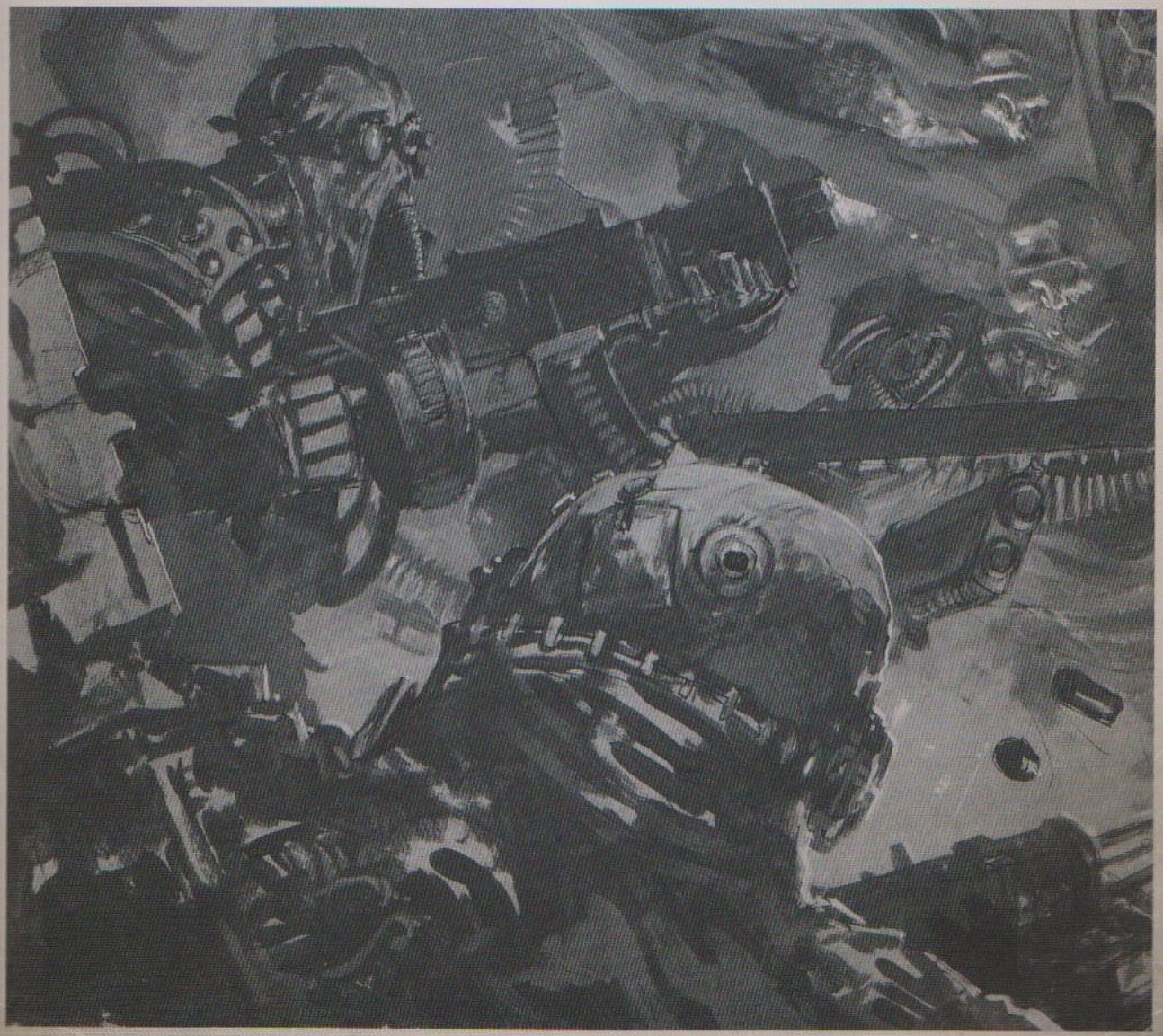
Haywire Rifle

Class: Basic (SP)

Proscribed by the Adeptus Mechanicus for its effects on their holy engines, this short, brutish weapon fires large-calibre rounds specifically designed to defeat servitors and other mechanical constructs. The ammunition contains a directed energy discharge that effectively passes through augmetic armour or machine plating. A woefully slow rate of fire and short range counter this useful trait.

Whilst useful for missions where the nature of the defences is known in advance, it has limited use against more varied targets.

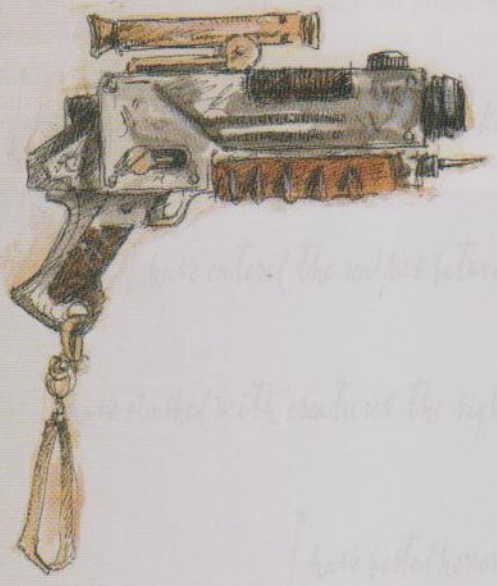
The Haywire Rifle doubles its Pen value against targets with the Machine tTait, or those judged by the GM to be similar in nature (such as the lock system for a blast door).



Snare Gun

Class: Basic (SP)
When bringing one's quarry in alive is of tantamount importance, those without access to more sophisticated weapons (such as webbers) will resort to this more simple, yet still effective weapon. It fires a snare at the end of a spool of thin adamantine cable, lassoing the target and allowing them to be reeled in. The spool has a quick release so if the quarry becomes too much to handle, the entire weapon isn't lost.

When struck by this weapon, the snared victim makes an Opposed Test using their Strength or Agility against the firer's Strength to break free.



Melee Weapons

"I am sorry it had to be you; you have such promises, but I serve a higher purpose. A purpose that you can only serve by your death."

–words spoken by Seraph to Exlpicator Bern

Spindlethorn Sieve Blade

Original examples of this weapon were made from the hollow, spiky fronds of the spindlethorn plant, where it would be loaded with the venomous sap of the same plant for use against predators. While some "purists" insist on a weapon grown in the old ways, similar examples constructed from modern materials have become popular with a number of cults and Assassinorum operatives. The flat sides of the blade have hundreds of tiny holes, allowing the substance inside to spread into any wound it causes.

Any hit with a Spindlethorn Sieve Blade that causes at least one Wound will also "inject" a dose of whatever substance its owner has placed in the hollow. However, due to the indiscriminate nature of its delivery system, a dose is expended out of the blade on any hit, not only the attack that inflicts Wounds.

Shock Gauntlets

Underhivers and low-life enforcers often refer to these gloves as the poor man's power fist. Crude versions look very much like an armoured gauntlet laced with power cables, while advanced designs look no more obtrusive than a heavy glove. They can be devastating in brawls or other situations where an opponent might not suspect their presence till far too late.

The gauntlets can deliver the effects of the Shocking quality with an unarmed strike per the normal rules, but can also discharge at any time they have contact with a victim's skin, such as grappling an unarmoured opponent or dancing at a formal occasion.

Table 4-5: Weapons

Ranged Weapons

Name	Class	Range	RoF	Dam	Pen	Clip	Rld	Special	Wt	Cost	Availability
Haywire Rifle	Basic	10m	1/–/–	1d10+3 I	2*	6	1 Full	-	5 kg	400	Very Rare
Snare Gun	Basic	30m	1/–/–	—	0	1	1 Full	Snare	3.5 kg	100	Scarce

Melee Weapons

Name	Class	Range	Dam	Pen	Special	Wt	Cost	Availability
Garrotte	Melee	—	1d10 R	0	Flexible, Primitive	0.5 kg	200	Scarce
Sieve Blade	Melee	—	1d10–1 R	0	Primitive	0.5 kg	75	Scarce
Shock Gauntlets	Melee	—	1d5 E	0	Shocking	1.0 kg	100	Scarce

The bulk and appearance of Shock Gauntlets is directly related to their quality. The attributes below are in addition to the regular Craftsmanship modifiers:

Poor: Large and covered with power cabling, these poorly wrought examples have the Unwieldy quality and any attempt to conceal their true nature suffers a –20 penalty

Common: These have an appearance similar to power armour gauntlets, with obvious wires leading up the forearm.

Good: No more bulky than the reinforced gloves of carapace armour, they can almost pass as regular armour. The wearer gains a +10 bonus for attempts to hide the weapon's purpose.

Best: Only master artisans have the skill to create these works of art. They have the appearance of mesh or leather and can even pass for stylish clothing in the upper hive. The wearer gains a +20 bonus to conceal the nature of these gloves.

Garrotte

In the hands of a master, the humble garrotte can be every bit as lethal as a boltgun, but this weapon has an added advantage for those who need to bring in their targets alive. Due to the close proximity necessary to use this weapon, the Moritat death cult consider it one of the last and most intimate martial forms taught to their members.

All attacks with a garrotte are counted as Called Shots to the Head, and as such suffer a –20 penalty to hit. Subsequent attacks after a successful hit, regardless of damage, receive a +30 bonus. Should the weapon cause damage to the target after armour reduction, the attacker may cause Wounds normally or inflict half the value, rounded up, in Fatigue. Rules for Fatigue can be found on page 200 of the **Dark Heresy** rulebook.

WEAPON UPGRADES

"There is no blade that could not be sharper."

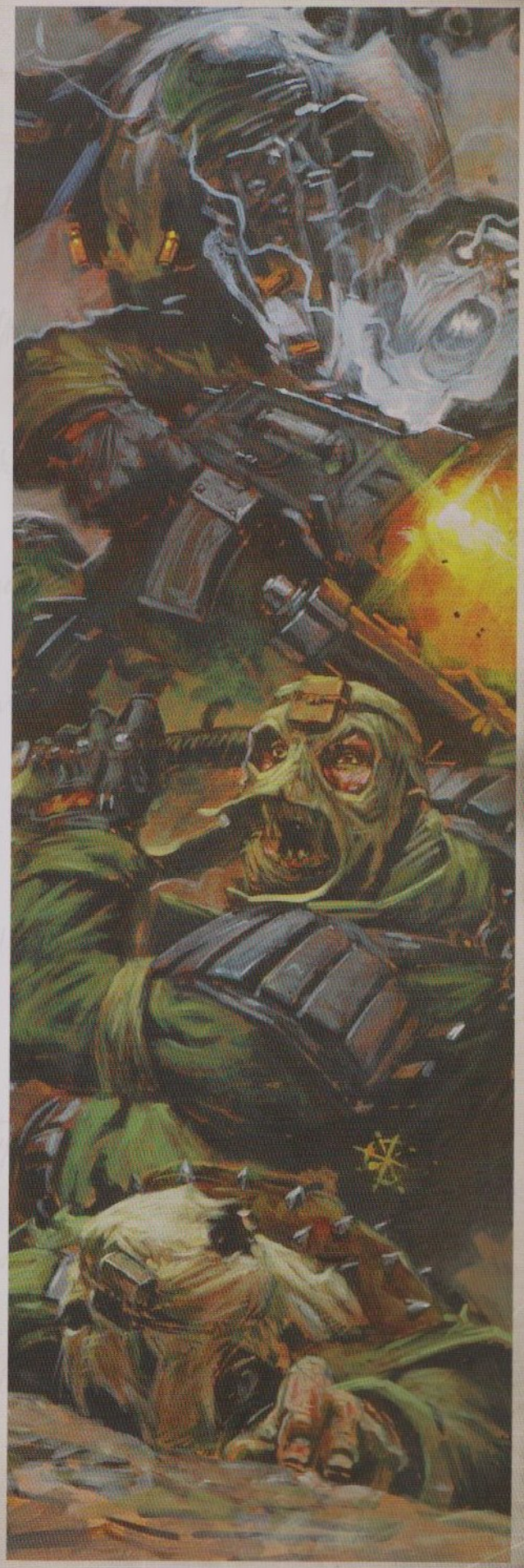
–Landrian proverb

Combi-Weapons

Master Armourers of the Commercia Houses can combine two weapons into single deadly instrument, yielding custom combinations for any situation of combat style. Though expensive and very difficult to obtain, these finely crafted works often become heirlooms.

Any Basic weapon can have a second Basic-class weapon added to its frame to create a combi-weapon. The firer may chose to attack with either weapon, but not both. All the secondary weapon's characteristics remain the same except for ammunition, which is half the listed value (rounded up), and cost, which is doubled.

If using the Crafting rules from page 245 of **The Inquisitor's Handbook**, this is a Difficult (–10) job with a Duration of Weeks. If the Acolyte doesn't possess the Trade (Armourer) skill, the price of such creations is double the sum of both weapon costs after any modifications for Craftsmanship.



ARMOUR

"The best armour is to never be seen."

–old Terran proverb

Cameleoline Combat Armour

Typically only used by the Lathes' Secutor Skitarii and select Ordo operatives, this armour combines the best traits of Light carapace armour with the masking effects of cameleoline technology. However, it only works against visual detection, making it a poor choice for advanced stealth requirements.

The wearer gains the same effect as a cameleoline cloak, +20 to Concealment Tests and counting as if one Range bracket further away against ranged attacks if stationary.

Mask Bodyglove

While visual masking will confound sentries and simple scans, often one's own body heat will give you away to an auspex with thermal capability. The Mask Bodyglove uses a canister of liquid cooling agent that circulates through capillaries throughout the exterior of the garment, bringing the wearer's heat signature level with the environment. As those who need such things often find themselves in harm's way, it also has flak-cloth panels covering most vital areas.

The mask bodyglove provides a +20 bonus to Concealment Tests when opposed by infrared sensors of creatures whose sight is based on heat.

Blur Suit

Some Xenologists call the Blur field "a poor imitation of an Eldar holofield"—usually moments before their apprehension by an Ordo hit squad. In truth, in an effort to mimic other technologies the Mechanicus created a unique effect. The effect does not hide so much as distort the user's outline, rendering it difficult to focus upon or identify. The field has the added bonus that it causes a similar effect against electronic systems, foiling those that rely upon pattern recognition.

The field generators require a standard power cell to operate, and employ a complex network of wiring that can cause damage to the user when torn or punctured.

This suit imposes a –10 penalty against all sight-based tests against the user when activated, including both ranged and close combat attacks. However, should the wearer take any damage that penetrates the suit, add two to the damage of the attack. Activating or deactivating the field requires a Half Action, and the power cell will last two minutes (24 Rounds).

Shock Carapace

Used by the elite "White Hand" Arbites Riot Squads of Scintilla, these formidable suits of heavy carapace have a shock field integrated into their armoured plates, delivering an unwelcome surprise to those that strike them in close combat. Underhivers of Hive Sibellus refer to these suits as Spark Plates and sometimes wrap their hands in paper detritus in an attempt to counter its effects.

Any successful hit to Shock Carapace with a conductive weapon—any close combat weapon not made of wood, ceramite or glass—results in a Toughness Test as if the attacker had been hit in the arm with a weapon with the Shocking quality.

ARMOUR UPGRADES

Cameleoline Coating

This coating mimics the colours surrounding its user, just like the cloak of the same name, but is integrated into an armoured surface. Supplementing armour with cameleoline coating requires a skilled tradesman with Trade (Armourer) and adds 1,000 thrones to the cost. The effects are exactly as if the user were wearing a cameleoline cloak.

Preysense Mask

Artisans can add the fine mesh of cooling capillaries and the necessary circulatory system to a set of armour. This challenging task requires a craftsman with the Trade (Armourer) skill and adds 500 Thrones to the price. The net result is the same as described in the Mask Bodyglove above.

Table 4-6: Armour

Armour Type	Locations Covered	AP	Wt	Cost	Availabiity
Cameleoline Combat Armour	Head, Body, Arms, Legs	5	17 kg	1000	Very Rare
Mask Bodyglove	Body, Arms, Legs	2	6 kg	650	Rare
Blur Field	Head, Body, Arms, Legs	2	7 kg	750	Rare
Shock Carapace	Body Arms, Legs	6	19 kg	5000	Vey Rare

Blur

Far more difficult to integrate into armours than most other additions, the complex network of nodules cause an individual's image to distort and fog, making it very difficult to make out their silhouette or features. The person adding this modification must have Trade (Armourer) +10, and it adds 1,000 thrones to the cost. The game effects are the same as described in the Blur Suit above, including the additional damage for penetrating hits.

Shock-Field

This modification can only be added to armours with an AP value equal to or greater than 4 due to the rigid substrate necessary for proper function. This addition also calls for a skilled artisan of at least Trade (Armourer) +10, and adds 2,000 thrones to the price. The results are the same as described in the Shock Carapace entry above.

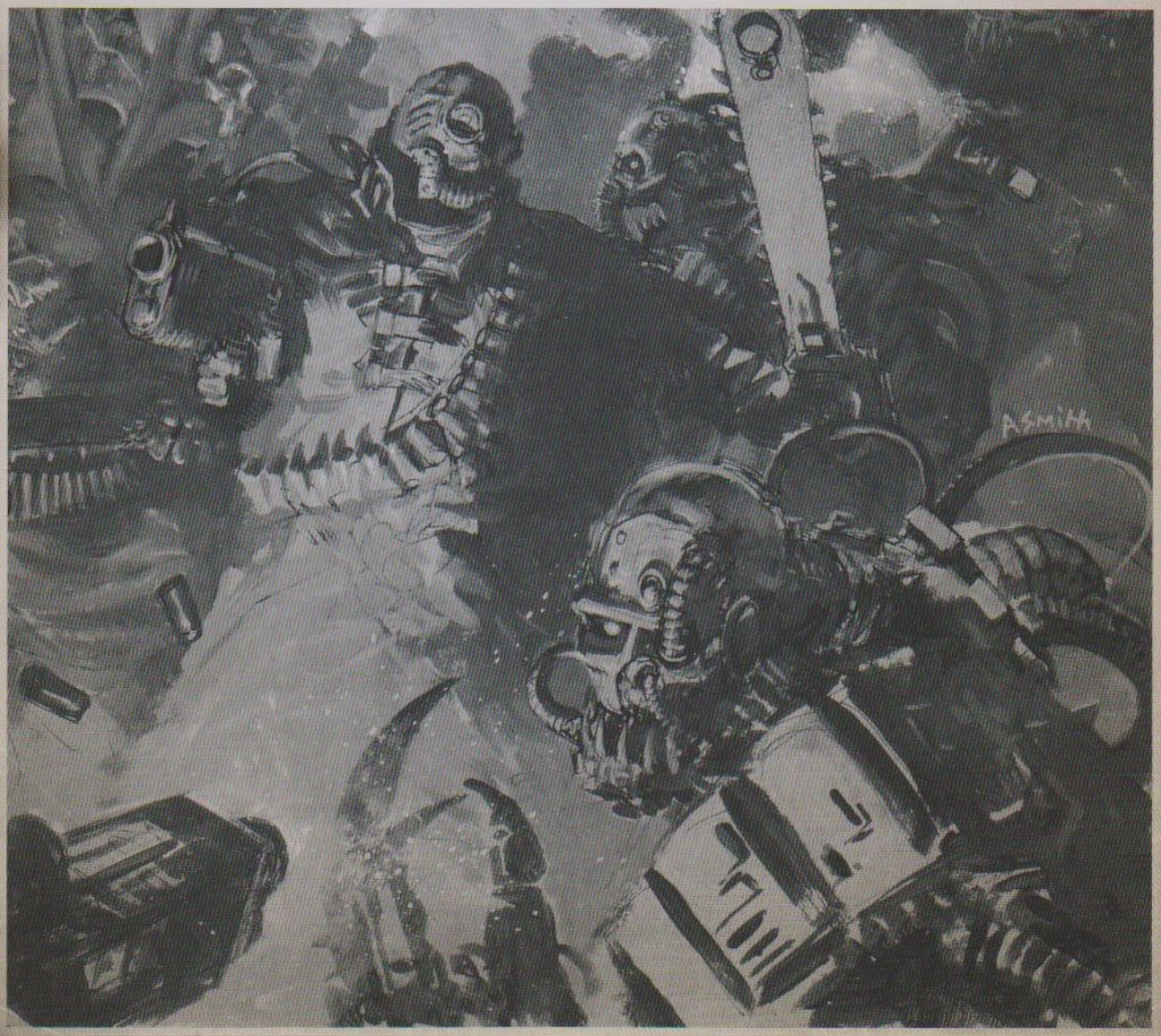
GEAR

"Let there be no where that my eyes cannot see."

–secret proclamation by Lord Sector Marius Hax

Gill Filter

Magi of the Mechanicus Biologis working on the water world of Spectoris developed these breathing masks for work in its subsurface processing facilities. They allow the user to filter oxygen from the water, using a synthetic gill system. These filters are somewhat delicate, and require constant immersion lest they dry out and degenerate.



Holo Visor

Whilst the red-dot laser sight can be invaluable for improving one's aim, it can be far too visible for covert operations. The holo visor works in conjunction with a laser sight that has been tuned to emit a non-visible beam. The aiming point shows up in the helmet visor, but will not give away one's intentions. Despite from the name, this system does not require a helmet. However, wearing the visor on its own would be fairly obtrusive and unusual in most Calixian circles.

Intrusion Spirit

This simple machine spirit, typically residing in a special data-slate isolated from all other possible means of escape, can defeat many security systems if plugged into an appropriate data port. These devices burn themselves out after essentially devouring the system into which they've been placed. An Intrusion Spirit grants a one-time +30 bonus to a Security or Tech-Use Test to beat a lock or security system with a data port.

Keep in mind that most systems have intrusion gates that limit the damage of these kinds of incursions to the local area, so the spirit might unlock a single door or disable the pict-caster on the opposite side, but it would not open all the doors to the west wing of a merchant household.

The Mechanicus are divided about the use of Intrusion Spirits, finding them either highly useful or an objectionable abuse of their sacred craft.

Line Ascender

This device can attach to virtually any rope or cable, and enable its user to "climb" the line. Its gears snap around three sides of the cable using a Full Action, and require two hands during use. Each Full Action of movement ascends at a rate equal to the Acolyte's Agility bonus per Round. Once finished, disengaging the device requires a Half Action.

Pict-fly

Much like the Vox-bug, these insect-like constructs resemble large Terrestrial dragonflies, using the brain and nervous system from a similar flying creature. They also have a very limited intelligence, allowing for uncomplicated instructions such as "follow the woman with the augmetic eye" or "hover above the cargo yards."

The Acolytes will require a pict-caster (5 kg, 400 thrones, Scarce) to view the fly's transmissions, which also include sound, though the quality tends to be poor (–20 to any hearing-based Tests). Pict-flies emit a low insectoid buzzing when flying, allowing for a **Very Hard (-20) Awareness Test** on the part of the observed to notice them. For any required tests, assume the Pict-fly has an Agility of 50 and the Concealment skill.

Privacy Field

In the worlds of shadow operations, commerce negotiations, and Inquisition business, it is often desirable to ensure that one's conversations cannot be overheard. Establishments that cater to an elite clientele who wish to remain anonymous will sometimes include a field generator of this type around select tables. It is briefcase-sized device that projects a field up to 5 metres in radius. From the opposite side, the field has the same visual effect as looking through heavily frosted glass: shapes might be distinguishable, but very little else. The field is completely impervious to sound, vox-, and pict-casting of any sort.

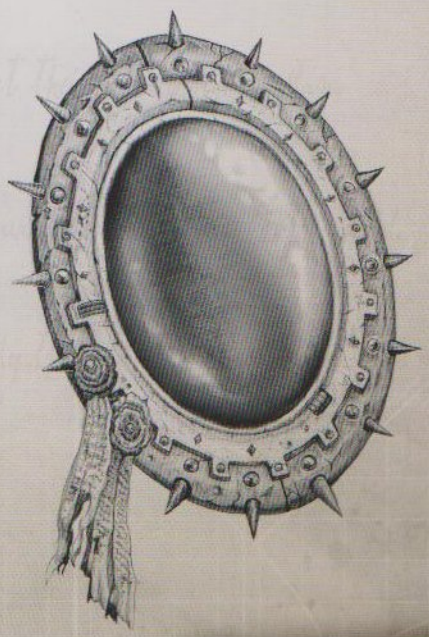
Psy Dampers

Most citizens of the Imperium have an ingrained fear of psykers, not only for the threat they represent, but also for their ability to inspect or alter the minds of others. These phobias are not restricted to the common man, and even members of the Holy Ordos have grave concerns about the threat to privacy that psykers represent.

Psy Dampers are not portable devices like Psy-Jammers (see page 190 of The Inquisitor's Handbook); their arcane workings can take up a space larger than some vehicles and require large amounts of power. These devices surround their area of effect with a multilayered lattice of psycho-absorbent alloys and psycho-reactive crystalline fibres. Each device has a rating that corresponds to the reduction of the number of dice allowed to psykers within their field.

The field requires 2d5 Rounds to become fully effective, and during this time any psykers within the field will notice its activation if they succeed on an **Ordinary (+10) Psyniscience Test**. The damper also requires 1d5 Rounds to subside, remaining in full effect till the end of this time.

These devices are extremely rare, and cannot normally be purchased by Acolytes during the course of a game. They are much more likely to be encountered as part of the setting than as a piece of equipment.



Spider Pads

These gloves, vambraces, and greaves strap securely over clothing or armour and supply an adhesive surface that greatly aids climbing in most circumstances. Pads at the knees, toes, forearms and hands secrete a tacky substance that sticks to many surfaces. They provide a +30 bonus to Climb Tests on materials such as rockcrete, ouslite, or other fairly regular surfaces. The bonus is reduced to +10 when climbing on scree, talus, or similar substance.

Tracking Device

Consisting of both a marker (which is approximately the size of a Throne coin) and a tracker (roughly the size of an Auspex), the system indicates direction and distance to the marker so long as it remains within range. Within 1 kilometre, the signal will remain strong, and even out to 2 kilometres, the signal will read properly so long as there isn't a large amount of stone or metal between the marker and tracker (such as a hive or tunnel system). The tracker is backed with an adhesive that will bond with virtually any material, but can be removed with relative ease either before or after discovery.

Vox-bug

Looking much like its moniker, Vox Bugs are self-motive devices, the size of a thumb, able to scuttle to their target and hide themselves amongst their clothing or possessions. The cortical material from the ubiquitous roach forms the basis for its rather limited awareness, allowing them to take one simple sentence of instruction, such as "hide in the gear of the man across the table" or "climb onto the corner of the next room." They can also be placed in "inert mode," where their tiny claws will simply affix themselves to an item or object.

They will faithfully transmit sounds from their location to any vox-caster or micro-bead tuned to the appropriate frequency. Their range, however, is poor, only able to broadcast out to 1 kilometre. For any situation requiring it, consider it to have an Agility of 40 and the Concealment skill.

Vox Tracker

Roughly the size of a backpack, this device can give a direction and approximate distance for vox transmissions. The tracker is ineffective in locations where the volume of vox traffic will not allow parsing of one signal from the rest. The interceptor array requires 2d5 Rounds to assemble, and must be in a location where the signal's strength allows for reception. The quality of the information obtained depends on the degrees of success on a Tech-Use Test:

Result in Degrees of Success	Quality of Information
Simple Success	General direction, such as southwest or northeast, and distance within 1d5 kilometres
1–2 Degrees of Success	Direction to within +/– 10 degrees and distance within 1d5 x 100 metres
3+ Degrees of Success	Direction within +/– 2 degrees and distance to within 1d5 x 10 metres

Table 4-7: Gear

Name	Weight	Cost	Availability
Privacy Field	10 kg	1250	Rare
Line Ascender	1 kg	100	Scarce
Spider Pads	1 kg	150	Scarce
Gil Filter	0.5 kg	100	Scarce
Holo Visor	0.5 kg	250	Rare
Vox Tracker	6 kg	450	Sacrce
Intrusion Spirit	0.5 kg	500	Very Rare
Tracking Device	0.5 kg	200	Scarce
Vox Bug	n/a	500	Rare
Pict Fly	n/a	1000	Rare

DRUGS

"These vials contain dreams and nightmares, forgotten truths and craved oblivion. All may be yours for a price."

–Cassiopeia, Mistress of the Palace of Chalices, Malfi

Drugs, like poisons, alter the body's natural processes, but unlike toxins their effects are not always destructive. Their effects can vary from mental pliability to a state of near suspended animation, and thousands of others besides. Many drugs also have the potential to cause addiction, where the desire to use the substance again can override all sanity.

This section builds upon the rules presented on page 148 of the **Dark Heresy** Rulebook and pages 30–31 of the **Dark Heresy Game Master's Kit**, adding additional Effect categories and including the possibility for addiction with selected substances. As with poisons, the victim must roll a Toughness Test at the listed modifier for the drug to take effect.

Additional Effects

In addition to the Lethal, Paralytic, Sedative, and Narcotic effects already established by the poisons rules, drugs add the potential for metabolic, psychotropic, metamorphic, and other effects that don't fit into these categories. These categories are broad generalizations, and some drugs can span more than one set of effects, such as Slaught from page 149 of **Dark Heresy**, which combines both Metabolic and Psychotropic effects.

Metabolic

These substances affect the speed and intensity of the body's physical processes, either enhancing of dampening these activities. They modify the user's Agility and/or Strength as listed in the drug's description. Many combat drugs fall into this category, and those providing an enhancement tend to be highly addictive.

Psychotropic

Drugs of this category affect the mental capacity of those using them. They can confound the will, enhance the senses, or modify one's mental state. These substances modify Intelligence, Perception, and/or Willpower as specified in the entry for the drug. Truth serums, memory enhancing mixtures and other tonics of a more recreational nature fall into this grouping. The addictive properties of these drugs vary widely.

Special

The final division includes any drugs that have unique effects or results not easily categorized into any of the others. This would include Spook from the main rulebook, other drugs that affect Pskyers, as well as substances that have very specific results, such as De-Tox.

Roleplaying Addiction

Playing an addicted character is extremely challenging, and GMs should carefully consider the maturity level of their players before allowing Acolytes to use potentially hazardous drugs in the game. They may cause characters to engage in distinctly non-heroic behaviour! However, with experienced players this can be a unique chance to explore both the darker side of a character's personality and the chance of eventual redemption or damnation by one's fellow Acolytes or patron Inquisitor.

Addiction

Some substances cause effects so compelling that their users cannot help but want more. Those of strong will may withstand these temptations for a time, but continued use erodes even the most stalwart hearts.

Those drugs with addictive effects require a series of Willpower Tests using the noted modifier. Even a single test failure will indicate the user must attempt to take another dose of the drug, but once they suffer a number of failures indicated in the text of the substance, they have become addicted, and will take drastic measures to find more, suffering the effects listed for that drug. Further successful WP Tests indicate that an Acolyte has temporarily mastered himself, but is still addicted.

Overcoming Addiction

Once addicted, the Acolyte must successfully avoid the substance for the length of time noted in the drug's description. This can be accomplished through a number of successful WP Tests, or by removal from the source of the substance for the requisite period of time. After an Acolyte has defeated their addiction, they need not make any further WP Tests unless they choose to use the substance again. In this case, only a single failed test, regardless of time, will sink the character back into the addiction.

Forbidden Drugs

Many "medicines" have uses that make them highly effective in interrogations, subterfuge and other forms of shadowplay. The Inquisition and Officio Medicae sanction the use of some, but they proscribe the use of others due to their unstable or addictive nature.

Explication Serum

(Swift / –10 / Psychotropic)
Highly effective in interrogations, this drug puts the victim into a mental state that effectively prevents deception. The modifier to the subject's Toughness Test becomes –20 if they have failed an Opposed Interrogation test just prior to the drug's application. The drug decreases the subject's effective WP by 20 for resisting interrogation (including Opposed Interrogation Tests).

Lho

(Instant / –20 / Psychotropic)
Very similar in effect to Lho-Sticks, Lho can be injected or applied via dermal patch. The substance gets into the user's system, causing the same distinctive scent as the smoked variety, though of lesser intensity. The subject will enter a very relaxed state for 2d5 x 5 minutes.

Lho is addictive, requiring a **Challenging (+0) WP Test** after each week of use, with addiction occurring after 5 failures. Once addicted, the user will suffer a –5 penalty to Toughness, Agility, and Fellowship on any day when he has not used the drug. It takes two weeks to clear one's system of Lho's chemical effects. Those that wish to explore the addictive effect of Lho-Sticks can use these addiction rules as well.

Phetamote

(Swift / — / Psychotropic)
Also known as "thrill pills," this drug enhances the subject's senses at the expense of physical abilities. Some high-born nobles use this substance prior to intense or immersive experiences, such as a play or symphony. Others, however, have discovered it acts as an effective supplement to interrogation, allowing the victim to more fully "appreciate" the skills of the interrogator. Phetamote increases the user's Perception by 10, but decreases Strength, Toughness, and Agility by 5 each for 1d5 hours.

Phetamote is mildly addictive, and requires an **Ordinary (+10) Willpower Test** after each use, causing addiction after 4 failures. Addicts suffer –10 to their Perception at any time they are not using the drug. It takes 5 days to reverse its addictive effects.

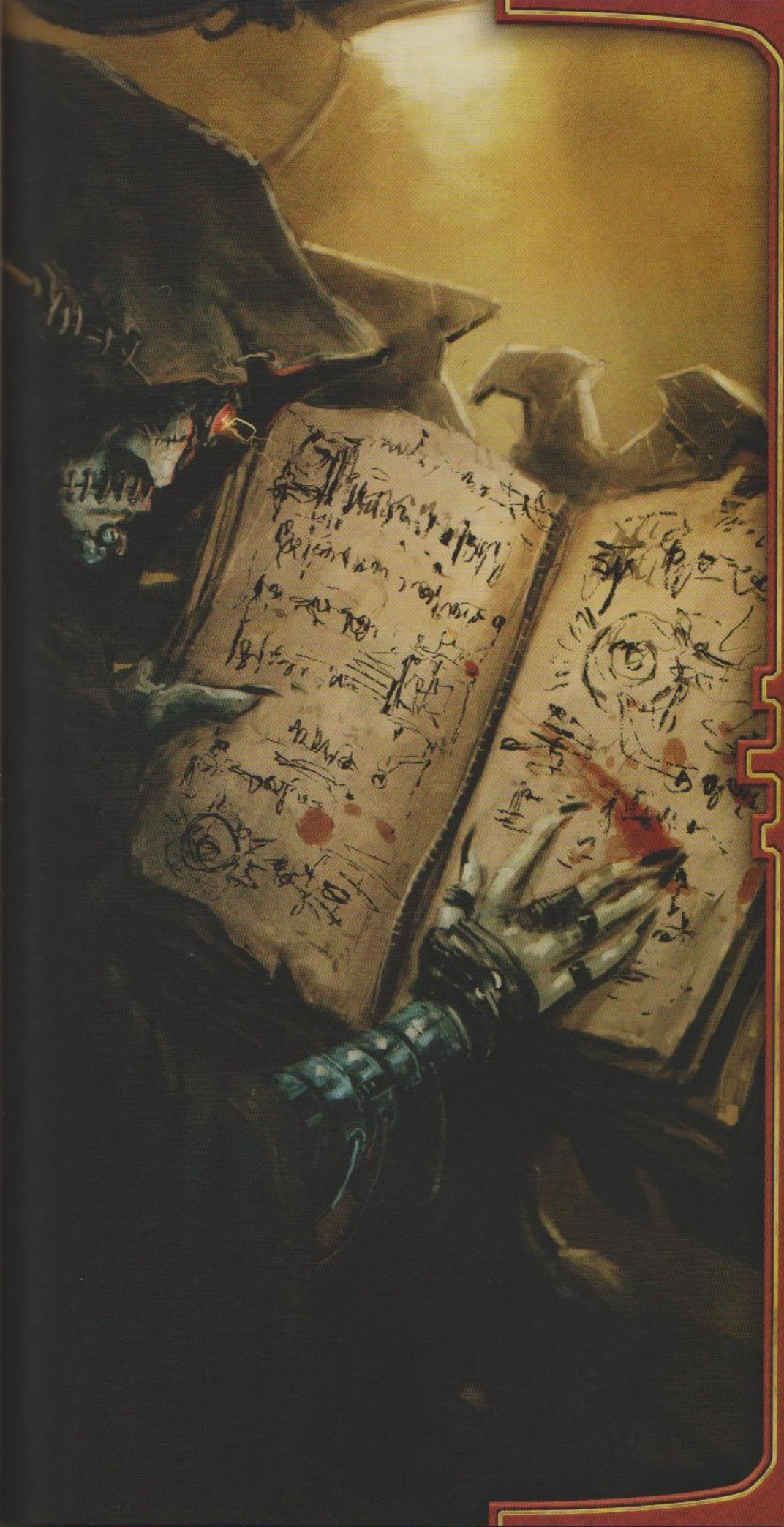
Binary Agents

Skilled Apothecaries can turn virtually any drug or poison into a binary agent, where the effect will not be felt till both components are mixed. Normally, such mixing occurs in the stomach or bloodstream. Transforming a drug into a transient binary agent multiplies its cost per dose by four. Transient agents will remain in the target's system for 1d5 days. If the second half of the drug isn't administered within this timeframe, there will be no effect. Changing drugs into persistent binary agents costs ten times the price per dose, but these remain in the victim's system for 1d5 years, making them far more effective in blackmail or threats.

TABLE 4-8: DRUGS

Name	Cost	Availability
Binary Agents	x2	Very Rare
Explication Serum	100	Scarce
Lho	5	Scarce
Phetamote	300	Very Rare





V

The Dark Arts

Chaos Rituals

•

Sorcery

•

Occult Artefacts & Daemon Weapons

•

On the Creation of Daemonhosts

•

Dark Tech

Chapter V: The Dark Arts

"When creating the binding geometry, particular care must be taken as regards to the precision of both the intersection of angles and the noetic implications of the materials used: While the fumbling backwoods warp dabbler may make do with livestock blood and bones of dubious provenance, I find I lose less acolytes by the simple application of a little diligent measuring and a Sollex-crafted las-containment grid..."

–Inquisitor Whitlock, *On the Confinement of Aetheric Forces*

The following section presents and greatly expands on information first featured in **Disciples of the Dark Gods**, and additional malefic rituals may be found in that work.

Chaos Rituals

The term 'Chaos ritual' or 'warp ritual' encompasses the diverse weird rites, occult formula, and strange ceremonies by which the warp can be called on to alter reality or its denizens summoned forth into the physical universe. Some may be relatively petty affairs, such as communion with a daemonic entity to slake the depraved appetites of the Magus, but other rituals may involve intricate and arcane plots set in motion over decades that will culminate in the deaths of billions as a whole world is swallowed by the warp.

Chaos rituals can take a potentially endless variety of forms and are often inconsistent, irrational things employing lunatic formula and centred on damaging reality in some way; some rites are conducted through sheer ignorance and superstition as much as by diabolical intent. Such rituals are phenomenally dangerous and little comprehended even by those depraved savants who have spent several human lifespans attempting to uncover and master their secrets, and even when successful, these rituals threaten both body and soul in the baleful backwash of their effect.

Despite their many pitfalls and dangers, in the minds of many Radical Inquisitors, Chaos rituals offer appalling power and freedom of action to enact the user's will on the physical universe, forge weapons and instruments of godlike power, and shape reality itself like clay in a sculptor's hands. They offer ultimate power but at ultimate risk.



Maletek Incarna

Not all Chaos rituals are purely matters of what might be considered 'pure warpcraft.' There also exists a dark and forbidden strain of technological lore which deals in the manipulation of the warp long proscribed by the Adeptus Mechanicus. This corrupted science lurks as a nightmarish shadow that perverts the empirical understanding of the universe with the insane maletek incarna of the Dark Mechanicus. Such incarna, though blessedly rare, are every bit as dangerous as a Chaos Magi's summonings and often far more insidious, able to corrupt signals, possess circuits, mutate metal, and sunder physical laws in terrifying patterns.

COUNTER-RITUALS AND THEIR PERILS

The ancient Terran proverb states, "The road to hell is oft paved with good intent," and for some within the Inquisition this has proved undoubtedly the case time and again. Many Radicals are drawn into the dark understanding of the Chaos ritual by first attempting to combat it. Many such rites are delicately balanced between vile triumph and dire tragedy, and an Inquisitor or clever Acolyte confronted by them soon learns that often it takes the merest nudge or pulled thread at the right moment to bring them crashing to the ground. This of course requires profane knowledge, which may itself begin to corrupt the user, even as it provides the basis for counter-rituals that disrupt warp energies and turn summoned daemons back on their masters—or worse still, control them. The lure of such power, aided and mollified at first by great success against mankind's enemies, can prove hard for even the staunchest soul to resist.

THE MAKEUP OF A CHAOS RITUAL

Chaos rituals seldom have much consistency or constancy other than suffering and death, which are the meat and drink to the things of the warp. In general terms, the more powerful and elaborate the desired effect, the more difficult or dangerous the ritual is to accomplish. Unlike much of the psyker's arts or the sorcerer's malefic conjurations, rituals are capricious and demanding things akin more to a marathon than a sprint; they take time, continuous concentration, single-minded dedication, and a host of other minor factors and requirements whose needs must be met for the ritual to succeed.

The following are some common elements found in the makeup of many Chaos rituals:

The Rule of Sympathy

The warp is a place where reality echoes and certain events, themes and deeds cast long shadows. This factor is taken into consideration and exploited by some in what occultists refer to as the 'Rule of Sympathy'. This is to say that 'sympathetic' customs and rites are conducted to draw on the achieved effect during a ritual. So, for example, a ritual whose goal is to summon a daemon of the Lord of Decay might well involve the use of rancid offal, rusted implements and diseased and contaminated sacrificial victims–all objects of sympathy to the nature of the thing being called on used to improve the ritual's chance of success.



The Daemonic Mastery Test

Many Chaos Rituals focus on binding the daemon to a mortal's will. Commanding a daemon is no minor thing, and even the lesser entities that may answer a cult magister's call are malignant, raging creatures that would rather rend a human apart for sport than serve one. In order to control a summoned daemon, a battle of wills is fought psychically between the summoner and the entity summoned, represented by an opposed Willpower Test taking a Full Action to perform. If the summoner wins the Test, he may command the daemon to do his bidding. The beast will follow the summoner's spoken or telepathic instructions.

If the summoner fails the Test, then the daemon is free to do as it likes and will usually start by seeking to butcher all those present.

Breaking Mastery

Daemons are wilful and untrustworthy things at the best of times, and it is always wise to simply summon them to do what they are best at: killing. If the daemon is forced to go against its fundamental nature in some way, it may attempt to break the summoner's control, forcing a second Daemonic Mastery Test with a –30 penalty for the controller.

Sundering the Veil

An empyrean barrier separates the physical universe from the formless, seething psycho-reactive energies of the warp, and it is this barrier often referred to as 'the veil' that warpcraft in all its forms, including the power of Chaos Rituals, must breach to achieve its work. The density of this barrier is not constant, and in some places it is weaker than others, making rituals commensurately easier to perform. In a few accursed places—dark volumes of shunned void space and myth-shrouded, haunted worlds—the barrier is frayed so very thin that the warp penetrates reality at a fundamental level, and the daemon walks without mortal intervention. But as with all things to do with the warp, this also has its risks; the weaker the veil, the greater the force and easier the energies of the warp are summoned, and the harder they can be to control.

Many ritualists cannot rely on the veil being weak of its own accord, and instead must seek to disrupt or abrade the barrier themselves using a number of proscribed methods. Some rites call for hallucinogenic drugs, tortuous incantations and numbing trances to attune the minds of the celebrants to the beyond. Others rely on the psychic release provided by sacrificial death and murder, the power of the psyker's mind as a conduit, or even corrupted technological means of forming a breach, such as the Ghast Engine, a blasphemous and forbidden piece of dark technology based on corrupted Gellar field systems used to hurl Imperial starships through the warp.

Table 5-1: Basic Ritual Modifiers

Condition†	Modifier
Botched, rushed or incomplete ritual	–20/–30
Failure to understand the true nature of what is being attempted (meddling amateur penalty!)	–30
Strong Veil	–10
Hallowed ground/Antagonistic individuals with Pure Faith Talent present	–10
Within an active Geller field	–20
Enactor is a psyker or sorcerer	+10
Enactor is a master sorcerer	+20
Weakened veil	+10
Sundered veil	+20
"The Stars are Right" or other auspicious circumstances	+10/+20
Ritual follows the "Rule of Sympathy"	+10
Additional Factors for Daemonic Summoning	
The summoner knows the daemon's allegiance and kind	no mod
The summoner knows the daemon's true name	+30
The summoner knows little of what is being called up	–10
The summoner knows nothing of what is being called up	–30
The summoner has an artefact connected to the daemon	+10
The daemon has been provided with a suitable sacrifice to partake in on its arrival	+10
The summoner has already sworn allegiance to the daemon's master or cause	+20
The summoner has recently summoned or commanded daemons of an opposing allegiance	–30

†Combine any of the following that apply to arrive at a net modifier with a total maximum of (+) or (–) 60.

When the Stars Are Right

Some specific rituals require very specific and often unique or bizarre circumstances and components to successfully enact. These auspicious factors can be of bewildering variety, and may, for example, involve a very focused example of the Rule of Sympathy, (such as a sacrificial victim from a particular bloodline, or a relic from a dead world connected to what is being invoked), as well as the whims and desires of a particular daemon (such as a object of beauty to devour, or a favoured sin to be enacted.) The most powerful of rituals—devices of terrifying import and influence whose nature known only to the deepest denizens of the warp or fabricated in the insane minds of the most infamous magi—often involve very particular cosmological and temporal convergences to function. Such rituals often span many places and times and can be brought to fruition by the fulfilments of prophecy, baleful sacrifices and intrigues that scream forth in the warp and shred the barriers of reality.

The Game Mechanics of Chaos Rituals

In the game, Chaos rituals exist to achieve specific occult effects, which might include entreating a powerful warp entity for aid, sealing a daemonic rift, foretelling the future, or stealing someone's soul. No two such rituals are exactly alike, and as with the fickle nature of Chaos itself, their needs and consequences are a shifting quagmire of guesswork, intent and unpredictability that may lead to disaster even in the hands of the most skilled magus.

To conduct a ritual, the magus must possess knowledge of how to do so and must also meet the ritual's specific requirements beforehand; these factors will vary according to the ritual itself (see the Chaos Ritual Format on page 165). At its heart, one or more Skill Tests will be required to accomplish the ritual successfully, modified by the factors found on **Table 5–1: Basic Ritual Modifiers** and any others the GM feels is appropriate for the ritual's fundamental difficulty.

Researching Chaos Rituals

Researching and understanding Chaos rituals requires both opportunity and considerable erudition in the dark arts. The more potent or obscure the ritual, the harder this is to comprehend. In basic terms, a ritual recovered by a character created by another requires a successful Forbidden Lore Test (as appropriate) to understand, with a starting Difficulty of Challenging (+0) for a relatively minor ritual, increasing with the ritual's complexity and power. Attempting to discover how to disrupt or counter such a ritual requires for Test one degree of Difficulty higher than comprehending it.

The creation of Chaos rituals 'from scratch' is a truly perilous and laborious activity involving considerable time, resources and occult experimentation and should never be attempted lightly even by a master. The dark knowledge

Using Rituals in Your Games

Although for the most part NPC driven rituals need little hard definition other than as a narrative in your game, it can be handy for the GM to lay them out more clearly for descriptive purposes (particularly if Acolytes are getting involved in an attempt to disrupt them, or even carry one out themselves!). For this reason, the Chaos Ritual Template has been provided.

Chaos Ritual Template

A ritual can be defined by the following criteria.

Description: This section details what the ritual is for, why it is carried out, its origin, and any other pertinent facts.

Requirements: What is needed to perform the ritual—specific components, time, place, etc., as well as any Skill Tests or level of Corruption needed to make it work correctly. How well or poorly these Tests are made and the wider makeup of the ritual may affect the quality of the results achieved. Many factors both esoteric and mundane may affect a ritual's chance of success. Particular examples for daemonic rituals can be found on **Table 5–1: Summoning Ritual Modifiers**.

Effect: The successful effect of the ritual.

Duration: How long the ritual's effects last.

Cost: The cost in physical and spiritual terms to those that carry out the ritual, including any Insanity and Corruption accrued.

The Price of Failure: All attempts to control the warp have an unpleasant cost should they fail. These are listed here, usually represented by Psychic Phenomena, immediate Perils of the Warp, or in the specific case of summoning or warp-rift opening rituals, an effect called Contempt of the Warp as detailed in **Table 5–2: The Contempt of the Warp**.

Table 5-2: The Contempt of the Warp

Roll d100	Effect
01–50	**Ignored:** Silence and stillness greet your efforts. You have failed.
51–80	**Mocked:** Howls of daemonic laughter fill the tortured air, and your worst secrets and shames are hurled at you in mockery. You gain 1d5 Insanity Points.
81–90	**Struck Down:** You are blasted with raw warp energies, you take Damage as if hit by a 1d10+3 (E) attack with the Warp Weapon quality. The foully seething energies scar your soul should you be wounded but survive, inflicting 1d10 Corruption Points.
91–00	**Assailed:** For your affront, a minor daemon is dispatched to deal with you. You must fight an Incarnate Daemon or similar (chosen by the GM) to survive your shortcomings. This daemon is not subject to Mastery.
101–120	**Possessed:** Chaos replays your arrogance by making you its plaything and you are possessed by an Unclean Spirit or worse. Alternatively, the GM may determine that the warp grants your wishes…in the worst ways imaginable.
121+	**Devoured:** Reality is sundered and you are sucked screaming into the warp or devolved into a mindless, mewling Chaos Spawn. Your character is destroyed.

required to spontaneously and successfully create even the least of such rituals is massive and requires either the Psyker or Sorcerer Talents and a rating of +20 in the relevant Forbidden Lore Skill.

Sample Chaos Ritual: Create Daemonic Familiar

Daemonic creatures are created by a Chaos ritual during which blood must be spilled and a body ritually fashioned to house the daemonic essence summoned. Usually this will entail a corpse, animal cadaver, or a specially prepared statue or other occult construct. The resultant daemonic creature is enslaved to its creator's will. The creation of a daemonic familiar is often the first step on a diabolist's road to an attempted mastery of warp binding and the control of daemonic forces. For a Radical member of the Inquisition, the creation of such a warp-twisted thing is a damning act that might lead to far more terrible acts as his powers and warp lore increases, such as dark packs with the forces beyond and the creation of dread daemonhosts.

Requirements: The ritualist must pass a **Very Hard (–30) Forbidden Lore (Daemonology) Test** to successfully research this ritual himself given access to relevant materials, although alternately this knowledge can be gained by a malefic power as part of a Dark Pact. In preparation, a blood sacrifice from the creator (inflicting 1D5 Wounds) must be made in order to construct a body for his familiar. Other ritual components may also be called for, as the uncovered lore may dictate, though this varies widely by source.

Conducting the Ritual: The ritual culminates in a 1D5 hour ceremony during which the creator must pass both a **Challenging (+0) Willpower Test** and a **Difficult (–10) Forbidden Lore (Daemonology) Test** to successfully carry out the summoning.

Based on the highest number of Degrees of Success in either of these two Tests, the familiar has the following abilities:

0–1 Degrees of Success	Assume one additional form (Puny size or smaller), no extra powers.
2–3 Degrees of Success	Assume two additional forms (Puny size or smaller), one extra Psychic or Sorcery Power.
4+ Degrees of Success	Assume two additional forms (Puny size or smaller) and a human form, 1D5 extra Psychic or Sorcery Powers, additional +5 to WP. Additionally, in order to remain in this reality, the familiar must ritually kill a sentient life form every 1d5 weeks.

Effect: A daemonic familiar is created. The summoner must attempt to master it (see Daemonic Mastery on page 163) gaining a +20 bonus for doing so. Once bound, the familiar will not rebel unless commanded to act against its nature.

Duration: Permanent until the familiar is destroyed.

Cost: The permanent loss of 1 Wound by the creator, also 1D5 Sanity Points and 2D5+3 Corruption Points are incurred.

The Price of Failure: If either of the Tests required to complete the ritual fail, the familiar is stillborn, the materials wasted, and the would-be creator must roll for Contempt of the Warp (see **Table 5–2** on page 165).

DAEMONIC FAMILIARS

Daemonic familiars are servitor creatures bound to the soul and service of a sorcerer, diabolist, or malefic witch. Although relatively inferior to the raw power of summoned daemons, familiars are not subject to Warp Instability and may offer numerous benefits and abilities to aid their master. They are also enslaved to the will of their owner and cannot turn against them unless called to do so by some higher power. This said, they are still daemons, sly and utterly malevolent, with vile hungers of their own.

The rules and profile below are for a common type of daemonic creature: a shape-shifting servant and spy. Other familiars with widely differing shapes and powers are certainly possible.

Characteristics: Generate the daemonic familiar's Characteristics on **Table 5–3: Daemonic Familiar Characteristics**, then select a single Characteristic key to the familiar's nature and add +5 to the score.

Skills: Awareness (Per) +10, Concealment (Ag), Deceive (Fel) +10, Dodge (Ag), Forbidden Lore (Daemonology, Warp) (Int), Psyniscience (WP) +10, Secret Tongue (any known to its master) (Int), Silent Move (Ag), Speak Language (all) (Int)

Talents: Melee Weapon Training (Primitive) and any others appropriate to its chosen form.

Traits: Daemonic, Dark Sight, Fear 1 (true form), From Beyond, Natural Weapon (Unnaturally sharp claws or teeth 1D5+ SB, Pen 2), Innate Psyker, Changeling, Size: Puny, Soul Joined.

Innate Psyker: The daemonic familiar has Psy Rating 2 and has the Sense Presence Psychic Power. It possesses other potential powers determined at its summoning, and is never subject to Warp Phenomena while using them.

Changeling: As well as its true form (described by the profile above) during creation, a familiar is able to shift between a number of other forms determined at its creation. These shapes and forms may be of human size, often slight of build or smaller, and while a familiar will imitate mundane creatures, there will always be uncomfortable aura and something of a sinister cast to it. Whilst in these shapes, the familiar's physical Characteristics, Talents and Traits change to reflect its new form, but its mental Characteristics and Psychic Powers remain unchanged. Familiars retain their Daemonic and From Beyond Traits regardless of form.

Possible forms might include a raven or scald bat (use the winged creature profile from **Dark Heresy**) or a guard beast such as a felid or hound (use the ferocious creature profile from **Dark Heresy**), as well as more mundane and innocuous pets: large dolls, statues, or even small servitors or drones. In rare cases, most powerful familiars may be able to copy individual human images.

Soul Joined: A daemonic familiar is joined with its master's soul; if the master perishes, the daemonic familiar will likewise be destroyed, and if the familiar is somehow slain, then the master automatically suffers 1D5 permanent Toughness Damage and 1D5 levels of Fatigue. By concentrating and

Table 5-3: Demonic Familiar Characteristics

Weapon Skill (WS)	10+2d10
Ballistic Skill (BS)	10+2d10
Strength (S)	15+2d10
Toughness (T)	15+2d10
Agility (Ag)	20+2d10
Intelligence (Int)	20+2d10
Perception (Per)	25+2d10
Willpower (WP)	20+2d10
Fellowship (Fel)	15+2d10
Wounds	5+1D10
Psy Rating	2

passing a **Routine (+10) Willpower Test**, the familiar's master mentally communicate with the familiar and may see and hear what it sees and hears with an effectively unlimited range. Likewise, if its master is harmed in any way, the familiar will immediately know.

Warp Shadow: The familiar is partially concealed from the prying arts of the psyker and technological means of scanning. All attempts to locate it or discover its true nature (by Sense Presence, Psyniscience, auspex, etc.) suffer a –20 penalty.

Weapons & Gear: None or as provided for by their master.

Threat Rating: Malleus Minoris



From the Journals of Inquisitor Felroth Gelt, 781.M41

Black Tontines, compacts of vile sorcery, have plagued the Calixian hives for many centuries–such forbidden knowledge is nigh impossible to expunge. Despite this, in all my years as an Inquisitor I have been involved in but one persecution of a tontine brotherhood. This was upon Merov of the Tsares, a world apart from the Merov of the Merovech Combine. The Tsares are elite families of the ownership class, the manufactory barons, toll-rail masters, and district lords whose ancestors fought over great swathes of hive structure. Journey away from cerasteel landing fields and Combine holdings to the Tsares' Hives and you will find it is Tsareite lawr and tradition that hold sway, despite the efforts of anemic Administratum bureaus.

In Tsareite Merov, the very soul of the serf is owned by the structure they labor within: by writ of lawr these souls are of no more consequence than beams or doors. Baroness Demydova accepts sworn fealty from no soul, yet is a baroness by the size of her alchemical processors. The souls within grovel at her feet by her ownership of alchemy vaults that in turn own them; each aspect of their lives rests upon her whim. It is a crushing tradition of lawr that produces callous lords and gray, solidly faithful masses of little knowledge and less vision. Yet the Ordo fortress of Merov turns out the most incisive and philosophically adept questioners of the Sector from its Schola Interrogatio, a fact I have never understood, but profited greatly by. They are melancholy and fatalist by demeanor, but I consider that a further benefit.

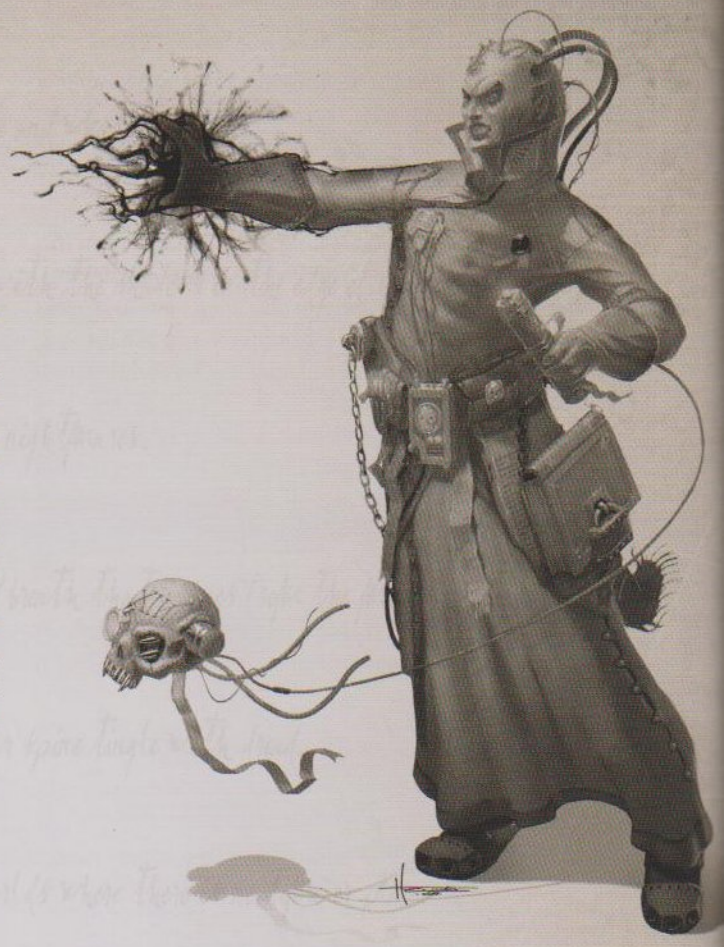
As to the Tontine: that a brotherhood of serf souls of any sort existed was a grave matter under Tsareite lawr. Owned souls are beaten to death for far less than swearing to a compact without instruction, and fraternal organigations are scrutinized by bailiff and priest. The Merov Ministorum appoints jealous wardens to watch over souls, and so it was the testament of a priest that drew in the Ordo–and thence I, upon Merov at that time to add to my staff from the Schola Interrogatio.

Sorcery

"Sorcery. Of all the black arts, none are so foul as that which give a man the powers of an abomination."

–Valran Hurst, Ordo Hereticus Witchfinder

The arduous study and strength of will required to become a psyker of ability drives many who lack the diligence, opportunity or the inate talent, to look for what some foolishly see as an easier path to power and even those with very limited or no latent psychic ability can become powerful Sorcerers If they have the will, intelligence and stomach to wield and pay the price for their dark lore. Despised and feared for their unnatural practices and the taint of the warp that lingers near them, sorcerers are often recluses. Like all who gaze too long at things which man was never meant to see, most sorcerers eventually succumb either to insanity, mutation or the daemon's hunger for there are no more treacherous paths to power known to mankind.



Sorcery Game Mechanics

"They cannot be stopped. I've seen the end. Humanity stripped bare. Piece by piece, a jigsaw unravelled."

–Access Restricted

Sorcery is treated in the game using the same mechanics as Psychic Powers, and any of the powers listed in **Dark Heresy** are available as sorcery to avoid needless duplication (and at the GM's discretion visa-versa for witches and malefic psykers). All Sorcery Powers are treated as psychic effects, and where applicable Talents, Traits and specialised defences that protect against Psychic Powers also defend against sorcery.

All Sorcery Powers are divided between the Minor Arcana, which are equivalent to Minor Psychic Powers, and Major Arcana, which are equivalent to Discipline Powers. Arcana that duplicate an existing Psychic Power are treated as the same (the power has the same Effect, Duration, and Overbleed) but has its Threshold increased by 2 for a sorcerer. This represents the increased complexity and difficulty the sorcerer faces using these abilities compared to a normal psyker. Unless expressly stated, a sorcerer must also be able to speak and gesture freely in order to use a Sorcery Power.

The practice of using the dark arts to channel the warp is even more difficult and dangerous than the use of a psyker's innate powers, and if he incurs any Psychic Phenomena, he adds +10 to the results of any random effect for a Minor Arcana power and +20 to any mishap while using a power of the Major Arcana.

The ability to use sorcery is dealt with for simplicity sake by a number of special Talents in the following section, along with a number of specific powers available to the sorcerer. Some additional Arcana powers can also be found elsewhere in this chapter under specific cult descriptions.

Individuals with the Sorcery Talent have access to the Invocation and Psyniscience Skills and may have their own version of the Corpus Conversion Talent.

Dark Power

Even a mild flirtation with the abominable powers of the warp will leave its mark on a practitioner's soul, while those who continue to tap into its energies will eventually be consumed by it. Every time you successfully manifest an Arcana, you gain a number of Corruption points equal to 1d10 minus your Willpower bonus. Note that if a character also has a Dark Pact (see page 238 of **Dark Heresy**) this will be further mitigated.

Sorcerer (Talent)

Prerequisites: Intelligence 35+, Willpower 35+, Forbidden Lore (Demonology or Warp) +10.

The Acolyte may use the powers of sorcery to channel the warp through a combination of esoteric lore, skill and focused will. He counts as having an effective Psy Rating of 2 and may learn a number of Arcana powers equal to three times his WP Bonus. Major powers count as two powers when determining the amount of powers a sorcerer can learn.

When choosing Arcana powers, the sorcerer is not bound by a particular type of power (such as the psyker's Discipline framework), as sorcery is a fragmented and contradictory business. Characters, however, can only fill these power slots

by seeking and mastering the rituals independently, either by dangerous experimentation, ancient lore, or dark bargains, and cannot be develop them naturally.

Master Sorcerer (Talent)

Prerequisites: Intelligence 40+, Willpower 50+, Sorcerer, Forbidden Lore (Demonology or Warp) +20.
The Acolyte's mastery of the dark arts is great, and he has learned to avoid the pitfalls that beset lesser practitioners of the craft. He may channel far more raw power than most and counts as having an effective Psy Rating of 4, a +10 bonus to Daemonic Mastery Tests, and is immune to the effects of Daemonic Presence.

Master sorcerers are extraordinarily rare, and with good reason. Few possess the dedication and strength of mind to enact their will on the warp in this way, and most are destroyed before they attain such skill.

Minor Arcana (Talent)

Prerequisites: Sorcerer.
The sorcerer has acquired an additional Minor Arcana Power over the amount usually allowed; this must be learned or researched as normal.

Major Arcana (Talent)

Prerequisites: Willpower 45+, Sorcerer.
The sorcerer has acquired an additional Major Arcana Power over the amount usually allowed; this must be learned or researched as normal.

Sublime Arts (Talent)

Prerequisites: Perception 40+, Intelligence 45+, Sorcerer.
The sorcerer may use his powers without the usual need for obvious vocalisations, gestures, and the like, simply enacting the patterns needed mentally by sheer dint of concentration and unyielding mental strength. However, the Threshold of Arcana Powers used this way is increased by an additional +2.

Fuelled by Flesh (Talent)

Prerequisites: Sorcerer.
In manifesting their powers, many sorcerers practice some form of self-mutilation in order to further augment and empower their incantations with their own suffering and bodily sacrifice. Each time an arcana is unsuccessfully manifested, the sorcerer with this talent can opt to re-roll the dice at the cost of inflicting 1d5 Damage on themselves (Armour, Toughness Bonus, and other protections do not apply to this Damage).

An unfortunate side-effect is that it leaves the sorcerer's flesh a mangled mess of cuts and wounds in a state of constant recovery and open to infection. As a result, the sorcerer suffers –20 to resist the effects of diseases and poisons, and if wounded by a Toxic weapon, he suffers an additional 1d10 points of damage with no reduction from his Armour or Toughness Bonus.



MALEFIC WITCHES AND WARP TAINTED PSYKERS

"They're coming. I know. Horrors. Such visions of death. My mind burns with clarity."

–Sebastian Erwin, Declared Heretic 219.33
Executed 231.47

For psykers, the dark arts of sorcery present a deceptively easy path to greater power—but one any righteous servant of the Emperor will abhor. Most witches and rogue psykers have no such qualms, however, seeking out the study of the malefic arts and dark lore to augment their own power, or in a desperate attempt to achieve better control over their abilities—all the sooner to fall, in many cases, for the daemon's lure.

Sorcery (which can also be used to represent warp taint as well as learned dark lore) may be "stacked" with Psychic Powers. Rather than a Talent's usual effects, it serves to boost the psyker's Psy Rating by 1 for the Sorcerer Talent, and by an additional 1 for Master Sorcerer. From this point onwards, the psyker may accrue sorcery Arcana as if they were Psychic Powers (treating Major Arcana as a new Psychic Discipline).

An unfortunate side effect of this dangerous super-charging of the psyker's abilities, however, is the damage caused when these powers go out of control. A psyker with the Sorcerer Talent adds +20 to the result when determining Psychic Phenomena, which will increase the chance of invoking the Perils of the Warp.

MAJOR ARCANA

Create Door

Threshold: 28
Focus Time: Full Action
Sustain: No
Range: 5m

The sorcerer summons a burning doorway from thin air. The doorway may be used to transport the sorcerer anywhere he can clearly recall in his mind. The sorcerer's player must tell the GM where he would like the door to lead; the GM will then set an appropriate Difficulty rating based on when the sorcerer was last in this place, his state of mind, circumstances, and concentration. The sorcerer can then step through the doorway and make an Intelligence Test based on that Difficulty. If passed, all is well. If not, the GM will determine a suitable alternate destination—typically one the sorcerer would prefer to avoid.

Special: Travelling through such a blasphemous portal brings users closer to the horrors of the warp than it is safe to tread. Anyone passing through the door must pass a **Hard (–20) Willpower Test**. If the Test is failed, then that character must roll on the Perils of the Warp table.

Distance	Difficulty
10m-100m	Routine
101m-1000m	Ordinary
Anywhere upon a Planet	Challenging
Anywhere within a System	Difficult
Anywhere within a Subsector	Hard
Anywhere within a Sector	Very Hard



Disease

Threshold: 20
Focus Time: Half Action
Sustain: No
Range: 5m
With a contemptuous flick of his hand, the sorcerer invites a plague upon his target, who then begins to vomit bile and blood as the skin forms into bulbous pustules. The disease lasts for a number of Rounds equal to 1d10 minus the target's Toughness Bonus. During each Round in which the target is diseased, all of his Characteristics are reduced by 10. Should his Toughness reach zero, the target dies.

Overbleed: For every 5 points by which the sorcerer exceeds the power's threshold, the duration of the disease increases by 1 round.

Special: If a character dies from Disease, his soul is forfeit to the plague god Nurgle. The fallen corpse will decay further and arise as a Plaguebearer (**Dark Heresy** Rulebook page 354) 5 Rounds later. The Plaguebearer will immediately attack anyone nearby.

Exsanguine

Threshold: 18
Focus Time: Half Action
Sustain: No
Range: 10m
By snapping his fingers and bellowing an incantation at his target, the sorcerer causes the target's blood to bubble and rush from his body. Make an Opposed Willpower Test against the Target's Toughness. If successful, the target suffers Damage equal to double the sorcerer's Willpower Bonus (Toughness Bonus and Armour will not reduce this Damage) and will suffer from Blood Loss (see page 211 in the **Dark Heresy** rulebook).

Flail of Skulls

Threshold: 14
Focus Time: Half Action
Sustain: Yes
Range: You
Using strands of warp energy, the sorcerer binds together the skulls of the fallen, creating a flail of skulls that burns with malice. Once manifest, the Flail of Skulls uses the same profile as a flail (see **Dark Heresy** Rulebook page 139) but has the Warp Weapon quality and will bypass most armour and defences. Any target suffering Damage from the Flail of Skulls gains 1d10 Insanity Points and an additional Insanity Point for every skull used in the flail's construction after the second.

Special: Obviously, manifesting this power requires the sorcerer to possess one or more skulls.

Flaming Word

Threshold: 18
Focus Time: Half Action
Sustain: No
Range: You
The sorcerer opens his mouth, using it as a gateway for the fires of the warp. The power inflicts 1d10+4 E Damage with a Pen of 3. The effects of his power extend to a range of 20 metres and possess the Flame Quality. In addition, due to the unnatural nature of the flames, any target struck by the effects of this power is automatically set on fire (see page 210 in the **Dark Heresy** Rulebook).

Special: The sorcerer may not communicate verbally while this power is manifest; this may prevent him from casting certain other powers.

Immunity

Threshold: 24
Focus Time: Half Action
Sustain: No
Range: You
By swallowing a solid round of ammunition, the sorcerer fortifies his body against projectiles and crude weapons. The sorcerer must pass a Toughness Test. If successful, he does not suffer any Impact Type Damage for 1d5 Rounds.

Leach Life

Threshold: 21
Focus Time: Full Action
Sustain: No
Range: Touch
Sinking his fingers into the flesh of a target, the sorcerer absorbs the target's very life force until nothing remains but a dessicated husk. This power can only be used on a Stunned or otherwise incapacitated target. For every 5 points by which the sorcerer exceeds the power's Threshold, the sorcerer regains 1 lost Wound and the target's Wounds are reduced by 1. The sorcerer may not gain any additional Wounds over his beginning amount. If the target is reduced to 0 Wounds, he dies.

Living Weapon

Threshold: 24
Focus Time: Full Action
Sustain: Yes
Range: You
The sorcerer carves a foul symbol of Chaos into his flesh, calling on the warp to remake his flesh for war. Whilst this power is in effect, the sorcerer gains the following profile increases: +20 WS, +20 S, +10 T, and +10 Ag. In addition, the sorcerer gains a +3 bonus on all Initiative rolls, the Natural Weapons Trait, and all of his melee attacks gain the Tearing Quality. Whilst in this bestial state, his Fellowship is reduced by 10.

Open

Threshold: 14
Focus Time: Half Action
Sustain: No
Range: Touch
Using his own blood, the sorcerer traces a blasphemous rune across a sealed portal or object, dissolving the essence of the locking mechanism. This power can be used on any object regardless of how it was originally sealed. The sorcerer suffers 1d5 Damage for a small object, 1d10 Damage for a medium-sized object, and 2d10 Damage for a large object. The GM should feel free to alter the amount of Damage taken to better represent a given object. This Damage is not reduced by the Sorcerer's Armour or Toughness Bonus.

Psy Barrier

Threshold: 19
Focus Time: Half Action
Sustain: No
Range: 5m
With a finger dipped in blood, the sorcerer draws a burning rune in the air which then burns the minds of those nearby with a mixture of fear and confusion. Anyone wishing to advance towards the rune must pass a **Difficult (–10) Willpower Test** or become rooted to the spot in fear. A target that fails his Willpower Test may do nothing further that turn.

Summon Object

Threshold: 24
Focus Time: Full Action
Sustain: Yes
Range: 10m
Through ritual blood-letting, the sorcerer summons an object out of thin air. The sorcerer's player must describe to the GM the object he wants to manifest. The GM will then set a Difficulty rating. For the object to manifest, the sorcerer must pass a Willpower Test at that Difficulty rating.

Overbleed: For every 10 points by which the sorcerer exceeds the power's threshold, he gains a +10 bonus to the Willpower Test for creating an object.

Note: Obviously, the larger the object you wish to manifest, the more blood you will need.

Transfix

Threshold: 19
Focus Time: Half Action
Sustain: No
Range: 5m
Flicking the blood of the recently dead onto the target's face and muttering a guttural curse, the sorcerer inflicts horrible hallucinations on the target. The victim witnesses horrific images of darkness and despair. Distraught and emotionally paralysed, the target is totally transfixed. Unless he passes a **Very Hard (–30) Willpower Test**, the target can do nothing for 1 hour. He also gains 1d5 Insanity Points.

Special: The sorcerer will need some reasonably fresh blood in order to manifest this power normally. If he has no access to blood, he manifests this power at a Threshold of 25.

Wall of Souls

Threshold: 24
Focus Time: Full Action
Sustain: Yes
Range: 15m
The sorcerer draws on the power of the warp and calls forth a wall of leering, aetheric faces to bar the path of his adversaries. Once manifest, this wall of souls is 15m in breadth and height. Crossing or penetrating the wall is easy, but carries a price. Any individual unlucky enough to be hit by the wall as it manifests, stumble into it, or passing through suffers 2d10 Insanity Points and must pass an **Ordinary (+10) Toughness Test** or become Stunned.

Overbleed: For every 10 points by which the sorcerer exceeds the power's threshold, he may add 1 metre to the height of the wall.

Special: If the sorcerer fails to manifest this power by 2 Degrees of Failure or more, the aetheric faces are called forth and swarm around him like a cloud of flies. The sorcerer gains 1d10 Insanity Points and may do nothing further that round as he clutches his head and tries to hold onto what remains of his mind.

Warp Corruption

Threshold: 27
Focus Time: Full Action
Sustain: No
Range: Earshot
Crying aloud the dark truths of the warp, the sorcerer is able to corrupt the souls of those around you. Everyone who hears your chanting—friend or foe—must pass a Willpower Test or gain a number of Corruption Points equal to the amount by which the Test was failed.

Warp Lightning

Threshold: 21
Focus Time: Half Action
Sustain: No
Range: 10m
Whispering in an ancient tongue, the sorcerer manifests a ball of pulsing energy in his palm. With the outstretched fingers of his other hand, the sorcerer releases dark bolts of warp lightning upon his targets. The sorcerer may project 1 bolt for each point of his Psy Rating and may target a different individual with each bolt as long as he is within 5m of the previous target. The sorcerer makes this attack with his Ballistic Skill, rolling to hit as normal. If struck, a target must roll 1d10 minus their Toughness Bonus on the Energy Critical Effects Table (see pages 202-203 in the **Dark Heresy** Rulebook).

Warp Tongue

Threshold: 16
Focus Time: Half Action
Sustain: No
Range: Earshot

The sorcerer distorts the cacophony of voices in the warp, fooling daemons into believing he is a minor herald. Any creature with the Daemonic Trait who hears the sorcerer must pass an Opposed Willpower Test or become vulnerable to his suggestions. The sorcerer receives a +10 bonus to any Charm, Intimidate or Deceive Tests against these targets. If the daemon wins the Opposed Test, it gains a +10 bonus to all Tests made against the sorcerern (including Weapon Skill Tests!).

Overbleed: For every 10 points by which the sorcerer exceeds the power's threshold, he gains a further +10 bonus to Charm, Intimidate, or Deceive Skill Tests against creatures with the Daemonic Trait.

Special: This power requires only that the target must be able to hear the sorcerer.

Warp Vigour

Threshold: 14
Focus Time: Half Action
Sustain: No
Range: Touch

With a mix of blood and ash, the sorcerer marks a burning rune on the target's head. Through the rune, the target can draw on unnatural reserves of fortitude. A character marked in this way may re-roll any Strength or Toughness Opposed Tests he is required to make and gains an additional 5 Wounds whilst this power is active. Any Damage that is inflicted upon the subject of this power affects these bonus Wounds first before affecting the rest. The rune will continue to protect the character for 1 hour.

Special: Any character whose body is defiled by this unholy symbol gains 1d10 Corruption Points.

Table 5-4: Major Arcana

Name	Threshold	Focus Time	Sustain
Create Door	28	Full Action	No
Disease	20	Half Action	No
Ensanguine	18	Half Action	No
Flail of Skulls	14	Half Action	Yes
Flaming Word	18	Half Action	No
Immunity	24	Half Action	No
Leach Life	21	Full Action	No
Living Weapon	24	Full Action	Yes
Open	14	Half Action	No
Psy Barrier	19	Half Action	No
Summon Object	24	Full Action	Yes
Transfix	19	Half Action	No
Wall of Souls	24	Full Action	Yes
Warp Corruption	27	Full Action	No
Warp Lightning	21	Half Action	No
Warp Tongue	16	Half Action	No
Warp Vigour	14	Half Action	No



Occult Artefacts and Daemon Weapons

"Wrought by my hand, bathed in my blood, bound to my will. By these ways did I forge a fetish meant to draw forth the infinite energies beyond our reality. Simple as it may appear to be, it is my gateway to understanding."

–From the writings of Ocran Orana

All humans desire power, be it power over themselves, their fellow men, or the world around them. The Ruinous Powers exploit this desire with Dark Pacts and unnatural gifts. Sorcerers, in turn, seek to increase their capacity for warp-craft by creating items designed to draw upon the power of the warp directly, without the need for extended rituals. Some go a step further, calling forth servants of Chaos and binding them into physical cages to create daemonic weapons of great and terrible power.

Occult artefacts come in many shapes and sizes, ranging from rings engraved with esoteric symbols to great malefic engines designed to channel warp energies for often unguessable (but certainly malevolent) purposes. But no matter their appearance, these items reek of the malignant forces contained within and must be handled with great care. As it is often said, all power corrupts, and the power of the warp is both vast and subtle, more than willing to lead anyone foolish enough to think they can master it down the road to his own self-wrought ruin. Still, there are those who try, often with results as destructive as they are spectacular.

The Ordos Malleus seeks to either destroy (if possible) or seal away occult artefacts when it encounters them. Possession of such an artefact is taken to indicate complicity with Chaos and will result in sundry execution. Some Inquisitors, however, feel the best way to fight the forces of Chaos is to try and beat them at their own game; these Radicals seek to master occult artefacts (even daemon weapons) for their own use. While effective, this is a dangerous path to tread, for direct association with the powers of the warp will change a man, and never for the better.

This chapter presents a selection of occult artefacts, ranging from the merely odd to utterly terrifying.

OCCULT ARTEFACTS

The Lens of Seeing

This artefact appears as nothing more than a simple monocle, similar to those worn by the aristocracy across the Imperium. Close inspection will show the lens itself is made from the finest crystal, with none of the usual marks left by mechanical polishers. The frame is gold wire, engraved with tiny symbols and sigils, and comes with a length of fine chain so the lens can easily be attached to one's clothing.

A curious and almost benign artefact—unlike many creations of the malefic arts—the Lens of Seeing was in fact shaped by the Radical Inquisitor Immel Amud. He sought to use it for the Imperium's benefit, seeking a way to decipher the oft-encoded tomes found in the possession of cultists and sorcerers. For a time, the Lens proved to be a valued tool in his crusade against the forces of Chaos, allowing Amud to clearly read even the most minor of notes, thus laying the cultists' plans out in the open to be countered. But eventually the fickle nature of the warp made itself known, and Amud discovered far too late the price the Lens asks for its services.

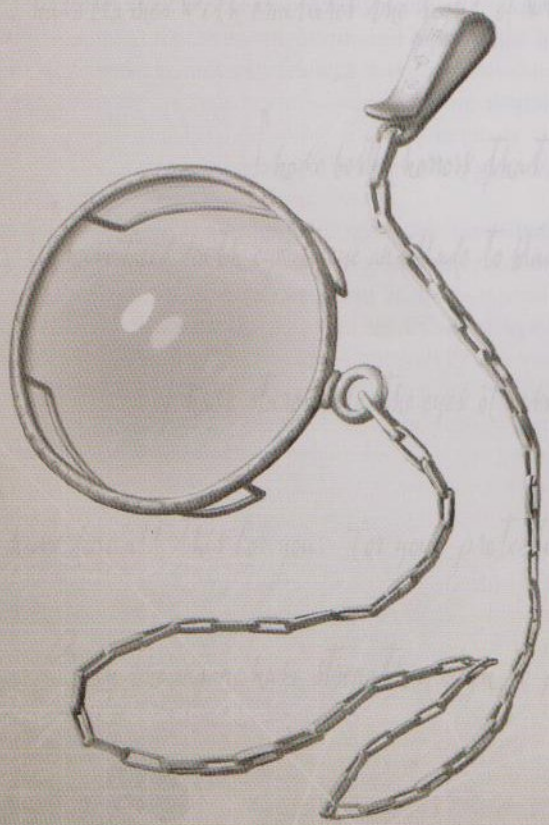
Driven to near madness by his obsession with secrets the Lens revealed, Amud met his end when a supposedly minor gathering of cultists proved to have ten times that number. Slain in the ensuing battle, Amud's body was eventually recovered, but the Lens was not to be found.

Using The Lens Of Seeing

Activating the Lens requires an **Ordinary (+10) Invocation Test** and a Full Action. Once the Lens has been activated, it will make any text viewed through it legible to the character regardless of origin. This includes text written in various xenos tongues, ciphers, codes, and the like. The effect lasts as long as the character reads one particular text. If he switches to a new book, he must reactivate the Lens.

The Lens, while quite useful, isn't without its hazards. Each individual use of the Lens causes the character to gain 1 Insanity Point. Keep this total separate from any other Insanity Points the character may gain. Once the character gains 10 Insanity Points from using the Lens, he must make a Trauma Test as described on page 234 of the **Dark Heresy** Rulebook. However, failure doesn't result in a roll on the Mental Trauma table; it simply reflects how much control over the character the Lens has.

As the character gains Insanity Points (and potentially fails Trauma Tests) he becomes more and more possessive of the Lens, until eventually he will refuse to be without it. In addition, once the character reaches 40 Insanity Points, he will double-check all written documents with the Lens, looking for hidden meanings and secret messages. Once he reaches 60 Insanity Points, he will only read documents via the Lens, and once he reaches 80 Insanity Points he will have lost the ability to read anything unless using the Lens. In addition, once the character has 60 Insanity Points and is totally dependent on the Lens, the accursed monocle will begin to alter the content of whatever the character is reading, subtly changing words and sentences.



The Lure of Temptation

GM

Occult artefacts should serve two purposes in a Dark Heresy campaign. First, they represent the evils of the warp given physical form. Profane rituals are required to activate most of them, while their mere existence is proof of malefic involvement. Second, they allow the GM to sway an Acolyte from his vows, leading him astray and out of sight of the Emperor's gaze. The GM shouldn't force a player to accept an occult artefact; instead, let him see it in action. Have a cultist easily cut down a few expendable Guardsmen with an enchanted knife, or have a psyker's best efforts foiled by a cunningly crafted amulet. If a character picks up one of these objects, allow him to benefit from its use, even for a brief moment. If he decides to discard the object, so be it, but if he thinks he might be able to use it against the forces of Chaos, by all means let him. Only later, once the player (and character) feels confident he has mastered his strange prize should the GM bring the artefact's full cost of into the game.

Bone Flute

At first glance, this artefact appears to be little more than a simple flute, such as is found on feudal worlds across the Sector. Closer inspection shows that it has been carved from a length of bone, specifically a human femur. Roughly 55 centimetres in length, it has been carefully shaped and polished. Both ends of the flute are decorated with thin bands of silver, into which are inscribed various sigils and symbols.

The origins of the Bone Flute are unclear, although the name Mateus is often associated with its history. If the stories are true, Mateus, a popular musician from the hives of Fenksworld, created the flute in an effort to, as he put it, "play the music of the cosmos." It's unknown if he succeeded in his quest, as Mateus committed suicide soon after crafting the flute—although some say his death wasn't by his own hand, and investigators found his dismembered body scattered about his squalid quarters. This has resulted in the Bone Flute developing a reputation as an 'unlucky' instrument. Whilst it is possible to produce haunting and unworldly melodies with it, sooner or later, the musician using it will come to a terrible end.

Using the Bone Flute

This requires a character to make two Tests. The first is a **Difficult (–10) Performer (Musician) Test** in order to create a piece of music the warp finds appealing (though other listeners may have a far different reaction), followed by a **Difficult (–10) Invocation Test**. The later Test takes a Full Action, while the former requires a variable amount of time (a minute at minimum).

Once both Tests have been passed, the character playing the Bone Flute can produce an effect similar to the Psychic Power Weapon Jinx. All mechanical devices within 50 metres cease to function and will remain so as long as the character continues to play. Weapons will jam or fail to fire, chain and power weapons won't activate, chronos will show impossible times, auspexes will give back false readings, and data-slates will display jumbled audio, video, and text.

The character can maintain this effect by making a Willpower Test each Round. For each Degree of Success, the character can add an additional Round before he needs to roll again. For example, if the character makes his Willpower Test, the effect lasts for another Round; if he makes it by +10, the effects last for another two Rounds, and so on. However, once the character stops playing (for any reason), a roll is made on the Psychic Phenomena Table (**Dark Heresy** Rulebook, page 162) as the warp makes its displeasure known in having its music interrupted. The Bone Flute will not be affected by any adverse effects rolled.

The Forge of Nightmares

The Forge of Nightmares is a huge bio-mechanical construct comprised of an oily black lattice of supports, struts, and braces. This outer shell only barely restrains the bulging, reddish, fleshy masses that expand and contract at a regular rate, akin to a monstrous pulsing heart.

The forge consists of four greater and four lesser furnaces radiating equidistantly out from a central vent; each furnace ends in an opening resembling a distended mouth. The furnaces are two to three metres in height, whilst the central stack is well over 10 metres tall. Even when supposedly quiescent, the furnaces draw in air, with various foul vapours being expelled from the towering vent. Those who have viewed a forge in this state find it uncomfortably similar to the act of respiration.

Supposedly, these monstrosities are shaped in order to hold a great and terrible daemon of unimaginable power, although some swear a forge is actually the daemon itself assuming physical form in our world. In either case, even the merest hint of a Forge of Nightmare's existence will bring the full force of the Ordos Malleus to bear, as an unchecked Forge brought to full operation can render an entire world over to the forces of Chaos. Once lost to the Imperium in such a manner, the only recourse to save the doomed world is Exterminatus.

Certain documents and numerous Inquisitors link forges with the Tyrant Star. The prevailing opinion is that a forge is meant to draw Komus to it, weakening the fabric of real space so the immaterium can leak through. Whilst others dispute this theory, no one can deny that an operating forge of nightmares lives up to its name, bringing forth madness and violence over a wide area and leaving only ruin and despair in its wake.

Using a Forge of Nightmares

Activating the Forge of Nightmares requires at least eight malefic cultists—one to stand at the opening to each furnace—and as many sacrifices as deemed necessary. The forge is fueled by human souls and will greedily consume any and all that are forced screaming into each of its furnaces. Once the first sacrifices have been fed to the forge, it will start to shudder, the furnaces appearing to swallow each victim as blood and other unnamable fluids begin to seep from various small orifices scattered over the forge's surface.

As the forge consumes souls, a sorcerer can attempt the ritual that activates it fully. This requires a **Very Hard (–30) Forbidden Lore (Daemonology) Test** (every 8 sacrifices after the initial set reduces the Test Difficulty by 5). If this Test is failed, roll on the Contempt of the Warp Table (see page 165), modified by +10 for every 8 sacrifices made to the forge.

Once activated, the air above the forge's vent will start to shimmer and ripple as the fearsome construct starts to moan. Soon, strange scintillating colours will pour forth from the forge's vents, accompanied by shrieks and howls as the barriers between this world and the warp begin to break down. As these barriers fray, a full-scale psychic warp storm

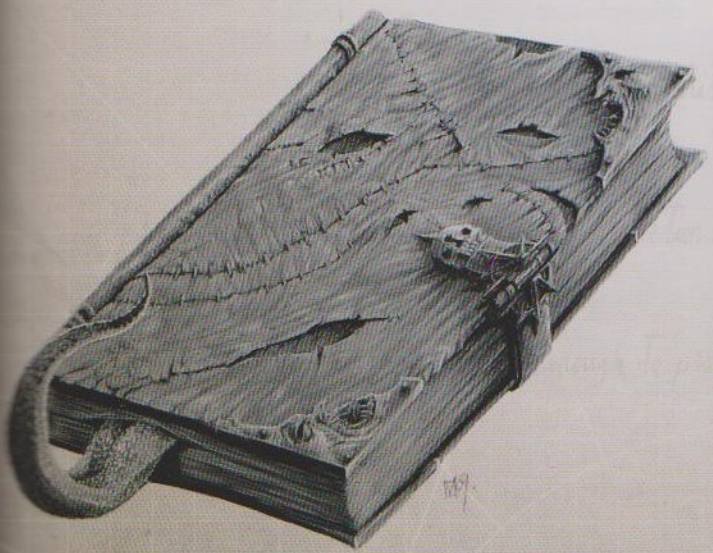
will begin to rage about the forge of nightmares: the sky will roil with dark clouds, showers of flesh and blood will fall from above, lightning will strike not in bolts but in sheets, foul spirits will walk freely, technological devices will suffer from a myriad of problems before failing outright, and weak men will go hopelessly mad. Any attempt to summon a chaos daemon while the storm lasts will gain +20 for the auspicious circumstances.

Libellus Appello (The Book of Names)

This small booklet, scarcely larger than an Imperial Infantryman's Uplifting Primer, has a cover made from wooden plates covered in carefully prepared human skin. It opens via a single iron hinge, which has been fashioned to resemble the eight-pointed star of Chaos. A brass hasp locks the booklet closed. If opened, the pages revealed are shown to be made of fine vellum. Though of nominally human origin, the exact nature of these well-dressed sheets is far too monstrous for most Acolytes to dare contemplate. Each leaf of the Libellus Appello is covered in mathematical formulae, alchemical symbols, star charts, and dense blocks of text written in an obscure tongue.

Written by the disgraced and heretical Adept Hetoun Parang Levon, the Libellus Appello's passages must be translated (see page 186 of **Dark Heresy** for more) before a character can properly use the book. One this has been done, the Libellus Appello is revealed to be a guide to the true names of daemons, as well as how to divine them through thorough examination of certain astronomical phenomena. A number of daemonic names are included in the book—some added by hands other than Levon's—along with scattered comments in the margins detailing the requirements of summoning any of the daemons mentioned in the main text (but not the summoning rituals themselves).

Levon was executed for heresy soon after the completion of his blasphemous masterpiece, and the book vanished for a time, only to reappear in the hands of various malefic cultists. Supposedly, at least one sorcerer used it to predict the next appearance of Komus, the Tyrant Star. Finally captured by Amalathian Inquisitors, the Libellus Appello currently resides deep in the vaults of the Tricorn Palace, located in Hive Sibellus on Scintilla.



The Lightless Vaults

Deep beneath the Tricorn Palace on Scintilla are the Lightless Vaults. Built into the bedrock of Scintilla and accessible only by writ of Lord Inquisitor Caiden the Vaults are a warren of stone passages patrolled by servitors harnessed with weaponry and conditioned to destroy any who do not have the correct seals. Within the chambers that branch off the passages are profane and terrible artefacts recovered by members of the Calixian Conclave in the long centuries since it was convened. Here are weapons forged by hate, obsession and delusion, tomes filled with truths and lies that could corrupt billions. All are sealed behind adamantine doors etched with sacred script of protection and held in check by humming void field generators. In the cells that are at the deepest point of the Vaults, held by null and stasis fields, are the worst heretics and malefic traitors to have been captured by servants of the Ordos Calixis.

Using the Libellus Appello

In order to make proper use of the Libellus Appello, a character must make a **Difficult (–10) Scholastic Lore (Astromancy) Test** in order to determine a daemon's true name using the formulae given. Summoning a daemon already named in the book gives the summoner a +30 bonus to his Forbidden Lore (Daemonology) Test, as he knows the daemon's true name.

Simply reading the Libellus Appello from cover to cover will give a character a +10 bonus on his next Forbidden Lore (Daemonology) Test, but will also inflict 1d5 Corruption Points.

GM Using Occult Artefacts in Your Games

Artefacts should never appear randomly in the game. They aren't "treasure" to be found once the Acolytes have defeated a nest of cultists. Game Masters should always have a reason for having an artefact appear, even it's only to prove an another character's involvement with Chaos. In addition, the artefacts themselves should have a purpose as well, even if the use isn't immediately apparent to the players. Of course, the warp is fickle, and not every ritual works as planned, so the GM has a little leeway in presenting the occasional bizarre artefact with no conceivable purpose or one that produces utterly strange and seemingly random results.

Mech Spider

This object consists of a human head, fashioned from brass, mounted on a small eight-legged chassis. The head is fashioned to be an almost exact replica of a human's, except it is missing the eyes, ears, lips, and tongue. Inside the head is a mechanism that operates the legs, eyes, and mouth—if there was anything mounted there for it to control.

Created as a mockery of a Tech-Priest's servitor, Mech Spiders are often used by sorcerers and witches to spy upon the unsuspecting or to communicate with remote cells of cultists and the like. They require no small skill to create, and are usually only found on hive and forge worlds, as other planets normally lack the resources needed to make one.

Using the Mech Spider

A Mech Spider's true purpose becomes apparent when a sorcerer or witch prepares it for use. First, the head is anointed with a mixture of blood and machine oil, then the eyes, nose, lips, tongue, and ears are removed from a freshly-killed corpse and attached to the head, connecting them to the various control rods within the skull. The sorcerer then performs a **Difficult (–10) Invocation Test**, taking a Full Action to do so. If successful, the sorcerer has now opened a mental link to the Mech Spider, and can see what it can see, hear what it hears, and can speak through its mouth. He also can mentally control it, moving it about using only his mind.

If the Mech Spider is destroyed, the user will suffer a psychic backlash, taking 1d5 Rending Damage (ignoring armour and Toughness Bonus). In addition, the spot where the Mech Spider met is demise will undergo Psychic Phenomena.

Mech Spider Profile								
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
20	—	10	20	36	†	†	†	—

Move: 4/8/12/24 **Wounds:** 5
Skills: Concealment (Ag +10), Dodge (Ag), Silent Move (Ag +10)
Talents: Fearless
Traits: Machine (1), Quadruped, Size (Puny)
Armour (Machine): All 1
Weapons: Unarmed (1d10–3; Primitive, Special)
Special: †These Characteristics are equal to those of the controlling sorcerer.

The Glory of the Emperor In the Light of Dawn

This blasphemous abstract painting, reputed to show the God-Emperor greeting the rising sun over Holy Terra, is both surreal and unsettling. Mostly painted in various shades of yellow, gold, blue, and white, the painting has the unsettling ability to cause feelings of vertigo and unease, as if someone was looking back at the viewer, when viewed for any length of time. Close examination of the frame shows it to be composed of thousands of human shapes wrought out of solid silver. The human figures, perfect in every detail, are entwined about one another in positions of either ecstasy or anguish.

The painting has a number of additional disturbing traits which only become apparent over time: the painting and its frame always feel warm to the touch; the figures making up the frame slowly move and twist, endlessly orbiting the painting itself; the colours making up the painting gradually shift, creeping over so slowly across the canvas. Although unnerving, the painting is effectively quiescent unless properly treated with a new layer of varnish. A thin line of black crust where the canvas meets the frame reveals the true nature of this varnish—human blood.

It's unknown who exactly created the painting, as records indicate *The Glory of the Emperor* to at least a thousand years old. Certain scholars among the Ordo Malleus believe *The Glory of the Emperor* was painted aboard a a spaceship during a particularly violent warp storm. Others have declared the painting to be erroneously named, as not even the immaterium is capable of corrupting the visage of the God-Emperor Himself.

Using The Glory of the Emperor in the Light of Dawn

Applying a layer of blood to the painting, followed by a **Difficult (–10) Invocation Test** (Doing so requires a Full Action) will awaken *The Glory of the Emperor in the Light of Dawn*. The colors will shift, run, and form into a semblance of a face, although one can never be sure if it's human or not—though it certainly isn't the Emperor's visage! Once awakened, the painting will answer any questions asked, but the truth and accuracy of such answers are subject to the GM's discretion (the user may ask one question per Degree of Success from the initial Invocation Test). As the painting represents a direct connection to the power of the warp, failure to succeed in the Invocation Test will result in a roll on the Contempt of the Warp Table (see page 165).

The blood used to varnish the painting must be fresh and must be human. If it's not human, or has been thinned with anything (turpentine, oils, water, and so forth), the Invocation Test will automatically fail, resulting in a roll on the Contempt of the Warp table.

DAEMON WEAPONS

Perhaps the most infamous of all unholy artifacts are weapons that contain within them the bound essence of some malign Warp Entity, invigorating them with unnatural power. Daemon weapons may vary widely in abilities, design, and appearance. All, however, are perilous to their wielder in some way, and often the daemon within is far from happy to be so confined and enslaved.

The vast majority of daemon weapons are variations of more commonplace or archaic melee arms, although guns and more esoteric weapons are not unknown but are far, far rarer. Regardless of their appearance, all daemon weapons share several basic qualities:

Lethality: In addition to any other powers and abilities they grant, Daemon weapons are hungering, unnatural things that delight in taking life; they never count as having the Primitive Quality and add the bound entity's WP bonus to the basic Damage and Penetration for a weapon of their type.

Uncanny Resilience: Regardless of their appearance and apparent construction, daemon weapons are extremely hard to physically damage and destroy. They count as having a natural Armour of 20, and will not be destroyed if used to Parry, or are Parried by, weapons with Power Fields or similar effects. If a daemon weapon somehow is destroyed, roll immediately on the Perils of the Warp Table (see page 163 of the **Dark Heresy** rulebook). On any result that would indicate a daemonic manifestation, it is the daemon in the blade that is released.

The Beast Within: All such weapons carry at their heart a bound Warp Entity that has been enslaved within. In the case of most daemon weapons, this will be a comparably weak example of its kind, a lesser servitor, a mindless beast, warp predator, or even an Unclean Spirit or Astral Spectre. The more powerful the entity bound, the more powerful the weapon, but greater also the risk to the wielder.

In order wield a Daemon weapon, the user must first succeed in a Daemonic Mastery Test. Doing so successfully cows the weapon into obedience. After this point, however, should the wielder's Willpower Bonus ever fall bellow that of the bound Daemon, then the Daemon within will attempt to rebel once more and force another Mastery Test. If at any point such a Mastery Test is failed by the wielder, the Daemon within the weapon may make a possession attack against their would-be master (see page 331 of the **Dark Heresy** rulebook). If this succeeds, the wielder has succumbed, and it is they who are the weapon's slave until they can break free.

Weapon Attributes

Daemon weapons may display an almost limitless variety of different powers and attributes which the beast within can grant grudgingly to their wielder, or by simple side-effect of their presence. **Table 5–4: Daemon Weapon Attributes** illustrates some of the possibilities involved. In the case of duplicate effects, re-roll the result.

Obtaining Daemon Weapons

Daemon weapons are exceptionally rare, powerful and unique artefacts. For these reasons no cost or availability for them have been included; they are not the type of thing that you go looking for in the bazaars of Maccabeus Quintus. A daemon weapon should be obtained either through persistent effort: hunting down a cult leader who is reputed to wield a weapon of dark and mysterious power, or by the Games Master placing a daemon weapon in the path of an acolyte to tempt them further to the path of radicalism.

Table 5-5: Daemon Weapon Attributes

Roll	Attribute	Effect
1–20	Sharp as Sin	Tearing Quality.
21–30	Hungering	+5 to all Critical results.
31–40	Void Chill	Inflicts 1d10 Toughness Damage with each wounding hit.
41–50	Screaming	When wielded, the user gains the Fear 1 (Disturbing) trait, causing Warp Shock.
51–60	Null	Grants the Wielder a +20 bonus to resist Psychic Attacks.
61–65	Life Bane	Toxic (inflicting 2d5 extra Damage)
66–70	Heart Seeker	+10 to Wielder's WS while used.
71–75	Dark Fire	Damage type becomes E and the weapon sets its targets on fire (see page 210 of **Dark Heresy**).
76–80	Mind Leech	Wounded victims must Test WP or become Stunned for 1d5 Rounds.
81–85	Warp Touched	Warp Weapon Quality.
86–90	Vampiric	For each victim slain, the wielder regains 1d5 lost Wounds.
91–95	Hell Spite	The wielder gains Frenzy and Unnatural Strength (x2) while the blade is used.
96–99	Soul Thirster	Wounding hits can kill outright as per a Force Weapon (see page 187 of **The Inquisitor's Handbook**) using the Bound Daemon's WP.
00	Aetheric Render	The weapon bypasses armour, psychic defences, and fields when it strikes; all living creatures must pass a **Challenging (+0) Toughness Test** or die when wounded.

Table 5-6: Daemon Weapons by Strength

Roll	Class of Entity	WP	Attributes
1–20	Warp Predator	15+2d10	Hungering
21–55	Daemonic Beast	20+2d10	1 Random Attribute
56–88	Bound Daemon	20+3d10	2 Random Attribute
89–99	Astral Spectre	30+2d10	Mind Leech and 1 Random Attribute
00	Greater Entity	60+3d10	Create unique abilities or Warp Touched and 3 random Attributes

INFAMOUS DAEMON WEAPONS

There are daemon weapons whose histories echo in the unspoken, secret records of the Ordo Malleus Calixis, weapons that are written of in the deepest archives of the Tricorn Palace on Scintilla and whose existence is only whispered between trusted peers of the Inquisition. The infamy of these foul weapons may be born of the role they have played in a vile atrocity of the past, or because they are known to be at large in the hands of arch-heretics. Some have never been confirmed to exist in truth, or lurk in the dire warnings of prophesies yet to realised.

Anguish



Little is known of the daemon weapon known only as Anguish. Some amongst the arcane scholars of the Ordo Malleus doubt that it even exists. Anguish is reputed to take the form of a long basket-hilted sword—its hilt dotted with thorny spines, its mirror-like blade etched with images of bird feathers and lidless eyes. It has been said to radiate a chill like that of the void between stars and to have an edge so sharp that it can cleave the curtain of reality—opening a wound-like portal into the Warp through which the wielder of the blade may pass to far and strange places.

Special Rules

Anguish contains a Greater Daemonic Entity (WP 71) with the Sharp As Sin, Void Chill, and Rend Reality (see below) attributes.

Rend Reality: The wielder of Anguish may be used by its wielder to cut a portal in reality. Attempting this is a Full Action and reproduces the effects of the Sorcery Power Create Door (see page 170) except that it requires no Focus Power roll and uses the Greater Daemonic Entity's Willpower rather than the caster's Intelligence to successfully open the door to the correct location.

Gore Thirster

Gore Thirster is a monstrous cleaver of dark metal whose pitted and stained surface sweats beads of blood. Within Gore Thirster's crudely forged metal is bound a daemon of rage and slaughter whose hunger for blood is without limit. Those who wield this tool of atrocity find their senses overlaid with the red rage of the thing bound within. Those who would master Gore Thirster must overcome a fearsome will focused upon murder and destruction.

Special Rules

Gore Thirster contains a Bound Daemon (WP 44) with the Hell Spite, Life Bane, and Demand of Blood (see below) attributes.

Demand of Blood: Gore Thirster's appetite for blood and death is such that should it not be sated, it will take what it requires from its wielder. Should Gore Thirster be used to strike a target and fail to cause any damage (after reductions for armour and Toughness Bonus have been applied) it will inflict 1d5 R damage to the wielder with no reduction for Armour or Toughness bonus.

The Whispers of Delight

The Whispers of Delight were daemon bound daggers created by the Order of the Amethyst Serpent on Malfi. Each dagger had a long blade of amethyst that twisted like a tongue of fire, a hilt of bladed and spiked finger loops, and was etched with dying words of thirty six sacrifices to the Prince of Pleasure. The Whispers of Delight were given to the Order's assassins who it were reputed to be able to persuade their victims to grant them admittance to their most intimate chambers before their throats were cut. After the Order of the Amethyst Serpent was broken by the Ordo Malleus, three of the Whispers of Delight were recovered. However, it is believed that more existed and survived the destruction of their makers.

Special Rules

Each dagger contains a Bound Daemon (WP 36), with the Sharp as Sin and Whispers of Delight (see below) attributes.

Whispers of Delight: When the edge of one of these daggers is blooded (by even a drop of blood from a small cut) it immediately begins whispering dark secrets and suggestions to its wielder, making his insights and words strangely persuasive. Anyone who hears and understands the wielder's

speech must pass an opposed Willpower Test against the daemon weapon's Willpower (roll once and apply the result to all Tests). Those who fail the Test become vulnerable to the wielder's suggestions, granting the wielder a +20 bonus to any Charm, Intimidate, or Deceive Tests against them.

Note: This is not a true form of direct mind control, but can be used to overcome good sense, sow discord, alleviate suspicion, and stoke the fires of hatred.

The Lash of Bitterness

The Lash of Bitterness is a long whip of bones and teeth taken from humans and the predatory creatures of Iocanthos. Within it is bound the tortured essence of a warp creature whose being is consumed by fear and insanity. The Lash of Bitterness was said to have been created by a slave champion of the Crow Farther and to have been wielded in combat against Drusus himself. It was recovered from the battlefield by servants of the Holy Ordos in the wake of the saint's cleansing of Iocanthos, and it is now is sealed in the Lightless Vaults of the Tricorn palace—its twitching coils muttering vileness and wishing ill to all life.

Special Rules

The Lash of Bitterness contains an Astral Spectre (WP 37) with the Mind Leech, Screaming, and Daemonic Presence (see below) attributes.

Daemonic Presence: Living creatures with 30 metres hear a constant wailing and moaning overlaid with the grinding and gnashing of teeth. All creatures, other than the wielder of the Lash of Bitterness, take a –10 penalty to Willpower Tests.

The Mace of Judgement

The Mace of Judgement is a symbol of Imperial might and purity that was violated by the Pilgrims of Hayte and turned into a mockery of its original purpose. The Mace has a haft and head of dark, wrought metal topped with winged fist clasping a skull of adamantine. Charred spills of parchment inscribed with tracts from the Book of Judgement coil the mace's length, secured by seals of thick wax. It was weapon made to demonstrate the might of Imperial law and punish those who deny its authority. The Mace of Judgement was possessed by Adeptus Arbites Judge Mielira, who was captured by the Pilgrims of Hayte while countering their activities on Vaxanide. Rather than kill their prisoner, the Pilgrims of Hayte took her weapon and bound into it a warp thing of madness and endless hate. They then set Judge Mielira free and returned her mace of authority. The cultists watched while the daemon in her weapon twisted the Judge's own faith and conviction and made her a monster to whom all were guiltily and worthy only of death. Mielira the Bloody was finally killed by vassals of Inquisitor Skane. However, her black mage that had become the trademark of her atrocities was never recovered.

Special Rules

The Mace of Judgement contains a warp entity of unknown nature (WP 41). It has the Daemon Hater (see below) and Sin of Righteousness (see below) attributes.

Daemon Hater: The thing imprisoned within the Mace of Judgement loathes other daemons with a purity and fury that can only be possible from one of their own warp-spawned kind. When the Mace of Judgement strikes a warp entity or any other creature with the Daemonic Trait, it automatically may inflict Righteous Fury on a Damage result of 8-10.

Sin of Righteousness: A wielder of the Mace of Judgement gains the Fearless and Hatred (all enemies of the wielder) Talents, but also automatically gains an Acute Delusion of Righteousness (see page 237 of The **Dark Heresy** Rulebook) for as long as the Maul is under their mastery, whether it is in their hand or not.

Midnight

The weapon called Midnight has had many other names in the time since its forging beneath strange dying stars. The daemon bound within Midnight is a thing that has been imprisoned for so long that all that remains is its hunger; hunger for light, for hope, for life. Light and warmth are drawn to Midnight. Its true shape is a mystery: it is glimpsed only as impressions of razor edges and barbs glimpsed in a pall of darkness.

Special Rules

Midnight contains a Greater Daemonic Entity (WP 68), with Void Chill, Dark Fire, Warp Touched, and Light Eater (see below) attributes.

Light Eater: The daemon weapon devours light, causing the area within 10m to be subject to Darkness (see page 198 of the **Dark Heresy** Rulebook) that is not cancelled by Dark Vision, photovisors, or any other means of seeing in the dark. The bearer of the daemon weapon is immune to the effects of the darkness it causes and also gains the Dark Vision Trait whilst wielding it.

Rot Giver

Rot Giver is a huge hammer of corroded iron. Its surface is patterned with blooms of rust and decay that to a fevered mind might seem to be foul marks and hateful runes growing from within the metal itself. The weapon was said to have been made of metal torn from space hulks which had drifted in the warp for seven thousand years and forged in a furnace fired by corpses before being quenched the slime of a plague pit. Rot Giver is surrounded by a nauseous air of decay; metal left in is presence crumbles to rust, wood rots, and dead flesh begins to turn pale and rotten. Only the one who can master the will of the daemon within Rot Giver is untouched by its power. Undiscovered and untamed in millennia, Rot Giver now lies in a space hulk. Once a great warship long ago, the space hulk drifts through the Fydae Great Cloud waiting to be found once again.

Table 5-7: Infamous Daemon Weapons

Name	Class	Range	Dam	Pen	Special	Wt
Anguish	Melee	—	1d10+7 R	7	Balanced, †Sharp As Sin, Void Chill, Rend Reality	1.1kg
Whisper of Delight	Melee, Thrown	3m	1d5+3 R	3	†Sharp as Sin (Tearing), Whispers of Delight	1.5 kg
Gore Thirster	Melee	—	1d10+5 R	5	†Hell Spite, Life Bane, Demand for Blood, Unbalanced	5 kg
Lash of Bitterness	Melee	—	1d10+4 I	3	†Mind Leach, Screaming, Daemonic Presence, Flexible	1.5 kg
Mace of Judgement	Melee	—	1d10+5 I	5	†Daemon Hater, Sin of Righteousness, Unbalanced	4kg
Midnight	Melee	—	1d10+7 E	—	†Balanced, Void Chill, Dark Fire, Warp Touched, Light Eater	1.5 kg
Rot Giver	Melee	—	2d10+2 R	4	†Gift of Rot, Unwieldy	7 kg
Hesht	Melee, Thrown	3m	1d5+5 R	—	†Aetheric Render, Heart Seeker	1.5 kg
Sceptre of a Thousand Moons	Melee	—	1d10+5 I	5	Null, Incandescent Blast	2 kg
Spear of Countless Eyes	Melee, Thrown	10m	1d10+2 R	2	†Hungering, Instinct of the Beast	2 kg

†All daemon weapons have the The Beast Within, Lethality and Uncanny Resilience attributes in addition to those listed. The additional damage and penetration for the Lethality attribute have been included in these entries.

Special Rules

Rot Giver is a contains a Daemonic Beast (WP 28) with the Gift of Rot (see below) attribute.

Gift of Rot: If an armoured location is struck by Rot Giver, make a Willpower test using the Daemonic Beast's Willpower. If it succeeds, the protection offered by the armour at that location is reduced by 2 points permanently as tendrils of rust, rot, and decay spread from the point of impact. If the armour is primitive, its protection is reduced by 4 points permanently. The armour protection at a location may be reduced to 0, in which case it is permanently destroyed.

Hesht: Granter of Vengeance

Hesht is a dagger with two parallel blades of twisted metal like the teeth of a predatory beast. Thrust into the chest of an enemy, the daemon bound within the blades gorges on the victim's essence and soul. The victim is slain in the most complete and terrible manner possible, and the daemon strains hungrily at its bonds seeking more life on which to feed. Hesht was forged by the foul enemies of the Imperium that were driven from the Calixis Sector by the Angevin Crusade. In desperation they turned all their vile arts to make weapons both great and small to try and turn the tide against the forces of the Imperium. They failed and were annihilated, but their vile creations, of which Hesht is one, endured and were left to tempt and corrupt those who had vanquished their creators.

Special Rules

Hesht contains a Bound Daemon (WP 40) with the Aetheric Render and Heart Seeker attributes. In addition, every time Hesht kills a victim outright (either through inflicting damage or because of its Aetheric Render attribute), the wielder must make a Daemonic Mastery test.

The Sceptre of Ten Thousand Moons

The Sceptre of Ten Thousand Moons is long rod of obsidian from which grinning sickle moons leer in constantly shifting patterns. Topped with a spray of silver feathers and a blue gem the size of a human eye the Sceptre of Ten Thousand Moons is possesses a destructive power craved by sorcerers and deceivers of all kinds. It is said to have passed through

the hands of dozens of warp dabbling cults in the Malfian subsector, and is whispered to have betrayed each one it has served to their destruction. In whose hands it resides at present remains unknown.

Special Rules

The Sceptre of a Thousand Moons contains a Bound Daemon (WP 54) with the Null and Incandescent Blast attributes (see below). It also functions as a Psy-focus (see page 151 of the Dark Heresy Rulebook)

Incandescent Blast: The sceptre can unleash bolts of multi hued warp energy at a target within 18m. To activate this ability, make a test using the daemons Willpower to hit the target (rather than the Ballistic Skill normally used for a ranged attack). Range does not modify this test, but other modifiers (such as cover, range, and so forth) apply as normal. If the attack hits, it deals 1d10+2 E Damage. This Damage gains Warp Weapon quality, and thus bypasses armour.

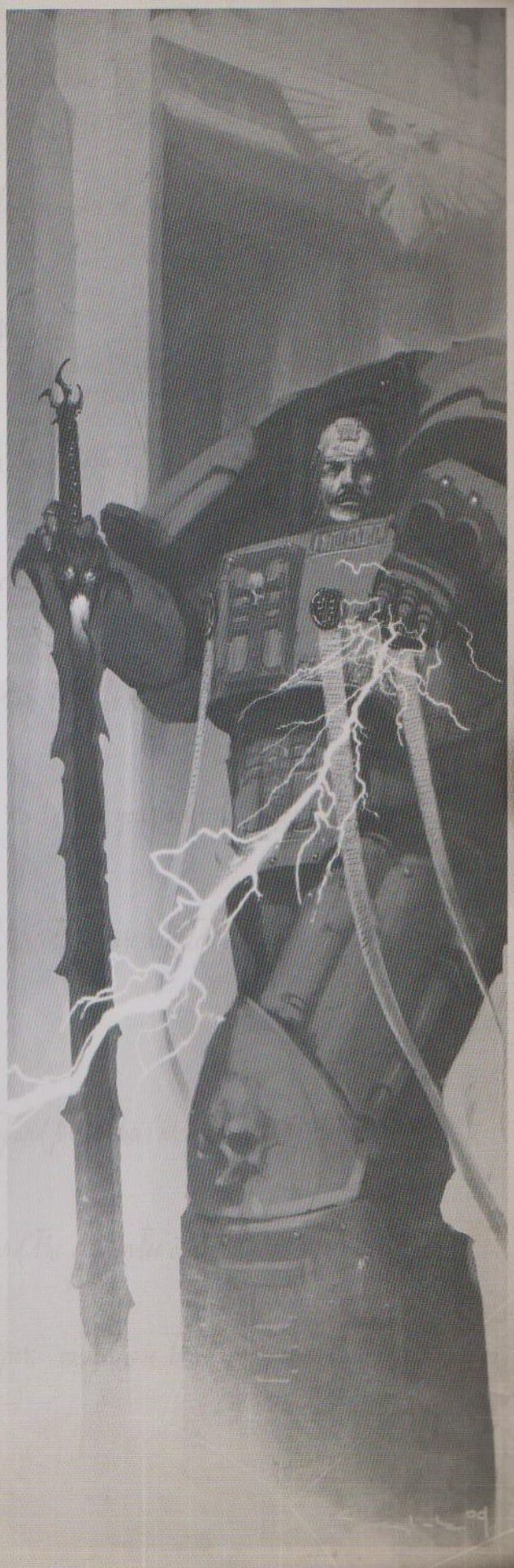
The Spear of Countless Eyes

The Spear of Countless Eyes is a tall spear of hammered bronze whose dark wooden haft is carved with lidded eyes that open and close to reveal rolling yellow irises and black slit pupils. It was created by the warp corrupted hunter tribes who dwelt on Iocanthos long before the Imperium claimed it. The Spear of Countless Eyes is said to make a hunter able to see with unnatural clarity and be able to feel all that passes around him as if it were the touch of wind on his skin. Though the old dark ways have long been burnt from Iocanthos, such relics as the Spear of Countless Eyes endure to as a memory of a dark past that may return once again.

Special Rules

The Spear of Countless Eyes contains a Warp Predator (WP 26) with the Hungering and Instinct of the Beast (see below) attributes.

Instinct of the Beast: The wielder of The Spear of Countless Eyes gains the Heightened Senses (Sight) talent, in addition to the Dark Sight and Unnatural Senses (15m) Traits.





On the Creation of Daemonhosts

Without a doubt, one of the most powerful weapons in the Radical's arsenal is the daemonhost. For those who would use the fell powers of the warp to achieve their goals, there is little that is more tantalizing than the thought of having a daemon bound to do one's bidding. However, the daemon is capricious, malicious, and above all, the daemon is a liar and deceiver. Many ill-prepared Chaos cults have thought to summon a warp-creature to do their bidding, only to find themselves amongst the fiend's first victims.

Even the most extreme Radicals in the Inquisition prefer tools they can control. Therefore, for those with considerable resources and a deep comprehension of heretical and diabolical lore, a daemonhost is an appealing alternative.

Simply put, a daemonhost is a daemon bound and contained within a human body, enslaved to the will of its creator. However, nothing about a daemonhost is truly simple.

To create such an abomination, the Radical must procure dangerous tomes full of the most proscribed knowledge, as well as a victim to serve as a host. These actions alone would be enough to condemn them unto death and damnation in the eyes of their Inquisitorial peers. However, they are by far the lesser of the two dangers the Radical will face. No daemon will suffer the yoke of a mortal master willingly, and without fail they will prove to be duplicitous and manipulative servants. Controlling a daemonhost is a constant struggle between master and slave, with the slave looking for any excuse to cause its master misfortune—or simply rend him limb from limb.

This leads to the Radical's most dangerous dilemma. The bindings that trap the daemon within its host and force it to obey its master also limit the power it can wield. Therefore, the stronger a Radical wishes his daemonhost to be, the weaker he must bind it to his will.

Instruction in the Malefic

The knowledge of how to create a daemonhost is very hard to acquire. Besides being considered heresy of the highest order by the Imperium (outside the Inquisition, one could be executed for even knowing of the existence of such abominations), the information is simply not widely known



and even less widely distributed. Some particularly devoted Chaos cultists or sorcerers may research daemonhost creation, but their work is often fragmentary, or even dangerously flawed. Only the desperate or insane would trust their mad scribblings.

A scant few tomes do include detailed—and somewhat reliable—instructions. These books are filled with malefic and daemonic lore, and are often very rare and very, very old. Some may have even been inscribed when the Emperor still walked on Holy Terra.

Even if such a tome is obtained, a victim is still required. Although no two sets of instructions for creating daemonhosts are the same, nearly all require a living, human victim. Normally, one cannot create a daemonhost by binding a daemon within an animal or a corpse. If there are more specifications describing a suitable victim (such as male, female, or pure of soul), they will be described in the instruction set. How the victim is obtained, of course, is another matter entirely...

Once the Acolytes have obtained both the proper instructions and a suitable victim, they must determine what daemon they will bind. This is the most difficult part of the process. The Acolytes cannot randomly summon a daemon, then bind it within a host. They must know who the daemon is, specifically its name, if it is a follower of a particular Ruinous Power (or simply a being of Chaos, undedicated to a particular patron), a measure of its deeds and interactions with the mortal worlds, and other details. Since the daemon will undoubtedly regard the binding as a hostile act, many choose to bind vanquished daemonic foes or rivals, well known to them through prior encounters. After all, what sweeter revenge is there than having your vanquished enemy forced to do your bidding?

VILE CRAFTSMANSHIP

Once the pieces are in place, there are two steps to creating a daemonhost. First, the actual bindings detailed in the instruction tome must be applied to the victim's body. This is done by inscribing the wards and phrases of containment directly onto the skin. The inscribing can be done in simple ink—although considering the terrible consequences should the wards have even the slightest flaw, most prefer a medium that cannot be carelessly smeared or altered, such as tattoos or scarification. Once this is done, additional bindings such as sanctified chains and locks, purity needles, and sigils of authority are added to the victim as well.

The entire process is usually quite detailed and time-consuming (although under duress, it can be accomplished quickly. Such sloppiness often leads to unpleasant results). An Acolyte can expect the procedure to take at least a full

Proscribed Works

A proscribed tome such as one that would contain instructions for binding a daemonhost is never simply sold on the market. Even an incomplete copy is extremely rare and valued beyond measure. Obtaining one should be an adventure in and of itself, and require daring (or dastardly) deeds and fortunes in excess of millions of Thrones. The exact details of procurement are left up to the GM.

Additionally, such items can be used for far more than the creation of daemonhosts. A GM should always feel free to embellish on what information these tomes contain, and even have the books reveal additional information on subsequent readings. They may even possess strange powers of their own...

For example, the Inquisition knows of two tomes written in the Calixis Sector's dark past, the *Occultus ad Oculos* and the *Folio Diabolicus*. The originals were believed destroyed by Saint Drusus's own hand during the Angevin Crusade, but copies have survived in dark corners of the sector to this day.

The *Folio Diabolicus* is actually a collection of works by different authors (likely sorcerers and warp-dabblers), and contains a great deal of information pertaining to the summoning and dealing with daemons. The book is traditionally bound with human skin and penned in blood. One of its chapters details several procedures and rituals for binding daemonhosts. Others cover more traditional summoning rites, and there are also several treatises on the natures and types of daemons. One can also find a great deal of sorcerous spells contained within the pages.

The *Occultus ad Oculos*, on the other hand, appears to have been written by a single individual. It is written in the deepest proscribed vaults of the Inquisition that the original book was perfectly innocuous, a small, hardcover tome with no indication of the secrets it contained. The few copies found in the Sector since then have followed this tradition. Between the pages exists a detailed and strangely lucid account on the nature of the warp and its inhabitants. The book does not describe sorcerous spells or diabolic summonings, but does detail the procedures for binding warp-denizens within human hosts. Between the two tomes, the *Occultus ad Oculos* is far more useful in the creation of a daemonhost, however, both tomes contain the necessary information.

In the game, each tome has the following attributes and drawbacks. The GM may add more at his discretion.

- •If an Acolyte reads a complete copy of the *Folio Diabolicus*, he immediately suffers 3d10 Corruption Points. He will not accumulate more Corruption from subsequent readings. He has the option of learning 1d5+2 psychic powers (selected by the GM) as Sorcerous Powers. The Acolyte can use the *Folio Diabolicus* to create a daemonhost.
- •If an Acolyte reads a complete copy of the *Occultus ad Oculos*, he suffers 1d5 Corruption Points. He will accumulate 2 Corruption Points for any subsequent readings. Whenever an Acolyte reads the tome, he has the option of gaining a +30 bonus to a single Forbidden Lore (Daemonology, Mutants, or Warp) Test. An Acolyte can use the *Ocultus ad Oculos* to create a daemonhost.

Generating a Daemonhost

A GM can approach creating the statistics for a daemonhost in two different ways. The first, and probably the simplest, is to use the rules for daemonhosts found in the **Dark Heresy** Core Rulebook on page 355. Simply generate the appropriate statistics following the rules on those page (skipping the part that determines what level of binding the daemonhost possesses, since that has already been determined).

However, since the binding process applies to a specific daemon, the GM may already have a daemon NPC with its own set of rules and statistics. In that case, the GM can follow these steps instead.

The daemon keeps its Weapon Skill, Ballistic Skill, Intelligence, Perception, Willpower, and Fellowship at the levels before it was bound. Then, take the daemon's Strength and Agility. Reduce each stat by 1d5 per level of binding (so a twice-bound daemonhost's Strength and Agility would reduce by 2d5). Then, take the daemon's Toughness and Wounds. Increase each stat by 1d5 per level of binding (so that same twice-bound daemonhost's Toughness and Wounds would both increase by 2d5).

The GM can roll randomly for the daemonhost's Unholy Changes and Daemonic Presence. Alternatively, he can select ones he feels suits his particular daemon. A daemon of Nurgle may have Bloated Form and Corpse-Host, while a daemon who delights in conflagrations may gain Inner Fire.

Instead of rolling for Psychic Powers, the daemonhost possesses any Psychic Powers it had while a daemon. A once-bound daemon has a Psy Rating of 5, twice-bound have a Psy Rating of 4, and thrice-bound have a Psy Rating of 3.

Finally, the daemon keeps any and all Skills and Talents it possessed. It replaces its Traits with Daemonic, Dark Sight, Fear 4, Flyer (AB), From Beyond, and Natural Weapons (Fangs, Claws, or Fists). A daemonhost's Natural Weapons do not count as Primitive. If the GM desires, he can have the daemonhost retain certain Traits that are thematically appropriate.

day, especially if the wards are etched into the skin, rather than drawn. At the end of the process, the GM should make a secret Forbidden Lore (Daemonology) Skill Test for the Acolyte overseeing the procedure. The basic difficulty of the Test depends on how many levels of binding the Acolyte wants applied to the future host.

- Unbound Daemonhost: Ordinary (+10)
- Once-bound Daemonhost: Challenging (+0)
- Twice-bound Daemonhost: Difficult (–10)
- Thrice-bound Daemonhost: Hard (–20)

The GM should apply any other penalties or bonuses the Acolyte may have for Forbidden Lore (Daemonology). If the Test is made successfully, the bindings have been wrought correctly. However, for every degree of failure, miniscule flaws render the bindings one degree less than the Acolyte intende—thrice-bound becomes twice-bound and so forth. A roll of 100 means that a vital piece of the bindings is missing, and the daemonhost will always count as unbound.

The GM should keep the results of the roll secret from the Acolytes. They will only discover how successful they were when they attempt to summon the daemon. However,



successful or not, everyone involved in applying the bindings suffers 1d5 Corruption Points.

The next step is to summon the actual daemon. The summoning ceremony will also be described in the instructions, and while the specifics differ, all ceremonies involve aspects such as warded circles made of sanctified salt and blood, long ritual incantations, and probably a live sacrifice of some type. The details are detailed in the instruction tome, and should be left up to the GM, but should require at least one **Challenging (+0) Forbidden Lore (Daemonology) Test**.

Once the daemon manifests, the Acolyte conducting the ceremony speaks the words of binding and engages in an Opposed Willpower Test with the daemon. The Acolyte gains a +30 for this Test, due to the nature of the daemon's summoning (the ceremony is designed to summon daemons for binding, after all). If the Acolyte loses the roll, the daemon vanishes back into the warp, swearing vengeance. If he wins, there is a flash, a deafening crack, a sudden stench of ozone, and the daemon finds itself inside the host body. Everyone involved in the ceremony gains 1d10 Corruption.

Representing a Daemonhost in Dark Heresy

A daemonhost does not have to be a slavering, rabid killing machine. Most deamohosts are at least as intelligent as their masters, and some far more-so. They are also perfectly capable of speech. And although they may despise their fate, they may very well be cunning and malicious enough to realize the opportunity that presents itself.

For these reasons, a GM should feel free to portray a daemonhost as an individual with a personality, rather than a simple tool. The daemonhost can speak and hold conversations with those in the party. It may make snide comments, disparaging remarks, or even what seems to be helpful advice.

The GM should simply keep two things in mind:

- **The daemonhost bears no love or kindness for its captors.**
- **The daemonhost, like all daemons, is a liar.**

With that in mind, the daemonhost should always be working against the party, but it can do so subtly. Perhaps it suggests that a course of action resulting in civilian deaths is regrettable, but necessary 'to be thorough.' If the Acolytes follow its suggestions, next time the collateral damage will be greater, and so on. Or perhaps it provides helpful a course of action that proves completely sound and useful to the Acolytes. Once they trust it, the daemonhost may lead them into greater folly later.

Although the daemonhost should desire its captors' destruction above all things, the GM should not be afraid to portray it as helpful or even friendly. The sooner the Acolytes treat it as a friend and college, instead of a dangerous tool, the closer the daemonhost is to its final victory.

Now, the Acolyte discovers how strong his bindings are. The GM reveals the strength of the bindings. As long as the daemonhost is at least once-bound, there is no immediate danger. However, if the daemonhost is unbound, it is not constrained by the Acolyte's orders. It will lash out, attempting to kill the Acolyte who summoned it, as well as anyone else in the vicinity.

COMPELLING THE DAEMONHOST

Once the daemonhost is bound and contained, the Acolyte who bound it can compel it to do his bidding. As long as the daemonhost remains bound, it is unable to directly harm the Acolyte. However, how closely it follows orders depends on how strong its bindings are—and how specific the Acolyte is with his directions.

When given basic instructions such as "protect me," or "follow me and be silent," the daemonhost will obey the Acolyte without trouble. However, when instructing the daemonhost on a specific set of orders (such as "go to this building, kill this man, let none see you"), the Acolyte and the daemonhost should make an opposed Willpower Test. The Acolyte receives a +10 bonus to this roll for every level of binding the daemonhost possesses. Provided the Acolyte wins, the daemonhost will obey his orders to the letter. However, the more degrees the Acolyte looses by, the more liberally the daemonhost will creatively interpret his orders, preferably to the detriment of his master.

THE MACHINATIONS OF THE DAEMON

Make no mistake, the daemonhost is no friend of whomever it serves. At best, it is a grudging servant, doing its master's bidding whilst taking any opportunity to delight in bloodshed, slaughter, and destruction along the way. Whenever it has the opportunity, however, it will cause trouble for its master in any way possible. Most often, this comes in the form of bending its master's orders as much as it can—without quite breaking them.

As an example, a daemonhost is ordered to go to a specific building and kill an individual while remaining unseen, but the Acolyte who created it lost the Willpower Test. The daemonhost will still go to the building and kill the individual, but then perhaps it will kill everyone else in the building in a gory and obviously supernatural fashion, drawing the attention of the authorities and likely spoiling its master's plans.

A daemonhost is bound not to harm its master. However, if its master is weak-willed enough, it is free to ruin his plans, fail to aid him if not specifically ordered to, or even harm those around him. Needless to say, this makes daemonhosts some of the most dangerous and fickle allies a band of Acolytes can possess, and they should be treated with caution.



Dark Tech

"The Dark Age of Technology casts its echoes upon us, softened with time, but foul yet. Beware the machine, for its lineage is unhallowed."

–The Cautions of Vessifus

Dark Tech is the tool of hereteks, comprising forbidden tech-lore and machine-patterns that defile the Omnissiah's gifts, imperil the soul, and taint the holy form of man. Servants of the Ordos Calixis recognize many forms of Dark Tech: warp-machines built by outcast Empyric Engineers of the Machine Cult; Ryneite perversions of cogitation; tech-sorcery that corrupts Sinophia; the myriad sins of Malygrisian renegades; and others. Yet it is the rare and dedicated Monodominant who is willing to burn errant device-patterns alongside the hereteks who use them. The Inquisition must understand its enemies, and so the lore of tech-heresy flows into sealed vaults of the Ordos. There it lurks, a temptation for Radicals—for Dark Tech is imbued with great power. At first it is power enough to reveal vital secrets, divine the right choice in matters of life and death, or utterly destroy enemies of the Imperium. In the end it is power enough to corrupt a Radical's soul, and make of him that which he once hunted.

RANGED WEAPONS

"Power flows from the hand and that grasped therein. Have you the courage to grasp only the holy, even at the cost of your life and service to the God-Emperor?"

–Pater Monomus, of the Lower Tricorn Shrine

Callophean Psy-Engine

A psy-engine is a dread weapon: barely controlled, living psyker brains set within a weapon-housing and goaded by neuro-implants to blast foes with the power of the warp. The Callophean pattern consists of a lozenge-shaped central body and metre-long insulated director wand connected by flexible cabling. The psy-engine's centre is a transparent housing just large enough to hold four psyker brains suspended in pink-tinged gel, pierced by mechanisms and linked by fluid-tubes. The narrow edges of the psy-engine consist of clustered psy-amplifiers, null-wards, and fluid support devices joined to the tormented brains within.

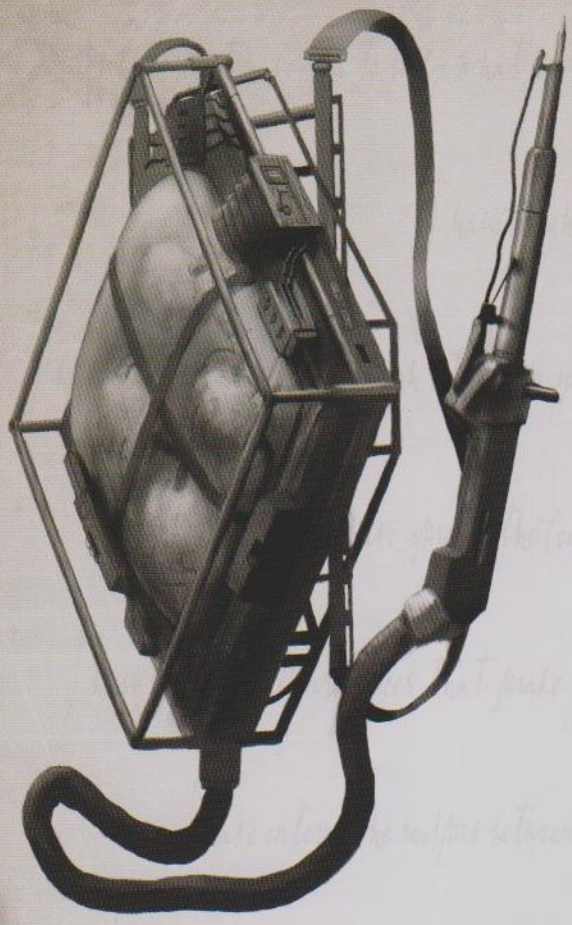
The psyker is a resource to be expended—this is an Imperial truth. But heretek Magi-Psykana go too far: forbidden gene-manipulation; neuro-active implants to induce and control psyker manifestation; and holding back psykers from the Imperial Tithe. Archmagos Callophe, incinerated in 583.M41 by Ordo Malleus forces, sought to eliminate the troublesome human element in her psyker resources. Her coven tended vats of pulsing, device-ridden psyker brains, all other flesh cut away and the minds within afflicted by a controllable form of blind insanity. Callophe was not the originator of this vile lore, but her name now attends it. Other hereteks practice it yet, harvesting the living brains of psykers to consign them to lives of sightless horror and madness.

Using the Psy-Engine

A militant warded against psychic overspill carries the director wand, whilst a servitor or expendable menial bears the weight of the psy-engine. When the militant triggers the psy-engine to attack, the maddened psykers within are goaded to strike at the closest target indicated by the wand (note that the Psy-Engine effectively never runs out of ammunition and never needs to be "reloaded"). When the wielder activates the Psy-Engine, roll on the following table:

Roll	Effect
01-03	The psy-engine ruptures under the strain and the tortured brains within expire in a psychic death scream. Roll three times on the Psychic Phenomena table.†
04-06	One of the encased psykers dies in agony, its protective null-wards burned out. Reduce the damage of future effects by 1d10. If this occurs for a second time, the psy-engine can no longer be used. Roll on the Psychic Phenomena table.†
07-09	The director wand fails: every living being and machine within 10 meters of the psy-engine is engulfed in witch-fire and suffers 2d10+5 Energy damage. Roll on the Psychic Phenomena table.†
10–15	The null-wards and goad-implants flicker in their operation, and the psy-engine fails to operate. Roll on the Psychic Phenomena table.†
16–20	The insane psykers attack the machinery that torments them, but are restrained by the null-wards. The psy-engine fails to operate.
21–30	One target suffers 3d10+10 Energy damage as warp-lightning arcs from the director wand. Roll on the Psychic Phenomena table.†
31–40	Everything in a 10 meter sphere about the target in engulfed in witch-fire and suffers 2d10+5 Energy damage. Roll on the Psychic Phenomena table.†
41-70	One target suffers 3d10+10 Energy damage as warp-lightning arcs from the director wand.
71+	Everything in a 10 meter sphere about the target in engulfed in witch-fire and suffers 2d10+5 Energy damage.

†The results of a roll on the Psychic Phenomena table are applied to the person closest to the psy-engine—usually the menial set to carry it—rather than the psyker brains inside. Their suffering is not so easily ended.



Psychic Blight

A psy-engine presents a continual danger to soul and sanity unless it is stored within a stasis field, the heavy psy-barriers of an Astropathica facility, or the like. The foaming, blind madness of the psykers within constantly seeps through the psy-engine's null-wards, and anyone within 100 metres is afflicted by half-heard whispers, fleeting visions of horror, phantom pains, and strange urges. A few hours spent within 100 metres of an unshielded psy-engine requires a **Challenging (+0) Willpower Test**—failure inflicts 1 Insanity Point and 1 Corruption Point. This Test is repeated once per day for so long as the psy-engine remains nearby and unshielded.

Dangerous Enhancements

Dangerous, unexplored ways exist to enhance a psy-engine. For example:

- A psyker can strive to control the insane minds within the psy-engine, adding a +10 bonus to rolls on the Effect Table while touching the psy-engine. He cannot use Psychic Powers of his own while concentrating upon this effort. Psychic Phenomena rolls made as a result of using the psy-engine apply to this psyker. Afterwards, the psyker must make a **Challenging (+0) Willpower Test** or gain 1d5 Insanity Points.
- Adding the psy-drug Spook to the psy-engine nutrient fluids adds a +10 bonus to rolls on the Effect Table and +25 to consequent rolls on the Psychic Phenomena table for 1d5 hours.

Melee Weapons

"'Quadfurcate' is not a real word. Just kill them and be done with it."

–Adept-militant Gresyne

Apostasic Matrix

The apostasic matrix is one of countless abominations spawned by the heretek followers of Umbra Malygris in the 8th century M41. Neuro-augmetic lore and study of the Omnissiah's universal laws was combined and tainted to produce an unholy technology—the matrix scourges mind and soul with occult energies, tearing down the foundations of faith and loyalty.

Apostasic matrices recovered by Ordo Hereticus Acolytes after the Cleansing of Tarycine were embedded within electrostaves. Each metal staff blisters with cogitation nodules, electro-sensors, and mottled field projection devices. As if in mockery of its origins, devotional prayers inscribed in orthodox machine cant spiral about its length—many Malygrisians remained convinced of their holiness, it seems, even as they fell into the vilest tech-heresy.

A victim so much as grazed by the electrostave is scarred by its power. The apostasic matrix reaches into the very mechanisms of the soul, pouring toxins and pain upon the roots of faith, and burning away memories of worship with agonizing darts of electro-essence. The immediate anguish is terrible, but the true horror is that the matrix causes the flower of faith in the God-Emperor to wither and die thereafter.

Some Radicals have found the apostasic matrix to be a potent addition to an interrogation chamber, and take great pleasure in setting this tool of the Archenemy upon



blackened heretic souls. In the same way that loyal Imperial citizens collapse into tormented apostasy, even the strongest devotees of the Ruinous Powers are given to babbling despair under the matrix's ministrations. Istvaanians in the Calixian Conclave have more ambitious aims: to replicate the Plague of Apostasy engineered by Malygrisians upon the hive world of Piety, where colossal matrix devices infused the very air with faithlessness and madness. Istvaanian covens study the electrostaves for hidden signs of this greater tech-lore.

Killing with Kindness: The wielder may choose to deal no Damage and not employ the Shocking quality of the electrostave. The Apostasic Energies effect will still occur.

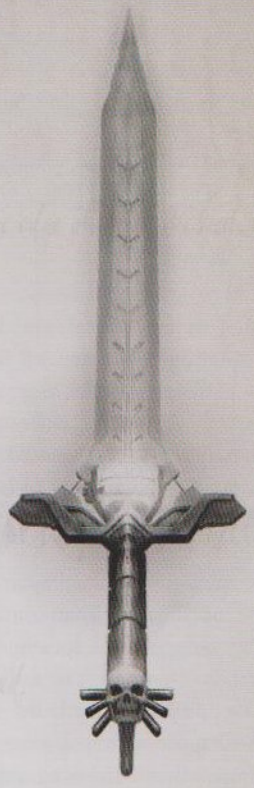
Apostasic Energies: Even a gentle touch of the Apostasic Matrix ravages the target's soul and dearly held beliefs. The victim makes a Fear (4) Test for each touch—with all the usual consequences, including a roll on the Shock Table on failure. Mitigating Talents, such as Pure Faith or Unshakable Faith, have their normal effects upon this Fear Test.

Mental Disorders acquired by a victim of the Matrix after suffering its effects take the form of a growing loss of faith in everything most vital: religious belief; enduring loves; and fundamental truths held close to the heart. For Imperial citizens, the most anguished loss is their relationship with the God-Emperor. As apostasy claims the soul, a victim feels the Emperor grow distant and tenuous, prayers become empty words, and the Ministorum is revealed as a hollow façade. The despair is crippling.

Empyric Conduit-Blade

The heretek Mechanicus faction known as the Empyric Engineers employs numerous device-patterns to turn the warp upon itself and annihilate daemons that transgress upon their labours. The oldest and most revered is the Empyric conduit-blade, a sacred standard for these Machine Cult hereteks. An adamantine mono-edged conduit-blade is a centerpiece in every Engineer shrine: inset field-guides of gold run the length of the blade, the hilt is a warp-mechanism, and at the base of the blade is a socket for a small null-field generator.

Vast warp-machines stand within hidden strongholds of the Engineers, used to draw forth the essence of the empyrean and imprison it within null-field containments for study. Much smaller null-field generators are constructed for attachment to a conduit-blade; they look like glittering gems laced with circuitry, belying the danger of their contents. Inside, raging



and incoherent, is raw warp-matter—without this imprisoned Empryic energy, a conduit-blade is no more than a symbol.

Special:

Empyric Discharge: the wielder can choose to discharge the null-field generator on a successful strike, allowing warp-stuff to foam out through the conduit-blade and into the target. This causes an additional 1d10 Energy Damage, or 2d10+5 Energy Damage to targets with the Daemonic Trait. Neither physical armour nor Daemonic toughness protects against this Damage. A non-Daemonic target gains 2d10 Corruption Points and 2d10 Insanity Points and will immediately mutate: roll once on the Major Mutations table and once on the Minor Mutations table. The conduit-blade's wielder gains 1d5 Corruption Points, and everyone within 25m must make a Fear (2) Test as screaming visions of the warp briefly radiate from the blade and its victim.

A small null-field generator contains sufficient warp-matter for 1d10 Empyric Discharges. The generator is Very Rare, costs 17,000 Thrones, and weighs 1 kg.

Table 5-8: Dark Tech Weapons

Name	Class	Range	Dam	Pen	Special	Wt	Cost	Availability
Callophean Psy-Engine	Basic	100m	Special	0		15 kg	41000	Very Rare
Apostatic Matrix	Melee	—	1d10 I	0	Balanced, Shocking	4 kg	30,000	Very Rare
Empyric Conduit Blade	Melee	—	1d10 R	2	Balanced	3 kg	45,000	Very Rare

Gear and Tools

"If I continue in the Emperor's service, it is because I look to the armour of the soul before the armour of the flesh."

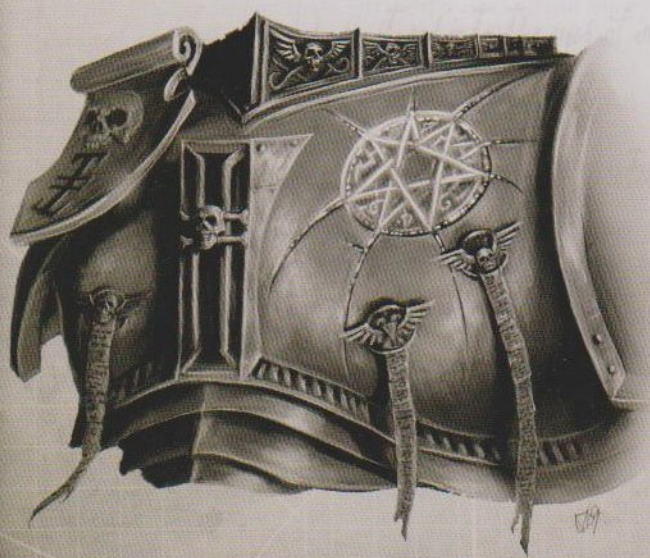
–Inquisitor Om Quall

Immateria Ward

An immateria ward is a form of null-field projector and machine spirit cogitation core intended for armour, portable shield-walls, and similar devices. Empyric Engineers who infuse the warp into their machinery are rarely insane—at the outset at least. They understand the need for protection from corrosive warp-energies, and so turn to heretekal archeotech lore concerned with creating machine spirits that can channel the warp.

Placed upon armour (to the accompaniment of long ritual and forging of the machine spirit) an immateria ward appears as a sigil within a circle, both shapes outlined by thin silver cables set into shallow channels. The null-field projector and cogitation core are hidden beneath the center of the sigil. The potent machine spirit within slumbers until it senses the presence of the warp; when it wakes to action, the silver cables smoke and glow with a purple mist of dissipated Empyric energies.

The Empyric Engineers have long granted immateria wards to allies as a form of compact—loyalty from the hereteks, and willingness to embrace Dark Tech from the ally. Thus the ward sigil has become a reviled symbol of the outcast Empyric Engineers in the eyes of loyal Mechanicus, such as militants of the Cult of Sollex, whose Magi direct Auxilia Myrmidon hunter-cohorts far and wide across the Calixis Sector to slay those who bear the sign of the heretek Empyric Engineers. Mere association with the owner of an immateria ward bears a risk of death at the hands of the Machine Cult—or worse, a short life connected to the interrogation machinery of a Magos-militant.



Protections of an Immateria Ward

The machine spirit of an immateria ward protects its bearer by blocking up to 6 Corruption Points gained from direct exposure to warp material. This prevention occurs once for each exposure, but the ward has no effect on other sources of Corruption. Additionally, the ward blocks up to 6 points of Damage caused by a psyker power. An armour location set with an immateria ward provides an additional 6 Armour Points versus daemonic attacks, force weapons, and the Damage of pure warp-energies.

Malygrisian Bioforging

Heretek Malygrisian tech-priests—later purged from the foundry wards of Port Wrath—practiced a form of mutational bioforging upon their workers to both improve their quotas and control them body and soul. As the bioforging took hold, the workers grew addicted to the addition of a rare and synthesized promethium extract called nephium added to their food rations by their masters. Over time, unnatural bio-motes grew within their bodies and began their dreadful work of twisting the sacred human form. An irregular, lumpy rind of organic plasteen developed beneath the skin, and their flesh became laced with filaments of that tough material. Eyes and mucus membranes also became plasteen-saturated. Within a few weeks, menials could enter the void unclothed, shrug off heavy blows, and survive terrible injuries. Over time, however, the bio-motes and plasteen growth reshaped the flesh to give the appearance of horrific mutation and went out of control, turning the body on itself with appalling consequences. The tainted workers died in drooling agony as plasteen formed in the brain, crushed vital organs, or broke through the skin in ridges, horns, and fronds. Before long, the heretek's blasphemies could not be hidden from their just punishment

For all the dreadful consequences of the bioforging's eventual failure, the wealthy and powerful have since been tempted by the possibilities of the body remade, both for their 'chosen servants' and even for themselves, and the secrets of the blasphemous technology has spread to several worlds despite ban by both the Holy Ordos and the Machine Cult. For its proponents, the bioforging is a glorious opportunity; Flesh is sculpted and changed in its constituent material, potent new organs grown within, and the mind warped to grant unnatural focus and clarity. Is it not noble to ascend beyond the limits of your birth-genes? To the Imperium, however, such thoughts pave the road to tech-heresy and mortal sin.

Effects of Bioforging

Malygrisian bioforging grants the following Traits and takes 1d5 weeks to take effect after the first biosurgical implantations:

- Unnatural Toughness (x2)
- Natural Armour (2)
- **Mutant:** purity tests show the bioforged to be impure.
- **Void Resistant:** the bioforged is unaffected by the cold and vacuum of space, but still requires air to breath.

For a few weeks thereafter, the bioforged appears little changed even through his flesh is armoured within. Without

ongoing intervention by heretek tech-adepts, however, the Malygrisian bio-motes will consume him. The bioforged will permanently lose 1d5 points from each of Agility, Intelligence, and Fellowship for each month passed without at least one painful course of treatment to remove excess plasteen and restrain the bio-motes. After losing 10 points from a single characteristic in this way, the bioforged can no longer pass as pure of gene—his flesh is too distorted.

Murder-Cogitator

A dark lore of data-violation and ravishment of cogitator machine spirits has long existed in the Calixis Sector. It is suppressed by the Mechanicus at every turn, but cogitation heresy remains widespread; there are always more hereteks to carry on their damnable toil in the shadows. Many influential figures in the Imperium so greatly desire unfettered access to secret data that they turn to forbidden cogitation lore, and the careful heretek prospers by preying upon these illicit desires.

Tech-devices capable of despoiling data-vaults have spread across the Calixis Sector through the black paths of smugglers, alongside vox-heresy, unsanctioned psykers, and a thousand prohibited substances. Crime barons of the Golgenna hives call these devices "murder-cogitators." They allow the uninitiated to pillage a cogitation array of encrypted secrets, slay the machine spirit within, and leave a steaming ruin behind. This is anathema to the Mechanicus, and Cult of Sollex hunter-cohorts show no mercy to anyone suspected of involvement with these vile devices.

The dominant pattern of murder-cogitator is produced by adorants of the arch-heretek Nomen Ryne, cultists who spread forbidden cogitation lore in the Malfian hive worlds. Many of their tainted works employ the Thirteenth Pattern of Cogitation, a heretek design abhorred by the Omnissiah no matter what purpose it is put to. A Ryneite murder-cogitator appears to be a heavy, bronze-cased data-slate ornately embossed with raised scrollwork and cherubim. Paeans declaring Nomen Ryne a saint and verses of Ryne's Precepts Mechanicus are engraved upon the device.

Table 5-9: Dark Tech Gear and Tools

Name	Wt	Cost	Availability
Immateria Ward	1 kg	17,000	Very Rare
Malygrisian Bioforging	—	20,000+	Very Rare
Nephium (1 month supply)	5 kg	200	Scarce
Murder-Cogitator	1.5 kg	9,000	Rare
Data-conduit cable (5m)	1 kg	20	Scarce
Prognosticaon	3 kg	5,000	Rare
Fragment of the *Tome of Ammicus Tole*	1 kg	8,000	Very Rare
Speculum Umbrae	10 kg	60,000	Very Rare

A **Challenging (+0) Tech-Use Test** is required to successfully use a murder-cogitator. The heretek device must first be connected to the target cogitator or data-vault by a data-conduit cable. Once activated, the murder-cogitator retrieves and decrypts at least some data best matching a formulaic description provided by the heretek, and then destroys everything else. The target is rendered unusable: its cogitation core charred; its machine spirit horribly slain; and its data volatized.

The most imposing machine spirits, such as those of voidships, Machine Cult temples, or archeotech devices, are potent enough to be immune to the murder-cogitator's embrace. Vengeance will likely soon follow any attempt to violate their sanctity, taking the form of enraged Tech-Priests and Machine Cult militants.

Prognosticaon

Amongst the many tech-perversions bestowed upon the Calixian Sector by the arch-heretek and former Logician Ammicus Tole is the foretelling device known as a prognosticaon. It is an inverted iron pendulum suspended within an enclosure of circular hoops and surrounded by a hedge of seemingly meaningless mechanisms. The construct is usually small enough to carry in one hand and may be etched with profane symbols or heretek texts. The pendulum bobs and oscillates in response to changes in its surroundings—it is very sensitive, particularly to tides in the near Empyrean.

Patterns for the prognosticaon are ciphered within rare fragments of Ammicus Tole's tome of rituals and chants: the cipher-keys reveal attendant scrawling as debased rituals of operation. The secret of the prognosticaon lies in perturbing the near warp in a way that steers the pendulum towards desired revelations about the future. Wizened tech-witches of Cyclopea, devotees of Ammicus Tole, accomplish this through blood sacrifice and wild ritual taught by their master's Tome. A heretek tech-priest of the suppressed faction of Empyric Engineers might find other ways of achieving the same end, but the prognosticaon is, at its core, a tool enabled by death and suffering.

Tole's ritual requires eight human sacrifices, achieved in a variety of unpleasant and carefully specified ways, and rousing excitement amongst eight more participants. Blood is strewn about and painted upon the prognosticaon device, and prayers offered to false gods. The tech-witch who seeks a foretelling sets Signifiers—disturbing sigils daubed in sacrificial blood at cardinal points about the device. The meaning of each Signifier is determined by the tech-witch and pertains to eight questions permitted by this tech-sorcery. With the ritual at its height, movement of the Diviner's pendulum to one Signifier or another reveals true answers.

Employing the Prognosticaon

Dark whispers attend certain Radicals supposed to have employed the sorcery of Ammicus Tole and worse in their quest for foreknowledge. Theirs is a black and terrible path to perdition:

- Participation in Ammicus Tole's murderous ritual adds 1d10 Corruption points.
- Deciphering fragments of Tole's book and comprehending how the prognosticaon, ritual, and Signifiers function adds 1d5 Insanity points and 1 Corruption point.
- Setting the prognosticaon and interpreting the pendulum requires a **Challenging (+0) Scholastic Lore (Occult) Test**. This test should be made secretly by the Game Master—an Ocularian might never know whether he correctly read the prognosticaon. A failed test leads to random answers.
- The pendulum indicates the degree to which an answer is true by the violence of its movement, but cannot reveal new knowledge omitted from the Signifiers.

Prognosticaons show the future that would have been had the user not used the device. The user can act to change that future—but partial foreknowledge is no guarantee of success. Occult lore is rife with examples, mythical and otherwise, of actions that brought about the very future those who seek to avoid such prophices tried to avoid.

The users's eight questions must look to the future and have simple answers: true, false, or one of a few options. For example: "Which of these two fools will betray me?" with Signifiers for Interrogator Maylle and Savant Herioth. The true answer is that betrayal lies elsewhere, but the tech-sorcery cannot reveal more from these limited Signifiers, and so the pendulum will avoid both. If the Scholastic Lore (Occult) test failed then the pendulum would randomly indicate neither, one, or both Signifiers, perhaps condemning these loyal servants to death.

Speculum Umbrae

A speculum umbrae is an intricate crystalline device formed of layer upon layer of circuitry arrayed like the petals of a flower—a piece of barely understood archeotech infused with warp-knowledge of the heretek Mechanicus Calixis faction of the Empyric Engineers. A handbreadth wide, it is much heavier than it looks and consumes power prodigiously.

The dead keep their secrets, but sometimes a Radical must have those secrets. At great risk to the soul, it is possible to summon shades of the dead via the dark arts of the Anima Mori; hereteks of the Empyric Engineers use the speculum umbrae device to achieve this end. When active, the speculum crackles with energy as it draws forth visions of madness and dead souls formed from particles of warp-matter. The sane heretek employs immateria wards and servitor labor-proxies to avoid direct exposure.

Commoners upon most Calixian worlds believe in ghosts: that the dead sometimes linger where they died, seeking vengeance or trapped by unfilled desires. Hive-world Ecclesiarchs preach against these beliefs and call ghosts the evidence of foul witchcraft. It is Calixian orthodoxy that all souls go before the God-Emperor—He protects, and no-one is overlooked. In contrast, Empyric Engineers assert that the empyrean records echoes of tormented death-throes and the mind that made them, ripples in the warp that drift across time to exert their influence upon the Materium.

Regardless, ghosts raised by the speculum umbrae are not who they were; they are hollow shells of souls, indistinctly

From the Journals of Inquisitor Felroth Gelt, 780.M41

A tarot once cast by my sole remaining vat-psyker designated Cyclopea as the Black Pit of Failings, the poison draft that brings default and decrepitude to all who sip its bitter dregs. This is no more than the truth, for the tarot will always tell truth to those who do not want to hear it. I did not wish to hear the tarot then, and the price for that foolishness was paid.

So many of my pledged adepts have died upon Cyclopea across the decades–and for what? To suppress no more than a plague of boils: the inconsequent tech-heresy of tinker-witches that festers upon that eternally dying world, springing forth afresh after each purge of sword and fire. But hidden by the buzzing of tinker-witch flies is Ammicus Tole, former Savant, sorcerer and arch-heretek–and so I have returned time and again to that world of dry rot and dust.

The death of Ammicus Tole was my task, assigned by the God-Emperor's hand upon the workings of fate. Yet the arch-heretek has escaped me thrice, the tinker-witches prosper, and a cult of tech-heresy worms beneath the ruins – and this despite the sacrifice of Ephisian, Joqueme, Balthas, and so many more. That is my failure. That I have eviscerated tech-witches who reach across the void, trapping Tole and his adorants upon a decaying world – that is the heretek's failure. That the mind-rusted Magi of Cyclopea do little but hide within their Machine Temples, too weak to slay the heretek, too weak to call Excommunication upon a world as good as dead... again, failure.

We all, most saintly to most vile, will die with our regrets. No matter the power you wield, there is always a road to failure and the death of trusted friends. At the end of that road lies Cyclopea: it is a cursed world, and to journey there will blacken your soul and taint your actions.

formed of glowing warp-motes and filled out by the tides and evils of the empyrean. They may have the answer that a Radical seeks, or they may be screaming, glowing phantasms that try to possess the living. Only the strong-willed can stand before moaning warp-ghosts and compel answers to their questions.

Calling Upon the Dead

Activating the speculum requires a great deal of power. A tech-priest's Luminen Charge is insufficient: more appropriate is the dedicated output of a manufactory plasma generator or orbital bulk-lifter's enginarium. The Game Master should rule on the time, cost, and materials required to ready the speculum umbrae: bringing in power conduits, rerouting power flows, or using industrial capacitance cells. If a large energy store—such as a capacitance cell stack—is used in place of a generator or enginarium, then the speculum can only remain active for 2d10 Rounds before draining the store.

Once emplaced and powered, activating a speculum requires either a **Very Hard (–30) Tech-Use, Difficult (–10) Forbidden Lore (Warp)**, or **Ordinary (+10) Forbidden Lore (Archeotech) Test**. If the Test succeeds, roll on the table below with a +10 bonus for every Degree of Success.

Summoned shades remain for a few minutes at most before the Speculum's hold over their substance fades. If shades appear, everyone within 25 meters of the Speculum gains 1d10 Corruption points from exposure to warp-motes, and the location becomes permanently warp-tainted—obviously haunted and cursed even for non-psykers.

Shade of the Speculum Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
25	—	—	(4) 20	25	30	30	35	15

Move: 3/6/9/18 **Wounds:** 8
Skills: Awareness (Per), Speak Language (Low Gothic) (Int).
Talents: None.
Traits: †Bound to the Speculum, Daemonic (TB4), Fear 3, Flyer 6, From Beyond, Incorporeal, Possession, ††Spectral Presence, Warp Instability.
Weapons: †††Tainted Essence (Special).
†**Bound to the Speculum:** the Shade cannot move more than 25 meters from the Speculum and dissipates after 1d10 minutes or when the Speculum is deactivated or loses power.
††**Spectral Presence:** Living creatures within 25 meters feel chilled and unsettled. Shadows become deeper, and people may hear voices or glimpse fleeting echoes of past events. Animals become restless and prone to panic, and machines suffer random glitches and breakdowns. All creatures take a –10 penalty to Willpower tests.
†††**Tainted Essence:** whenever the Shade passes through or strikes the living, warp-motes remain behind. The victim gains a momentary glimpse of torment and 1 Corruption point.
Threat Rating: Malleus Minoris

Roll	Result
01–10	Catastrophic discharges of Empyric energy arc from the Speculum as the device destroys itself. Everyone within 25 meters must make a **Hard (–20) Agility Test** or take 2d10 Energy damage and gain 1d10 Corruption points.
11–21	The Speculum and everything within 25 meters is engulfed by a shifting vision of the true horrors of the warp. This is a Fear (4) effect for those who witness it, and everyone within 25 meters of the Speculum gains 1 Corruption point.
21–30	The Speculum fails to work, consuming all available power to no end. Its operators must reset and re-emplace the device, undertaking whatever ritual blessings they feel are needed to placate the unwilling machine spirit.
31+	The Game Master chooses one of the following, as best fits the current plot:
Voices: Haunting half-heard voices and tremors fill the air as ball-lightning rises from the Speculum—but nothing more. The warp has rejected the Speculum Umbrae, and further attempts at this location over the next month will achieve the same lack of results.	
Tormented Shadows: 3d10 glowing and tormented forms limned by warp-motes are called forth. They immediately try to possess the petitioners in order to use their bodies to destroy the Speculum.	
Death Shades: 3d10 shades of those who died here materialize in a quiet babble of voices: moaning, trapped in their own visions, or floating quiescent. Obtaining information from them requires a Very Hard (–30) Test of any appropriate Fellowship skill.	
Apparitions: 1d10 familiar apparitions appear: old friends lost in battle or passed to old age. None died here, and they do not act like the people they appear to be. The shades will freely answer any question—but will the petitioners trust these warp-spirits?	
Multitudes of Spirits: Hundreds of shades emerge from the walls and floor, led by a strong ghost that died here and retains much of its personality. Whether petitioners can learn what they need depends on wit and bravery; even former foes will be a fragment of their former selves, perhaps eager to influence the world one last time. If a convincing argument is presented, a Challenging (+0) Test of any appropriate Fellowship skill will suffice.	

A RADICAL'S MISCELLANY

"Radicals would have us bathe in their poisons, watching and hoping that it would make us just like them—anything to deny the flaw in their souls that has given them to mortal sin."

–Interrogator Novarius

Goleph

Golephic Heresy was discovered by the Ordos Calixis in 419.M41, when the forces of Inquisitor Embuleos, prosecuting Mechanicus renegades, were ravaged by faceless machine assassins built in the form of men. Inhumanly clever, fast, and silent, the machines stalked their victims by sound and heat-radiance before slaughtering them with ancient power-blades. Ultimately triumphant, though at great cost, Embuleos discovered enough in the heretek ruins to put a name to these echoes of the Dark Age of Technology: Golephs.

The Mechanicus Calixis are nothing if not secretive, and the iron wall of silence hides much from the greater Imperium. Golephic Heresy has a long history within the Calixian Machine Cult; it seduces those who seek a path to the Silica Animus, the Man-Machine that stands one step closer to the Omnissiah's glory. Heretek-hunters of the Cult of Sollex have destroyed Golephs and the Magi who created them uncounted times in the millennia since the Angevinian era—but Golephic patterns and forbidden lore persist in labyrinthine Mechanicus data-repositories.

All of this is hidden from the uninitiated, but some few in the Holy Ordos understand. One Radical coven believes Golephs to be children of the lost machine-men of Amun'an Morrus, birthed from decaying mind patterns and unhallowed tech-designs obtained during the Angevinian Crusade. Amun'an Morrus is a cursed world—its inhabitants sold their souls and their humanity to the machine, discarding flesh for armour and minds for cogitators. They were put to the sword by the Lord-Militant Angevin in 540.M39, and Amun'an Morrus was burned in the Emperor's Fire and stricken from the star-charts, such was the abhorrence its machine civilization inspired.

Certainly, the Goleph frame looks little like an Imperial tech-pattern. Limbs are smooth and long, the human-sized body sleek and the head featureless; its outer shell betrays no sign or noise of the mechanisms within. Even Golephic hereteks have little knowledge of the origins of their forbidden lore. They toil in ignorance upon Goleph mind-pattern devices, seeking secrets of the Man-Machine within this dangerous archeotech.

A Goleph machine is cast in the pattern of a man, is cunning as a man, and can hate as only a man can—an active Goleph is an unrestrained murderer. To establish control, early hereteks crafted Golephic Keys, devices designed to communicate crude sigils of instruction and castigate disobedience by disruption of mind-pathways. A punished Goleph gives every appearance of torment—thrashing and writhing in silence, and then moved to sullen obedience or careful misinterpretation of sigils. A Goleph newly raised from safe storage in a stasis field is malevolent in aspect, pausing to weigh obedience to sigil-instructions against an attempt to slaughter its masters and destroy its Key.

Goleph Profile								
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
55	45	40	55	50	40	45	45	15

Move: 5/10/15/30 **Wounds:** 20

Skills: Acrobatics (Ag) +10, Awareness (Per) + 20, Climb (Str), Concealment (Ag) +10, Dodge (Ag) +20, Forbidden Lore (Archeotech) (Int), Search (Per) +20, Shadowing (Ag) +20, Silent Move (Ag) +20

Talents: Melee Weapon Training (Power), Exotic Weapon Training (Blade thrower)

Traits: Blind, Machine (6), Natural Weapons (Power blades, Blade thrower), Unnatural Agility, Unnatural Senses (100m)

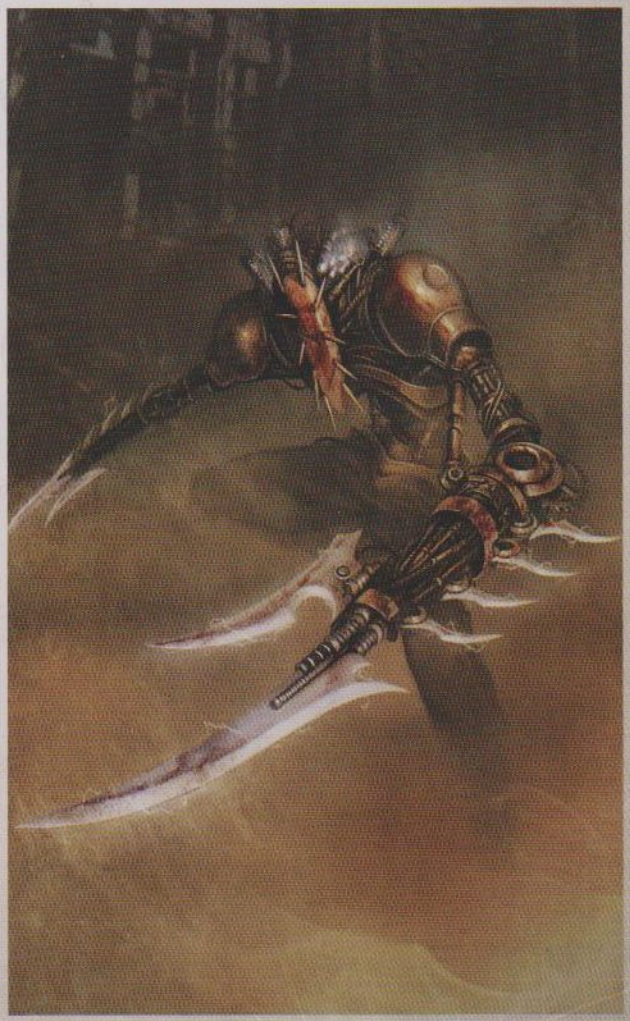
Armour (Machine): Head 6 Arms 6 Body 6 Legs 6

Weapons: Power blade (1d10+8 R; Pen 6; Power field), Monoblade thrower (30m; S/-/-; 1d10+3 R; Pen 3; Clip 10; No reload; Reliable)

Specials:

Unnatural Senses: A Goleph does not see normally. It can "see" movement within 100m, even around corners or through vents, provided there is air to carry sound and an unblocked path exists between it and the movement. It has line of sight vision for heat sources.

Threat Rating: Obscuro Minoris





VI

The Lure of the Alien

Xenos Technology

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Xenos Lore

•

Xenos Sites

Chapter VI: The Lure of the Alien

"Come closer, my friend. This weapon burns hotter than any of your Imperial laspistols, yes, and is much more durable as well. It is yours for only a small fee..."

–Kinser, merchant of the Cold Trade

One of the defining doctrines of the Imperium, one of the fundamental laws by which its citizens live their day-to-day lives, is that the xenos must not be suffered to live. The alien is weak compared to the might of mankind, yet they are insidious and treacherous enough to pose a threat. Therefore, they must be destroyed. Fear of the xenos is instilled in all Imperium citizens from a young age, even on worlds that have never seen an alien creature. Such fear is used by the planetary governors to keep their populations in line.

And yet this fear is not entirely unwarranted. There exist many terrible and ancient alien civilisations, races resentful of the spread of humanity and covetous of its domains. Such aliens seek to topple the Imperium, whether from without, through open warfare, or from within, through infiltration and corruption. The forces of the Imperium do battle with the xenos on a thousand different battlefields: the stalwart men of the Imperial Guard fighting doggedly to drive back the tide of alien warriors, the superhuman soldiers of the Deathwatch striking deep behind enemy lines to cleanse worlds of alien influence, and the Inquisitors of the Ordo Xenos acting covertly to counter the machinations of the alien on Imperial planets.

Yet the alien is not feared or distrusted by all. There are those within the Imperium who seek out the alien, to better understand their culture or to make use of them and their technology, for these aliens pose little or no threat to humanity. Such actions are rarely sanctioned by the Imperium, except to those rare outcasts known as rogue traders. Continued dealings with the alien, not to mention sympathies or alliances, are considered dangerous at best—and heretical and treacherous at worst. To use the weapons and methods of the xenos is



considered Radical by the Inquisition, no better than embracing the tools of Chaos.

There are those within the Ordo Xenos who would turn the weapons of the alien against their creators, researching alien technology to better understand how to destroy it. Other Ordos also have use of the xenos, using alien weaponry to combat the forces of Chaos or employing the services of the xenos to root out and destroy the heretic.

This chapter is divided into four broad sections. Xenos Technology covers the weapons and equipment of the alien, tools that can be used by the Acolytes to fight their foes. Xenos Lore describes the information an Acolyte can obtain from the xenos, whether through dealing with them directly or examining the artefacts of their civilisation. The final section details several alien sites scattered through the Calixis Sector, for which the the rewards for visiting are great but the dangers posed are greater.

Xenos Technology

Acquiring Xenos Technology

Xenos technology is difficult to find and secure—after all, no right-minded Imperial arms trader would sell xenos technology openly, for to do so and to get caught is to invite execution by the Inquisition. Although never commonplace or easy to get hold of, there are parts of the Calixis Sector where it is easier to obtain alien wares, and at least a few black markets exist to deal exclusively in such technology, although they are next to impossible to come by without a personal recommendation. Via legitimate routes, xenos technology counts as Rare. Via black market channels it is merely Scarce.

No one-stop shop exists for xenos technology. To represent this, unless otherwise specified, after the first xenos item has been successfully obtained from a source, additional items will prove to be one step more difficult to obtain (Very Rare and Rare for legitimate traders and black marketeers respectively). This penalty is not cumulative.

Using Xenos Equipment

Many of the weapons in this section are labelled as 'Xenos.' Such weapons require a relevant weapon Talent to be able to use properly, such as Exotic Weapon Training (Xenarch Death-Arc). None of the Career Paths include such a Talent as part of their progression, which means that players who wish to acquire such knowledge will have to do so by taking an Elite Advance. Such an advance will require an amount of in-game training, either by experimenting with the technology in question, or by spending time amongst the xenos. Both are not without their risks.



Xenos Horrificus

Although all aliens are—officially—viewed as anathema by the Imperium, some are tolerated to a lesser degree. Such races tend to be primitive in technology and culture or constrained to a backwater planet far from Imperium space. In many parts of the Imperium contact with alien races is not uncommon, and on some frontier worlds trading with aliens is a fact of life. Such dealings are usually overlooked by the authorities and would certainly not warrant censureship or intervention.

Other races, however, represent such a threat to humanity that the Ordo Xenos brand them with a stigma, the Xenos Horrificus, marking them as high-priority targets who must be hunted down and purged at every opportunity. The brand does not merely apply to the xenos themselves, but also to any who have dealings with them. More than one rogue trader has been branded with the Xenos Horrificus, marking him out as an enemy of the Ordo Xenos, the Deathwatch, and mankind itself.

Ranged Weapons

Morgauth Burn Caster

This compact, brutish looking, multi-barrelled gun is popular with human renegades and pirates operating out past the Fydae Great Cloud. The caster is valued for boarding actions and for use against dangerous xenoforms such as Orks and void lurkers for its sheer stopping power. It uses a hybrid of debased Imperial and alien technology attributed to a minor Xenos race known as the Morgauth. The scavenging reptilid Morgauth are not a species known for their subtlety and this weapon is no exception, nor is the effect its rapid firing self-propelled thermic shells have on the target.

The burn caster's ammunition has Scarce availability where the weapon is found with a base price of 10 Thrones per round.

Xenarch Death-Arc

Of the Xenarch of the Northern Rim, little is known, the Imperium having made little attempt to contact them. What technology of theirs has been examined by the Imperium centres around electrical weaponry that utilises capacitors and cells far beyond the technology of the Adeptus Mechanicus. The Xenarch death-arc is a potent, rifle-sized weapon that unleashes a series of arcing bolts of lightning towards its victim. If any of these bolts—deadly in their own right—strike their target, the death-arc channels a far-more powerful arc of electricity along their path, blasting the target into pieces.

Any additional shots that strike the same target are combined into a single damage roll, therefore only taking into consideration the effects of Toughness and armour once, rather than once per shot.

Example

An Acolyte fires the Death-Arc on full auto, causing three hits allocated to a single target. Instead of rolling 1d10+3 three separate times, a single roll of 3d10+9 is made, the target's Toughness and armour reducing subtracted from the damage just the once.

Melee Weapons

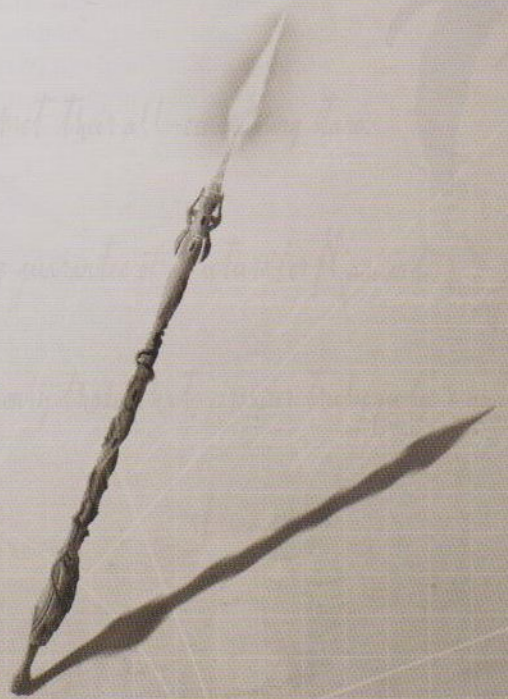
Aether Lance

To those enamoured with xenos craftsmanship, the Aether Lance is a hauntingly beautiful—and highly sought-after—work of art. The two metre-long haft seems to have been grown—not crafted—from exotic blue-gray alloys, and a smoky, flickering mist-blade perpetually dances from the tip. Despite its obviously alien origins, the weapon is at once both mysterious and alluring to all but the most Puritan of individuals. However, others desire it not for its beauty, but for its strange ability to pass through any material like smoke, and kill without leaving a wound.

A few scholars of xenos lore attribute this weapon to the Eldar, but others claim that the Eldar consider this device and its ilk anathema, its existence not to be tolerated. Under interrogation, some agents of the Cold Trade have confessed to purchasing these weapons from a race of void-nomads known as the Stryxis. However, official Ordo Xenos records claim there is no such race within the Calixis Sector.

The blade of the Aether Lance is completely insubstantial, and will pass through almost any material—including flesh—without leaving a mark. This makes it very difficult to parry the attack of an Aether Lance, and those who attempt to do so suffer a –10 penalty. The weapon also ignores Armour, Toughness, and psychic defenses, and the user cannot add his Strength Bonus to the weapon's damage. Aether Lances seem to wound an individual's very essence.

However, the blade does not damage non-living items, machines, or any creature with the Daemonic Trait or the Machine Trait (5+). In addition, if the Aether Lance's blade comes in contact with hexagrammic wards, an untouchable, or a similar psychic blank (such as other wards including a starship's Gellar field), the blade flickers and dies. The weapon remains inactive for 1d10 days.



Draethri Pain Gauntlet

The pain gauntlet is a device popular amongst the dark alien race known as the Draethri, for the amount of agony it inflicts is far out of proportion to the lethality of the weapon. Often taking the form of a whip or spiked glove, the pain gauntlet can also be found in much more curious forms, such as small glass boxes into which the victim's hand is placed, or needle-like probes inserted into the spine or skull of a victim. Regardless of the form, all pain gauntlets work in the same way. Upon contact with a victim, the pain gauntlet connects to his nervous system, taking control of it and turning it against the victim's own body, overloading it with varying amounts of pain. At its crudest, the gauntlet can be used as a simple yet effective weapon, quickly immobilising opponents in melee. Such a crude use is sniffed at by the Draethri, however, who prefer to use the device to torture captured prisoners. Such a use has made it popular amongst those Radical Inquisitors for whom expediency in information acquisition takes precedence over the condition of the prisoner after the interrogation.

The pain gauntlet can be used as a weapon with the profile provided, or it can be used as part of an interrogation. Using the pain gauntlet as part of an interrogation requires a **Hard (–20) Forbidden Lore (Xenos) Test**. For every Degree of Success, the subject suffers a point of Damage each Round. This Damage is not reduced for Armour or Toughness. For every point of Ramage inflicted in a single Round, any Interrogation Tests against the victim gain a +10 bonus.

Scythian Fury Talon

A cruel-looking blade, the Fury Talon resembles the sharp claw of some beast fashioned into a dagger. In combat, the blade is coated with a thin sheen of acid or venom drawn from a tank built into the hilt. The Scythians use the Fury Talon as part of their sacrificial rituals, cutting deeply into a target while the venoms laced into the blade ensure that the victim remains in a state of heightened bliss...or excruciating pain.

The talon can store up to five doses of any poison or drug. In addition to normal Damage inflicted by the blade, a victim wounded will also be affected by a dose of the stored poison or drug as though it had been injected into his body.

ARMOUR

Mecronid Armour

Discovered in the ruins of Molus, this unique set of armor has sparked much debate amongst the Ordo Xenos as to whether this device is truly an alien in its own right, a parasite of sort, or simply a device employed by its alien creators. Resembling naught so much as a pool of liquid metal, the device responds to external stimulation, although is resistant to auspex scans. When the metal comes into contact with human skin, it begins to coalesce, slithering over the skin to form a protective sheath much like armour. The metal is cool to the touch and responds to attacks by becoming momentarily super-dense, deflecting impacts or energy blasts across its surface. Using Mecronid armour does have its downsides, however. So long as the wearer remains conscious, the armour remains protective. As soon as the wearer loses consciousness, however, the parasitical armour attempts to slither inside the wearer, either consuming or taking control of him from within long enough to find a new host. Either way, it is often fatal for the wearer.

If the wearer of the armour loses consciousness, he must make an immediate Willpower Test. Failure indicates that the armour is trying to crawl within him, suffocating him at a rate of 1d10 Damage per round, ignoring armour or Toughness Bonus. Death indicates that the armour has taken control of the victim, crudely manipulating his body into doing its bidding—normally, hunting down another unwitting target.

Table 6-1: Xenos Weapons

Name	Class	Range	Rof	Dam	Pen	Clip	Rld	Special	Wt	Cost	Availability
Ranged Weapons											
Morgauth Burn Caster	Basic	20m	S/3/–	1d10+4 E	9	12	3 Full	Unstable	4 kg	2,750	Scarce†
Xenarch Death-Arc	Basic	100m	S/3/6	1d10+3 E	0	100	Full	Inaccurate, Shocking	10 kg	2,750	Very Rare
Melee Weapons											
Name	**Class**	**Range**	**Rof**	**Dam**	**Pen**	**Clip**	**Rld**	**Special**	**Wt**	**Cost**	**Availability**
Aether Lance	Melee	—	—	2d5 E	0	—	—	Unwieldy	3.5 kg	50,000	Very Rare
Draethri Pain Gauntlet	Melee	—	—	1d10+2 R	0	—	—	Shocking	3 kg	1,500	Very Rare
Scythian Fury Talon	Melee	—	—	1d5+3 R	3	—	—	Toxic	1 kg	1,000	Very Rare

†On the worlds of the Calixis sector's Trailing border, Very Rare elsewhere

Table 6-2: Xenos Armour

Armour Type	Locations Covered	AP	Wt	Cost	Availability
Holo-Armour	All	4	4 kg	Special	Special
Mecronid Armour	All	7	2 kg	15,000	Very Rare

Holo-Armour

This advanced Eldar design has been all but unknown to the Calixis Sector, with only a handful of these rare suits in existence, and even then most are in the hands of senior Ordos Xenos officials. The armour incorporates the same fields used by their titanic machines of war and the mysterious Harlequins, fragmenting the wearer's image into a thousand swirling slivers of colour when in motion.

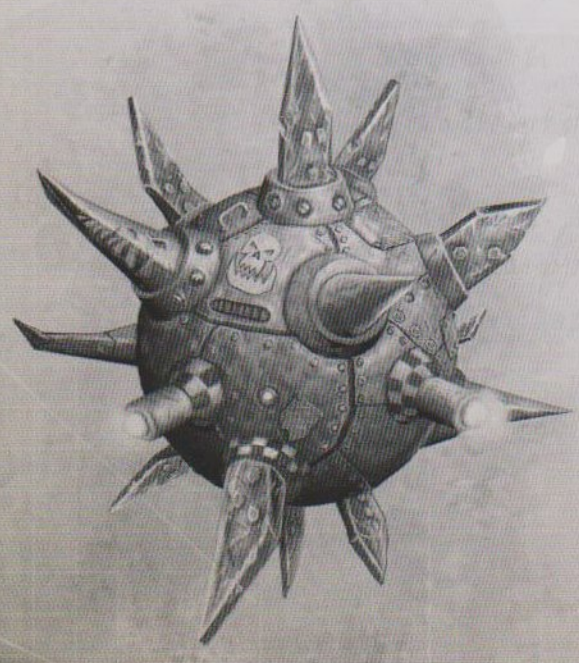
While in motion, the distracting nature of the holo-field causes a –30 penalty against all attacks against the wearer, as well as Perception or Awarness Tests to discern anything within the field, including those based on auspex readings or similar gear. However, any Awareness Tests to notice the user or detect the exterior of the field are at a +10 bonus.

These suits cannot be purchased by normal means, and GMs should make any attempt to obtain them into an adventure or campaign in its own right.

TOOLS

Ork Pulsa-Mine

A pulsa-mine is a large, bulky device that the Orks consider 'kunning', using it to disrupt enemy movements long enough for them to spring their ambush. The spherical device looks something like a primitive naval mine, complete with spiky protrusions. Rather than acting as triggers for the device, these protrusions are transmitter arrays for the powerful force field emitter of unfathomable design nestled within. When triggered, the field activates, sending pulses of force radiating erratically out from the mine, knocking down personnel and unsecured objects and overturning vehicles.



When triggered, a pulsa-mine initially detonates much like a grenade, affecting anyone within the blast radius as its force bubble expands outwards. However, unlike a grenade the pulsa-mine does not stop there, continuing to pulse every d10 Rounds as though triggered afresh each time. The detonation of a Pulsa-Mine inflicts 1d10 Energy Damage with the Blast (10) and Unstable Qualities.

Each time it pulses, roll d100—on a 91 or more, the pulsa-mine stops abruptly. Each time Damage is rolled, roll for the unstable property as normal—should a 1 be rolled, the Damage of the pulsa-mine is permanently reduced by half, as it gradually loses power. A second roll of a 1 indicates that the mine has lost power and ceases to function.

Anybody caught within the blast radius must make an Agility Test or be knocked to the ground. Drivers or pilots of vehicles within the radius must make a Drive or Pilot Test or lose control of their vehicle.

Q'Orl Mind Grub

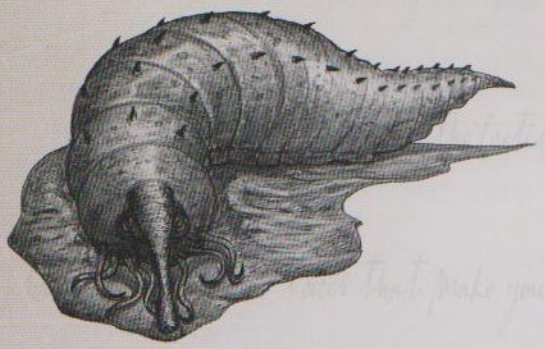
The Q'Orl are a particularly insidious insectoid race that infest several worlds on the rim of the Calixis Sector and beyond. Their true motivations are unknown, but they have been known to raid Imperial settlements for captives. It is speculated that the Q'Orl use captured psykers to pilot their vessels through the Warp, making up for their race's own lack of psychically-active individuals. Whatever the reason, this Xenos race has a rather unpleasant way of controlling their captives—the Q'Orl Mind Grub. The Mind Grub resembles a fat larvae about the size of a little finger, but with a pulsating mass of writhing probes and antennae in place of a head. The grub wriggles into the head of its unwitting victim, burrowing into the base of the cranium from where it inserts its probes upwards into the brain. The grub makes a psyker easy to control, opening them up to suggestion, whether by pheromones or by vocal commands.

Some Inquisitors attempt to make use of Mind Grubs to control otherwise dangerous psykers, either ensuring their loyalty through the threat of infestation, or actually dominating the psyker by allowing the Mind Grub to crawl inside the psyker's brain. A Mind Grub is difficult to control, however, although crude replicated pheromones gifts a limited amount of control over the parasite and its host. Instead, the controller takes advantage of the heightened susceptibility and docility exhibited by an infested psyker, giving them instructions that they are powerless to resist.

Sometimes deliberate infestation backfires on an Inquisitor, especially when the Inquisitor and his psychic 'pet' come into unwitting contact with the Q'Orl themselves. In such a case the Mind Grub and its host fall under the sway of the Q'Orl colony, often resulting in the infestation of the Inquisitor.

A psyker infested with a Mind Grub has his Willpower halved for the purposes of resisting psychic powers or other commands. At the behest of the Mind Grub's controller, the psyker can be placed under the effects of the Dominate psychic power for 1D10 rounds, attempting to resist as normal (in this case, the controller of the Mind Grub uses his Willpower to contest against the victim). Failure indicates that they are dominated, and are therefore entirely under the Mind Grub's control.

Infestation by a Mind Grub incurs 1D10 insanity points per day that the Mind Grub remains implanted within the victim's brain.



Transgenic Grafting

In the darkest corners of the Adeptus Mechanicus, certain heretek Magos Biologis practice transgenic grafting: the splicing of alien organs and biological matter into human subjects. Such a procedure is not only extremely dangerous, corrupting the mind as well as the spirit, but is also an act of extreme tech-heresy. A Magos Biologis found guilty of such tech-heresy is likely to be executed on the spot or whisked away to a black interrogation chamber for further questioning.

Even attempting such a procedure grants the surgeon and the victim 1d10 Insanity Points. The procedure requires a **Very Hard (–30) Forbidden Lore (Xenos) Test** followed by a **Very Hard (–30) Medicae Test**.

Success on both indicates that the splicing is successful, permanently giving the victim a Trait or Talent possessed by the alien.

Example

A Magos Biologis attempts to graft the spider-like eyes of a Dusk Stalker onto an Acolyte. The Acolyte rolls for Insanity and Corruption, gaining 3 Insanity Points and 7 Corruption Points from the procedure. The Magos Biologis does likewise, then he passes both a a Forbidden Lore (Xenos) Test and a Medicae Test. The procedure is successful, and the unfortunate Acolyte awakens with a set of alien eyes grafted onto his head, as well as the Dark Sight Trait.

Table 6-3: Xenos Tools

Name	Wt	Cost	Availability
Ork Pulsa-Mine	20 kg	2,000	Very Rare
Q'Orl Mind Grub	1 kg	Special	Special
Transgenic Grafting	—	20,000	Very Rare

Failure on the Medicae Test indicates that the graft has not taken and deals 1d10 Damage to the victim (unmodified for armour or Toughness) and an additional 1d10 Insanity Points. Failure on the Forbidden Lore Test indicates that the graft has taken, but the surgeon's knowledge of alien biology is flawed—instead of a trait or Talent, the victim instead gains a mutation (either random or chosen by the GM) as well as 1d10 Corruption Points. Failure on both indicates that the operation itself is an outright failure, and no additional penalties are incurred.

Example

The Magos Biologis attempts to replicate the same procedure on a second Acolyte. This time, after rolling for Insanity and Corruption, the procedure goes awry with the Magos Biologis failing his Forbidden Lore Test. Instead of the desired graft, something has gone wrong—the GM can either roll a random mutation or pick an appropriate one. The GM takes a look at the table and picks the Nightsider mutation—the Acolyte still gains the Dark Sight Trait from the mutation, but incurs a penalty during bright light.



From the Journals of Inquisitor Felroth Gelt: 3.937.750.M41

I remember the colony world of Teruxyne given to nightmare and corruption of the flesh beneath a dark night sky. We rode from the drop-flight within purity-sealed chimeras, exteriors set with lumens, picters, and auspex devices. We and those hand-picked from the Storm Troopers of the Black Regiment navigated a hideous landscape, as though the warp had melted its inhabitants into new forms and set them against one another, maddened and violent. Adept-militant Enaetus manned the mutilaser, and gave the Emperor's mercy to all he saw. In plazas and on rail lines, mobs of the corrupted formed, baying to the stars; these, we avoided as best we could. They would be dead all too soon.

Predawn skies showed the stars and bursts of void-battle when we located the laboratorium of the heretekx, a complex of prayer-towers beside a reclaimatory. The threat of contagion caged us within the transports, but tanks and chimeras surrounded the structures. The laboratorium was destroyed from orbit, sundered while we watched by shearing lance-fire and great explosions thrown down in anger.

After our withdrawal, the remainder of the colony was also purged. It required a week, and no Imperial citizen beyond the Ordos has set foot on Teruxyne since. It is a forbidden place, now and forever after, claimed by the virulent Sinners' Plague.



Xenos Lore

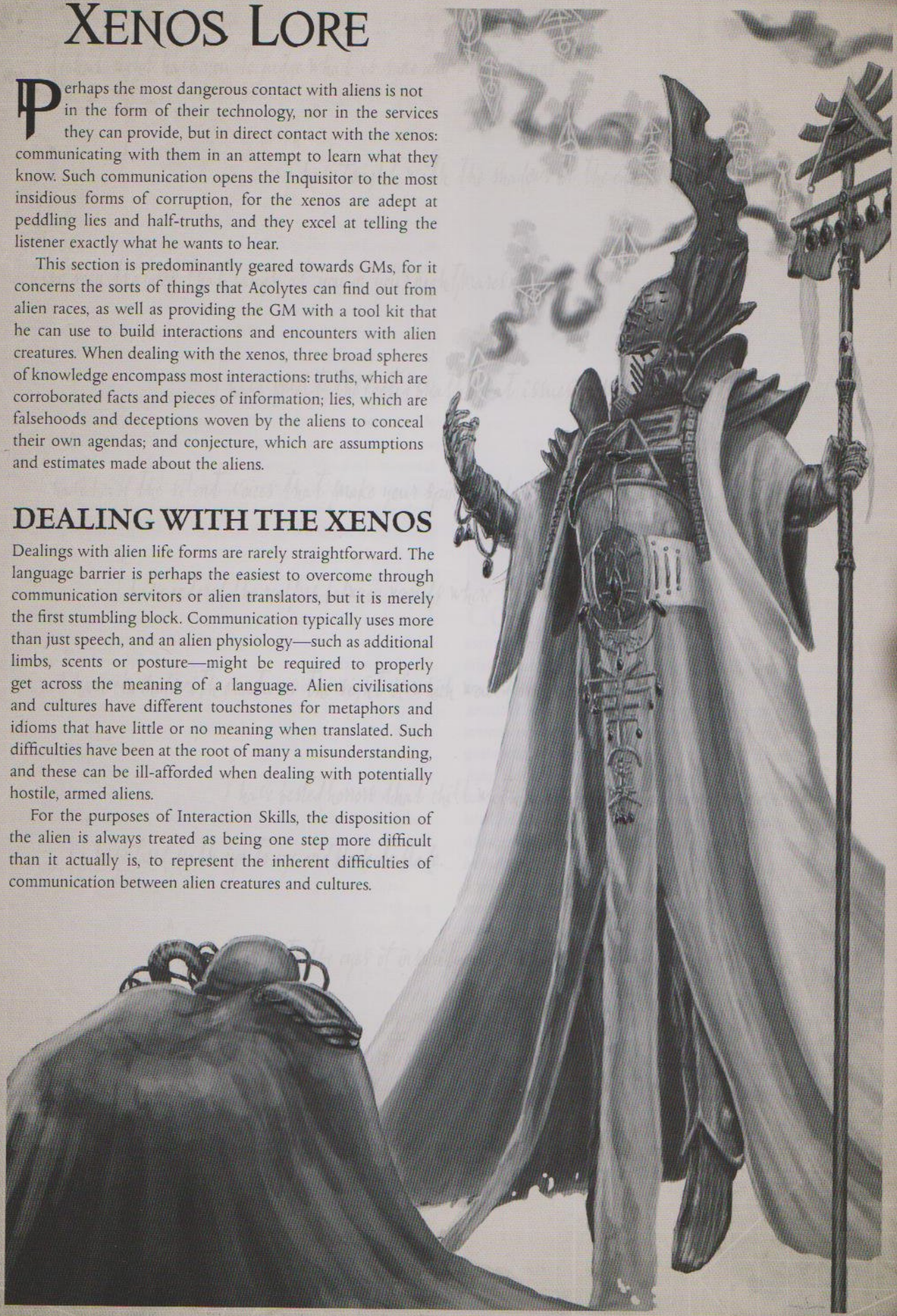
Perhaps the most dangerous contact with aliens is not in the form of their technology, nor in the services they can provide, but in direct contact with the xenos: communicating with them in an attempt to learn what they know. Such communication opens the Inquisitor to the most insidious forms of corruption, for the xenos are adept at peddling lies and half-truths, and they excel at telling the listener exactly what he wants to hear.

This section is predominantly geared towards GMs, for it concerns the sorts of things that Acolytes can find out from alien races, as well as providing the GM with a tool kit that he can use to build interactions and encounters with alien creatures. When dealing with the xenos, three broad spheres of knowledge encompass most interactions: truths, which are corroborated facts and pieces of information; lies, which are falsehoods and deceptions woven by the aliens to conceal their own agendas; and conjecture, which are assumptions and estimates made about the aliens.

DEALING WITH THE XENOS

Dealings with alien life forms are rarely straightforward. The language barrier is perhaps the easiest to overcome through communication servitors or alien translators, but it is merely the first stumbling block. Communication typically uses more than just speech, and an alien physiology—such as additional limbs, scents or posture—might be required to properly get across the meaning of a language. Alien civilisations and cultures have different touchstones for metaphors and idioms that have little or no meaning when translated. Such difficulties have been at the root of many a misunderstanding, and these can be ill-afforded when dealing with potentially hostile, armed aliens.

For the purposes of Interaction Skills, the disposition of the alien is always treated as being one step more difficult than it actually is, to represent the inherent difficulties of communication between alien creatures and cultures.



Xenos Interaction Gear

Acolytes who desire to communicate with alien cultures have few legitimate options. However, some particularly clever agents of the Xenos Hybris and other similar factions have made good use of certain items and equipment that make discussions with Xenos less arduous.

Translator Implants

Fitted between the inner ear and the brain stem, a translator implant filters foreign languages through arcane cogitators that translate speech into the user's native tongue. To the wearer, every language simply sounds the same, whether the most obscure High Gothic dialect spoken amongst a handful of nobility on a remote world, to the most uncouth underhive slang of Gunmetal City. The language of choice is chosen upon implant and cannot be subsequently changed. The implant does not allow the wearer to speak other languages, only to understand them. In situations where nuance or dialect is important, such as certain diplomatic encounters, a –10 penalty to Fellowship might be imposed by the GM.

A translator implant is Rare and costs 500 Thrones. Implants that have access to certain proscribed ciphers or alien dialects are Very Rare and cost between 1,000 to 3,000 Thrones.

Communication Servitors

Employed by diplomats and envoys dealing with cultures that speak obscure Gothic dialects, communication servitors are employed to ensure communication is as smooth as possible, often translating between the different factions. Communication servitors have large parts of the logic centres of their cortexes replaced with additional cogitators, allowing comprehension and translation to occur at a rapid pace. Adapted vox arrays allow the mimicry of not only language but also dialects and tone. Many Radical Xenos Inquisitors make use of adapted communication servitors to communicate with alien creatures, modifying their cortexes to comprehend alien language and their vox-units to mimic alien speech patterns. Some even go so far as to alter the appearance of the servitor to a form more pleasing to alien eyes. Such modifications are techno-heresy of the highest order.

Communications Servitor Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
15	15	50	40	15	10	20	30	15

Movement: 1/2/3/6 **Wounds:** 12
Skills: Secret Tongue (any), Speak Language (any)
Talents: None.
Traits: Machine 4, Natural Weapon (Fist).
Armour (Machine): Head 4, Arms 4, Body 4, Legs 4
Weapons: Unarmed (1d5+4; Primitive)
Gear: Internal micro-bead and vox-caster.
Threat Rating: Hereticus Minoris

TRUTHS

When dealing with the xenos, it can be hard to ascertain the truth of the matter, to dig deep enough to discover the facts that are present. Xenos are quick-witted and silver-tongued, coating even the plainest of facts with a layer of lies and deceit. Buried within such lies is often a kernel of truth—but it is up to the listener to determine what that might be.

There are many things that can be learnt from the xenos, from the deeper mysteries of philosophy or ideology, to arcane secrets and technological wonders. Xenos races are often adept warriors at fighting daemons or other creatures, and knowledge gleaned from their insights can prove invaluable in war. Some races even know secrets that can unlock the true power of the universe, if only these truths can be prised from their grasp. Such knowledge is rarely shared, however, and requires a great deal of trust to be earned—or a great price to be paid.

Perhaps the most straightforward way to gain knowledge about the xenos is through scientific enquiry—that is, vivisection or autopsy. The surgical study of a live alien creature is one of the best ways to gain cold, hard facts about the xenos. Such investigation can reveal much about an alien, but remains limited to the physical specimen, perhaps revealing how best to kill it or wage war upon it, or ascertaining some previously unrealised weakness.

Alive, rather than dead, the xenos can prove rather more helpful. Xenos races such as the Eldar are often far older than humanity, and the depths of their knowledge is far greater. Such races can often be bargained with or persuaded to offer insight into the deeper mysteries of the universe. These aliens might be willing to part with knowledge about some of the mysteries found within the galaxy, such as the reason for the fall of a civilisation or the abandonment of a colony.

Such xenos might also have a keen insight into battling the other perils of the galaxy, such as other alien races or the creatures from beyond. The Eldar, for example, have a long and violent history of war against daemons and Chaos, and as such are almost uniquely positioned to offer unparallelled insight into their vulnerabilities.

Xenos races often possess fabulous technology or great powers and might be bargained with to share such great and beneficent devices. An alien might not be prepared to sell his gun, but he might be persuaded to offer an insight into its manufacture or workings to the inquisitive. Similarly, an alien might be prepared to share his knowledge or to teach a budding student some of the greater powers.

LIES

The reasons that the xenos lie are as plentiful as the different xenos races in the galaxy. Many are adept at doing so, lying as naturally as talking or breathing, whilst others must work hard at the deception. The lies of some xenos are blatant for all to see, but the deceptions of others are so carefully interwoven with the truth that the reality might never be revealed.

Many xenos lie to conceal their true agendas, for whatever truths they peddle or services they offer, at the heart of it the xenos serve only themselves. Such aliens lie either to safeguard themselves and their plots or to make their plans more palatable to potential allies. Whatever an alien might offer, often with a smile and a sincere promise, it can never be trusted, for such an offer is never detrimental to its own kind and often feeds into its higher purpose in some way.

Other xenos lie to conceal their true selves. Creatures such as the Slaugth walk amongst mankind as though human themselves, yet without their deception they would be unable to do so. Others walk amongst humanity more obviously yet protect their identities with carefully spun lies and a disguise of sorts.

Perhaps most insidiously, xenos races lie to impose their will upon human subjects. Aliens are adept at tricking man into doing their bidding, promising them much and delivering them nothing. Many xenos have discovered that the best way to garner powerful allies is not through any sort of genuineness or honesty, but through brutal flattery and a fine carpet of lies.



Learning the Fates

One of the greatest skills possessed by the Seers of the Eldar is their ability to read the destiny of all things and to weave the fates to better direct the outcome of the future. To the innately psychic Seers, manipulating fate is no more difficult than unpicking and restitching the weave on a loom, albeit a weave made from a billion billion different threads woven so tight as to be near invisible. Seers make use of wraithbone runes, casting these artefacts to make auguries before plucking at the strings of fate with their minds alone, steering the future as a pilot might steer a ship.

The fates are only taught to those Eldar who walk upon the Path of the Seer, but on rare occasions the Seers might teach knowledge of the fates to a trusted outsider. Only a small handful of Inquisitors has earned this trust.

It is said that the Radical sect known as the Ocularians prize this knowledge greatly, and seek out any who might have learned it from the Eldar. How the Ocularians persuade the unwilling to part with this secret knowledge is unknown, but most who have fallen into their clutches have taken their own lives rather than betray the trust placed in them.

CONJECTURE

The final category into which dealings with the xenos inevitably fall is conjecture. That is, the assessment and extrapolation of evidence, making wild stabs at the truth when confronted with a field of unknown facts, half-truths and outright lies. Entire sections of the Inquisition and the Adeptus Mechanicus within the Calixis Sector are devoted to such analysis, attempting to draw conclusions about the likely disposition of alien races or plot xenos agendas based on scant information and endeavouring to work out the truth behind alien ruins or mysterious xenotech.

Conjecture is often the first and last recourse for an Acolyte embroiled in the machinations of the alien, especially when dealing with aliens of the long-dead variety. Unfortunately, such Acolytes can rarely call upon the logic wings of the entire Inquisition and so must make their best guess themselves.

Alien Disposition

The rules for disposition found in the main **Dark Heresy** rulebook can be applied to an alien race as a whole, especially when an Acolyte might have dealings with an influential power block within that race. Simply set the disposition of the race towards the Acolyte and his party, and then use the disposition and interaction rules as normal for all formal dealings with that xenos race. For large, less homogeneous races, such as the Eldar, the GM can still apply the disposition rules, albeit limited to smaller groups or factions within the race, such as the Blood Moon Pirates or the Grove of the Crystal Seers.

From the Journals of Magos Xenobiologis Waas Tirean 3530806.M41

I successfully petitioned to bring my coven to the administrative region of Archmagos Valenca of the Cult of Sollex because the xenos life of Haddrack's rocky wastes is poorly studied. My purpose and interests for this long-sought expedition are threefold: primus, that Haddrack is a young forge world pledged to the Omnissiah in 566.M41; secondus, nearly all biologis resources of Haddrack are devoted to a longitudinal study of menials-militant; and tertius, the nature of Haddrack's geosphere requires a great expenditure of resources for every purpose.

The purpose of the Archmagi of Haddrack is, of course, war in defence of the Omnissiah's glory. Here, the Cult of Sollex is ascendant. Haddrack's adept and voidfleet-militant resource allocations are far outsized for a forge world of its overall utilisation level, as you would expect. Weaponry, strategy, and tactics evaluation at all levels is constant and ongoing.

The majority of Haddrack's industry resides in, or rather beneath, the chem wastes. Since mining fortresses began operation in 570.M41, ceaseless maglifter flights have carried processed ore to orbiting highliners for transhipment to the Lathes and other attendant domains. Whilst sunk into the bedrock armourium halls, manufactora, and Secutor chantries soon followed. I know you are curious as to Haddrack's geospherics. The surface is composed of several hundred varieties of rocky waste, varying in rigidity, volcanism, crustal depth, chasms, and so forth scoured eternally by hyper-velocity winds and corrsive rain. The dominant weathered rock is a brittle igneous pseudo-glass of unusually intense magnetic properties, which like the dominant xenoforms is worthy of greater study than has taken place. Haddrack's planetary magfields are powerful and unstable—indeed, every machine spirit in service there requires extensive shielding. Furthermore, field perturbations, coupled with the unending winds lift aloft pseudo-glass fragments and blocks of every size, carrying them forth in serried processional lines and planes which dim the light of Haddrack's sun. More violent magstorms can cast pseudo-glass to pierce and crush even armoured vehicles and reinforced structure with ease.

Within the surface mining fortresses, it is impossible to completely insulate against the audio, electric, and etheric results of magneto-interaction of large fragments with fortress void shields. This has forced my coven into a series of inefficient locations within an orbital temple, a deep magma-tap installation, and ultimately a converted rock-tunneling mechanism in order to successfully conduct our own work. I stand within the latter at this very moment, as we proceed beneath the surface to our next location of study.

Despite these trials, I have made progress in study of the hydrae-pattern beasts that grow to a very great size in the deep wastes. Their structure is as much mineral as biological, a most unusual configuration of xenos life. Alas, the surface about the mining fortresses is crossed by power transference beams, and specked by Sollex atmospheric lance-beam and photon-burner test stations. The latter dramatically curtail local xenos beast populations, or put such a selection upon size and speed that any study is distorted beyond redemption. This, I am sure, is an intentional design, as the largest hydrae would pose a threat even to void-shielded structures.

Also of great interest are the lesser bicaputic breeds, for my Logis has not yet produced a suitable cogitation model to explain how they survive in any great number while exposed to constant corrosive toxins and airborne pseudo-glass assault. I theorise some form of biological magfield mechanism, perhaps based upon electrical discharge.

Xenos Sites

"Xenos piled upon vile xenos, those at the base treading on the bones of xenos past, who, whilst they lived, built unholy cities atop the dust of primordial xenos empires. Ah, and some few score poor worlds of men, lost or led astray amidst these unhallowed voids. That, my friends, was the Calyx Expanse—but, by the God-Emperor's blessing, no more."

–Savant Bertimus of Archaos

A xenos site, or archeosite, is a location once touched by the unholy and the alien, but now turned to ruins and dust—the subject of forbidden archeoexcavation and furtive quests for knowledge. Countless xenos sites exist in the Calixis Sector, some charred to ashes during the Angevinian Crusade of M39, others worn away by the passage of an inestimably greater number of years.

The Calixis Sector was forged in war from the strange voids of the Calyx Expanse, so-named in M36 by Solomon Haarlock, a mythic figure said to be the first rogue trader of the bloody Haarlock lineage. To Imperial eyes, the Expanse was tainted by xenos worlds little more than seething pits pretending to civilization, their very bedrock rife with fossils of ancient xenos empires. The stain upon the voids, this affront to the God-Emperor of mankind, was expunged in flame by the hosts of Lord-Militant Angevin, and many lost worlds of men were reclaimed from xenos vermin.

The Radical celebrates this triumphant history just as the Monodominant—but the Radical knows what the Monodominant must ever deny: the Calixis Sector of the Imperium of mankind is two millennia old, but xenos breeds spawned in these voids for a vastly greater length of time. Theirs is the true legacy of primordial lore and potency, a legacy that awaits discovery within their ruins and entombed with their corpse-dust. To the Radical mind, prohibitions against exploration of xenos sites exist to restrain the easily corrupted—not the privileged elite of the Holy Ordos.

Where the Knowledge is Buried

"'I must know.' That phrase has damned more souls than there are stars in this benighted galaxy."

–Inquisitor Om Quall

Some few grand libraries of the Calixis Sector are known in select circles for their catalogues of remote and abandoned xenos sites, though these archives are often encrypted, damaged, or fiercely guarded. Amongst their number are the following:

Library of Knowing

The grand Library of Fenksworld, jealously guarded by the planetary authorities, is the subject of quiet battles of will within the Calixian conclave. A number of Monodominants wish the Library closed or destroyed, but their position remains weak, and private initiatives to this end have so far proven unsuccessful. Lesser servants of the Ordos must tread carefully—they are not important enough to be avenged, and the Library's guardians are unforgiving. The Library's data on xenos vestiges includes a unique complete transcription of the collected journals of Lord-Battlefleet Brehlef's staff covering the period from 430-616.M41—a treasure for those who seek obscure information concerning Calixian worlds.

Vault of Remnants

A huge structure buried beneath cryo-machinery, one amongst ten thousand macrovaults on Prol VIII. The Vault of Remnants has been cryosealed by Inquisitorial decree for more than two centuries. Its inner air is frozen to ice, riming cold-fractured corpses of scribes too slow or afraid to leave. Acolytes of the Ordo Xenos sometimes don heat-suits and delve into the Vault's depths, in search of records describing xenos ruins and lost archeoexpeditions—the very reason that this structure was sealed in the first place.

Librarium Mundi

A library of ancient provenance is sealed within the heart of the Tricorn Palace on Scintilla. It contains collected works from the estates of Inquisitors past, as well as materials provided by living Inquisitors: warnings and prognostications; excruciation transcripts; records of lesser heresy; self-serving accounts; and gaping holes of redaction. Acolytes might learn more by what is missing from the Librarium's shelves than from the many scholarly accounts therein—but amidst the dross lie gems of information on dead xenos species and ancient ruins.

Lythea Haarlock's Tomb

Rogue Trader Lythea Haarlock was the reclusive, venomous abbess of priceless Haarlock libraries, murdered by the bioweapons of her half-brother Erasmus in 702.M41. The libraries remain within a chill, contaminated, and weapon-blasted void-station, drifting lost and uncharted in the outer Ysai Ydumee system. It is said to be haunted by tormented ghosts of past Rogue Traders, but more plausible threats are the intermittently active defense systems and lingering bio-motes of the virulent Miasmic Pox that slew the void-station's scribes and tech-adepts. Many servants of the Inquisition have sought the near-mythical Testament of Solomon Haarlock thought to lie within—an account of unholy xenos worlds that thrived in the Calyx Expanse long before Lord-Militant Angevin's Crusade.

BENEATH THE DUST OF DESIGNATE–228–18

"Only ten of us are left. We delved too deep into this maze, or something is here with us, come from above—I know not which. The expedition, such as remains, will attempt the unexplored gamma region shafts by suspensor platform, aiming for a speculative secondary exit above the prime gate. From there, we may have more options—to stay where we are is to be carved away to nothing, one by one."

–Vox record of Tyreus Klave, discovered in Archeocomplex IV.b

The Diversified House of the Lords Klave of Scintilla has long invested in archeostudy across the Golgenna Reach; it is a proven road to greater wealth and power. Gilded museums in the spires of Hive Sibellus assure the Lords Klave a grand position in noble society, whilst trade in unique rarities—even xenos artefacts, some whisper—swells House coffers. In 735.M41 a House Klave survey discovered huge gateway markers carved into equatorial cliff-faces on Designate–228–18: a barren, bone-dry moon of the Settlement 228 system, comprising a low-gravity, cool desert waste of grey dust dunes, dark rocky outcrops, a thin and unbreathable atmopshere, and great dust storms that churn the dunes.

In 753.M41 Athus Klave uncovered and partially mapped the labyrinth of Archeocomplex I. Tunnels, deep vertical shafts, and strangely shaped vaults extended for leagues beneath the dunes—but all were empty or collapsed, and the expedition proved a costly failure. In following decades, Designate–228–18 was the subject of lesser academic archeoexpeditions and modest House Klave patronage; further exploration made inroads into Archeocomplexes II and III. In 782.M41, artefacts and tech-remains of unknown patterns were uncovered in the complex depths and returned to Scintilla. They were declared, on the flimsiest basis, to be of pagan human origin, evidence for the Scintillan Empire of Antiquity theory popular at the time. Their exhibition brought much prestige for the House, and rumors circled of psy-active materials not displayed, but traded to greater Houses for princely sums.

On the strength of these relics, favored scion Tyreus Klave led a well-equipped archeoexpedition to the largest complex yet discovered—and vanished without a trace. A relief expedition recovered only scattered equipment and ambiguous vox records. They departed Designate–228–18 in fear and haste after some of their number also disappeared.

Ancient Origins and Present Activity

Knowledgeable archeoexplorators of Scintilla believe, correctly, that the ruins of Designate–228–18 are xenos in origin. House Klave keeps this secret: the Lords Klave do not wish to



lose access to Designate–228–18 should the Administratum be forced to declare it forbidden. House Klave members are presently financing a new expedition to the archeocomplexes—the gene material of Tyreus Klave must be recovered. However, the Holy Ordos is suspicious: whispers of xenos artefacts and psy-active materials have grown loud enough to be heard in the Tricorn.

The truth, were it known, is far worse. The vaults of Designate–228–18 were constructed by the Yu'vath, a warp-worshipping xenos breed whose empire of corrupted human worlds bled the Angevinian Crusade for decades. Complexes like those of the dust moon were used to create Hell Worlds—swirling centers of warp-tides, sustained by foundation-tunnels of human sacrifice and machine-enhanced psyker agony.

Archeocomplex IV.b

Archeocomplex IV.b's stonework is smooth and featureless. Thousands of kilometres of tunnels, vertical shafts, and hundreds of strangely shaped vaults form a vast, layered maze of unknown extent. The hexagonal or arched passageways vary in size; some are too small for a man, others are large enough for vehicles.

Access to IV.b requires navigating a dust-choked Klave drill-tunnel and then descending 200 metres down a kilometre-deep primary shaft. Auspex mapping has proven useless, and vox communication within IV.b has a short effective range, less than 300 metres outside shafts and long corridors, unless vox-cables are strung through the maze.

Artifacts made of a black, yielding material lie scattered in deeper reaches of the complex—they are of many sizes and shapes, but none have obvious function or purpose. Much deeper within IV.b are isolated human mummies, so old they crumble at any disturbance. Some are fused with dark artifacts in disturbing ways. Within the deepest vaults, kilometres below the surface, lines of human mummies in wall-niches wear psy-active Yu'vath crowns of the same dark material.

Yu'vath Resonance

The Resonance is Yu'vath machinery, much more warp-sorcery than mechanism. It suffuses the rock of lower levels of IV.b, dormant and invisible to commonplace Imperial technology. In the depths, Resonance can work a slow, insidious effect upon human minds: the Yu'vath corrupted by forcing actions that fragile minds then justified as their own choices. Explorators deep within IV.b begin to suffer hallucinations, false memories, and waking dreams as their minds rationalise what is happening to them.

Resonance is only active beneath 1 kilometer in depth. The first time each day that an explorator is alone for an hour, the Game Master makes a secret **Ordinary (+10) Willpower Test**. Failure indicates that Yu'vath Resonance influences the minds of those exploring the ruins:

At each stage, the explorator hallucinates or constructs false memories to explain his actions: orders from expedition superiors; accompanying comrades; that he is following or fleeing something. As the actions become more bizarre, so to do the hallucinations. Talking to other members of an expedition can break the Resonance's immediate hold by showing the explorator is in the grip of hallucination—but he still will not know that his actions were forced upon him.

Failures	Influences
1	Move to a new location, deeper in the tunnels.
2	Locate and collect one of the black artifacts.
3	Locate several more artifacts.
4	Vanish into the depths with his artifacts to fuse with the Yu'vath Resonance in an ecstatic death.

Whenever Resonance operates on an explorator, any psyker within chamber IV.b may make a **Very Hard (–30) Perception Test**, adding +10 per Psy Rating. If the test is successful, the psyker feels as though saintly, wondrous presences move far below and call to the faithful. Two or more degrees of success reveal the saintly wonder as false, and behind it an ancient evil suffusing the archeocomplex. A psyker subjected to Resonance is affected in the same way as a non-psyker, but still makes this Perception test. On success he feels presences—saintly or evil—reaching from far below to touch him.

Other psychic powers have the following effects:

- Psychometry provides the same impressions of a saintly presence as the operation of the Yu'vath machines. With overbleed of 10 points or more, the evil behind the cloak is sensed.
- Soul Sight and Mind Scan show minds affected by Resonance to have been disturbed by a subtle, potent force.

Crown of Wonders

The crowns set upon ancient mummies are circlets of black, flexible material, steeped with psy-power and ornamented with curling projections on the outer surface. They are a Radical's prize—and curse, as they slowly twist a psyker's mind. Wonders of the Yu'vath bubble up within the mind: wise, angelic beings that guide humanity to rightful adulation of the Ruinous Powers and joyous depravity. The lies begin as a whisper, then grow to a blasphemous torment. Soon, the psyker cannot distinguish the visions from his own beliefs.

Wearing a Crown has the following effects:

- Lowers the Threshold of all Psychic Powers by 5.
- Limns the psyker in warp-light when using his powers.
- Gains 1d10 Insanity points each full 12 hours the Crown is worn. Resulting Mental Disorders are convictions of righteousness in the visions of the Crown.

A successful Willpower Test is required to remove the Crown after it has been worn for an hour. Failure means the psyker believes he has decided to continue wearing the Crown and may not try to remove it for another hour. The psyker gains 1 Insanity and 1 Corruption whenever the Crown is removed.

SEEDWORLD AFG:218

Located in the Malfian sub-sector, this mysterious planet has long been under quarantine, put into place by the seal of Inquisitor Staven Arcturos. The quarantine is enforced by Battlefleet Calixis, and patrols of Sword-class frigates routinely sweep through the system. Those who make landfall on the Seedworld either evade the patrols or supercede them with Inquisitional authority, and there have been several such expeditions—because Seedworld AFG:218 is a planet haunted by an ancient alien presence.

The surface of the Seedworld seems pleasant enough at first—verdant fields, lush forests, and thick heather lie across the planet's surface, dotted here and there by clear, crescent-shaped lakes. In one region on the main continent, crumbling plinths surround a sizable ruined city. Abandoned for millenia, only shattered remains endure of the once-elegant and beautiful architecture.

These ruins were first discovered in 604.M40 by Rogue Trader Serren Travius, fresh from the Periphery and his participation in the victory over the White Sorrows corsairs. Travius provided the Ordo Xenos with copious notes of what he found, including sketches and descriptions of automated defenses and strange, silent automatons armed with weapons that fired concentrated warp-energy. However, subsequent visits to the planet's surface have found that the abandoned city explored by Travius seems to shift locations, and it is never found in the same set of coordinates twice.

Only after several groups of Acolytes vanished or failed to return from Seedworld AFG:218 did the Inquisition take a keener interest, resulting in the personal attention of Inquisitor Staven Arcturos. The steps taken by the Inquisitor to avoid or de-activate the ruined city's guardians are unknown, but Arcturos' venture was a success.

Inquisitor Arcturos was able to translate some of the symbols and runes found carved upon the Seedworld's ruins, and identified that the planet once belonged to the enigmatic Eldar. Many of the runic scripts were verified as identical to those found upon the death world of Woe in 778.M41.

The Fractured Palace

Finding the location of the ruins on Seedworld AFG:218 requires a **Very Hard (–20) Navigation Test**. If the character also has the Advanced Skill Forbidden Lore (Xenos or The Black Library) or is assisted by another character with that skill, the difficulty of the Navigation Test becomes Challenging (+0) instead.

Finding the Palace is one thing; surviving the automated defenses and guardians is quite another. The following is an example of one of the wardens who protect the secrets of Seedworld AFG:218—this automaton is similar to the constructs often fielded by Eldar Warhosts.





Seedworld Custodian Construct Profile								
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
45	45	(10) 50	(8) 40	40	30	40	50	15

Movement: 5/10/15/30 **Wounds:** 25
Skills: Awareness (Per), Climb (Str), Concealment (Ag), Search (Per).
Talents: Leap Up.
Traits: Armoured Plating, Dark Sight, Machine 5, Improved Natural Weapons, Natural Weapon (Fist), Size (Hulking), Strange Physiology, Sturdy, Unnatural Strength (x2), Unnatural Toughness (x2).
Armour (Machine): Head 7, Arms 7, Body 7, Legs 7
Weapons: Built-in wraith-gun (30m; S/–/–; 3d10+3 E; Pen 0; Unstable, Warp Weapon), Fist (1d5+10 I)
Gear: None.
Threat Rating: Xenos Minoris.

To: Lord Inquisitor Caidin
From: Inquisitor Staven Arcturos, Ordo Xenos
Ref: Seedworld AFG:218
My Lord Caidin,
A powerful warp-storm delayed my arrival at the Seedworld. According to my Navigator, this planet is often in the eye of such disturbances in the empyrean. This is only one of the reasons I have sealed this world under quarantine.
I discovered a chamber at the centre of the ruins; within, a complex array of wraithbone carvings and statues, many of them damaged beyond repair. The entire structure pulses with a powerful psychic force. My null rod was nearly overwhelmed, and I could sense great strain upon the hexagrammic wards upon my armour. At first, I took this construction to be the tomb of some great Eldar hero or leader, but I now believe my impression was incorrect. Instead, I suspect that this chamber, this city, is some kind of psychic node, drawing power from the stars and somehow stabilizing this planet against the influence of the warp.
The Tyrantine Cabal seeks access to this world, but I feel that the meddling of those fools would only result in disaster. I ask your assistance in this matter–some things are better left undisturbed.

A Ragged Oracle

The true value of the Fractured Palace is the psychic node that lies at its heart. Though damaged, the node still contains a vast repository of knowledge about the secrets of the Calixis Sector and the Halo Stars. A character may approach the node with one clear question in his mind, and should the node find him worthy, he will receive an answer.

The psychic node at the center of the Eldar ruins on Seedworld AFG:218 can only be consulted by characters with no more than 10 Corruption points. The node will not function for any character with a Dark Pact or possessing the Soul-Bound Trait. Using the node to gain knowledge costs the character one permanent fate point and inflicts 2d10 Insanity Points from his glimpse into an entirely alien consciousness. The node will only function once every hundred years.

Those Who Delve

"Accept no tutelage in history but that provided by the evidence itself—all else is damnable lies and wishful thinking."

–The maxim of Archeoexhumator Boll Wistrum

Many Calixian factions delve into forgotten xenos sites, sometimes unintentionally, for eroded ruins often offer little immediate evidence of their origin.

Archeoexhumators of Hive Sibellus

An elite society of militant academics, as much in their element in a poisonous war of character assassination as an actual war over archeosites, archeoexhumators provide noble Sibellus with the relics it craves. Scints and prestige flow from noble patrons to the greatest archeoexhumators, funding ever-deeper excavations into the past of the Golgenna Reach. Archeoexhumators are secretive, jealous, and proud beyond measure—but not above the use of spies, thieves, and even assassins in their rivalries, and so each relies upon a trusted retinue of specialists and bodyguards. Until proven otherwise, new faces are considered a threat to future acclaim resulting from present discoveries—and better that much of a site remains unexplored than risk additional workers who cannot be trusted.

Administratum Cartographers

Departments of the Calixian Administratum dispatch cartographers and map-scribes to the far corners of the sector, with the authority and seals to requisition additional support at their destination. Cartographic adepts are fussy and impatient, neuro-augmented and detail-oriented to the point of mania. An expedition in the field includes Imperial Guard personnel, tech-adepts pledged to the Munitorium, local guides, and equipment ranging from bulk-cogitators to cartographic auspex. Information percolates slowly through Administratum bureaucracy and is guarded jealously: a cartographic adept might have no idea that her team is the third sent, with no word from the prior two, or that the designated location is a xenos site.

Battlefleet Bridge Officers

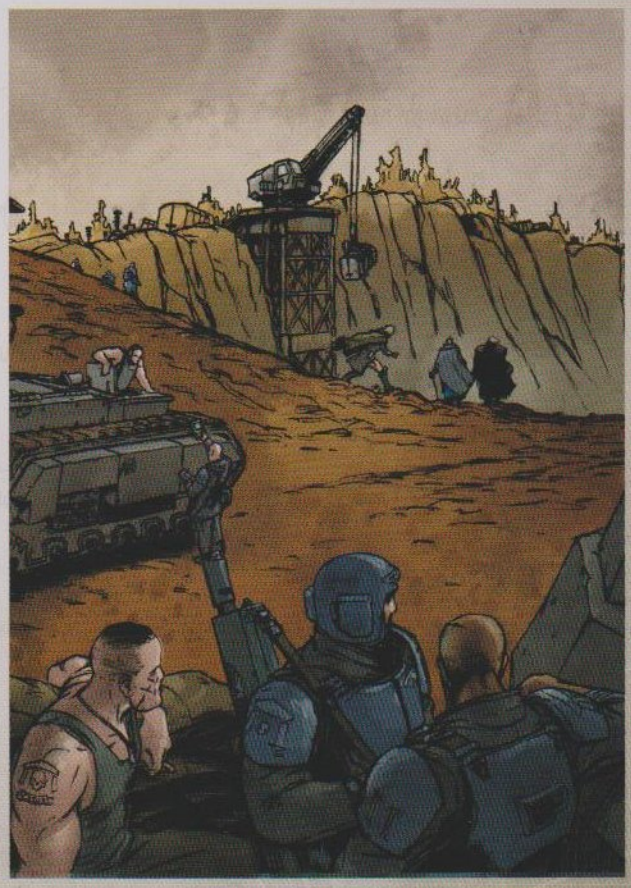
The officer class of Battlefleet Calixis is largely noble, an insular society that permits few acceptable pastimes: hunting xenos beasts, for example—or for the cultured, acting as a scholar-errant to investigate the glorious Imperial past. Many a bridge officer's retinue includes savants of history and keen-eyed explorators, and their possessions could stock a museum: hand-drawn site maps; pict-captures of ancient ruins; strange relics from a dozen worlds. An officer's archeoexpedition is an opportunistic affair, capturing the spirit of a site and a few artifacts in a short time away from duty. Members are drawn from all decks—lesser officers currying favor, the servants they bring with them, low-deck hands for hard labor, and naval security to keep the scum in line.

Tech-Retinue of a Magos-Explorator

A Magos-Explorator of the Calixian Mechanicus is as likely to descend upon an archeosite as to delve into unknown voids. Explorators are more personable than other Mechanicus, some eccentrically so, but they are still notoriously secretive. An Explorator, ensconced amidst tech-adepts, Tech-Guard, and servitor-excavators, will have his reasons and his goals—but it will be a struggle to uncover them. An Explorator calls upon vast resources: he could bury an archeosite beneath machines and tech-adepts carried within his voidship, leaving no stone unturned. More typically, the Explorator knows exactly what he is looking for: his expedition is precisely sized for the expected task, which he will accomplish with little fanfare, and then depart.

Others

Noble houses of the Golgenna Reach fund private archeoexcavations as a demonstration of prestige—or to remove a troublesome scion from the hive spires for a few years. The forces of rogue traders descend upon xenos sites with no regard for sanctity or antiquity, eager to strip them of hidden riches. Ill-led and unprepared xenos cults make pilgrimages to dark places, journeying in desperate privation in the hope of praying to the xenos beings they worship. Arch-heretics gather recidivist followers and cloak themselves as respectable Imperial citizens when warp-portents show something to be won from xenos ruins.





VII

The Radical Campaign

Shades of Radicalism

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Themes of a Radical Campaign

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Antagonists

•

Radical Missions

•

The Fate of the Radical

Chapter VII: The Radical Campaign

"You! You would slay an entire planet to kill a minor, insignificant cult, and yet you say that what I do is wrong!"

–Inquisitor Oberst Von Ryn, at his denunciation.

There are many layers to a Radical Campaign, and many ways to make use of the material in this book in your games. From a campaign featuring a Radical Inquisitor as the antagonist, to campaigns centering around the exploits of a group of Radical Acolytes, to everything in between, the possibilities are endless. Truly, the Radical Campaign caters to the extremes of morality and ethics within **Dark Heresy**, painting itself in the myriad shades of grey between the black and white of Chaos and Puritanism.

When we talk of the Radical Campaign, we broadly mean one of two things: a campaign where the Acolytes or their Inquisitor are Radicals, and the actions they carry out put them at odds with Puritans, or a campaign in which one or more of the Acolytes gradually slip towards Radicalism. The former of these campaigns begins as a Radical Campaign, whereas the latter of the two might start as a standard campaign and then slide into a Radical Campaign as the game progresses and the Acolytes set foot on the path of Radicalism. A campaign where the Acolytes' foes are Radicals themselves is not necessary a Radical Campaign, although through fighting Radicals they might find themselves becoming Radicals themselves.

Whereas the other chapters of this book provide a veritable catalogue of new material, from artefacts and items, to factions and careers, this chapter brings it all together and shows how you, the GM, can make use of it all in your games. Broadly speaking, there are three ways to use this material in your games. Simplest of all, you can just take the material and use it to create antagonists, pitting the Puritanical Acolytes against Radical foes. Secondly, you could start the campaign as you would a normal game, and then use the material to tempt the Acolytes, seeing if they will take the direct route and embrace radicalism, or whether they will fight to remain pure. Finally, you could create a Radical campaign from scratch, featuring the Acolytes as serving a Radical Inquisitor, or as ne'er-do-wells.

SHADES OF RADICALISM

No single point exists at which an Inquisitor can be branded a Radical, no dividing line in the sand between the actions of a Puritan and a Radical Inquisitor. Sure enough, an extreme Radical and an extreme Puritan Inquisitor stand worlds apart, in ideology if not necessarily in actions, but extremism is more of a circle than a straight line, and the extremes at either end have more in common than they might care to admit. The moderate Inquisitors come into direct conflict with one another, jostling for identity and ideology and labelling one another as Radical or Puritan. A Radical might consider himself such, yet be unprepared to act in an extreme manner as a Puritan Inquisitor. Likewise a Puritan Inquisitor might consider himself above reproach, yet be prepared to employ methods that a Radical Inquisitor might balk at.

There is no mechanical figure that can be used to gauge the Radicalism of an Acolyte, no arbitrary statistic that determines whether an Acolyte is Radical or not. Corruption Points are a good rule of thumb, or at least the extent to which an Acolyte is willing to accrue them, but they do not tell the whole story. Corruption Points are not always gained voluntarily—although many of the instances in this book require the Acolyte to willingly embrace corruption—so an Acolyte might be ideologically a Puritan, but be rife with corruption. Likewise a Radical, while more likely to come into contact with the sorts of things that are likely to incur Corruption Points, might be ideologically Radical but physically and mentally be as pure as the driven snow.

Instead it is up to the players to communicate the ideology of their Acolytes to the GM, and up to the GM to test that ideology, probe them and see how far they are prepared to go in the name of the Emperor.



The Fall to Radicalism

No man is born a Radical, and very few Inquisitors or Acolytes are recruited as Radicals. Instead the fall to Radicalism is a change that happens over the course of their career. Some Inquisitors and Acolytes become radicalised gradually over the course of countless investigations and encounters. Others become a Radical suddenly, their views abruptly changed in the aftermath of some calamitous event. Likewise, what pushes one Acolyte over the edge might only confirm the Puritanical beliefs of another, leading to disparate ideologies within a single cell.

To an extent, an Acolyte will often look to his Inquisitor to act as his moral and ideological compass in all things. This is true for a number of different reasons. Primarily, an Inquisitor is the foremost authority figure in an Acolyte's life. No other person embodies the will and authority of the Emperor so directly. If an Inquisitor says something is so, who are the Acolytes to disagree? Secondly, an Inquisitor is the leader and commander of a group of Acolytes. The sorts of missions they will be sent on—ordered on, no less—will reflect the Inquisitor's outlook and ideology, as well as serve his own interests. Thirdly, an Inquisitor is likely to be a sort of mentor to the Acolytes, training them and grooming them to become Inquisitors themselves one day.

Therefore, should an Inquisitor begin to slide towards Radicalism, so too, in all likelihood, will his Acolytes. This will not be an overt decision, or even a decision at all. At no point will the Inquisitor take his Acolytes to one side and confide in them that he has decided to take the path of the Radical. More likely, as an Inquisitor radicalises, the missions that his Acolytes will be sent on, and the methods they're expected to take, will become increasingly Radical in nature.

If the Inquisitor is consciously aware of his shifting ideology, he will watch his Acolytes carefully during this time, perhaps even testing them to see what lengths they're prepared to take. For an Inquisitor to survive and prosper as a Radical, he must maintain the loyalty and respect of his Acolytes; any who do not prove themselves willing to take the same path are likely to be swiftly dealt with, often terminated.

However, the reverse is also true. No Inquisitor wants his Acolytes to be corrupt, for such corruption is just as dangerous to an Inquisitor's cause as an overly pure Acolyte. Even the most Radical of Inquisitors is likely to recruit relatively pure Acolytes and then mould them to his own particular brand of Radicalism, shaping them in line with his own ideology. But an Acolyte who embraces Radicalism a little too readily is likely to face a similar fate to one who resists the change of ideology. To do otherwise is to invite disaster, heresy, and outright betrayal within his own group.

All this assumes that as the Inquisitor slides towards Radicalism, his Acolytes accompany him at the same rate. Such a fall is interesting in its own right, but differences of ideology between the Inquisitor and his Acolytes—or amongst the Acolytes themselves—is a great source of conflict too. Consider the following differences of ideology.

The Master Has Fallen, His Servants Stand True: Radical Inquisitor, Puritanical Acolytes

It is entirely possible that as an Inquisitor falls to Radicalism, his Acolytes remain Puritanical. Such a situation could arise for all manner of reasons. The Inquisitor may be something of a loner, considering himself apart from his Acolytes, or he may have trained them to be rather more zealous and strict than he. From the Acolytes' point of view, seeing their Inquisitor become a Radical might feel like the ultimate betrayal. They might see him as a traitor or, worse, a heretic.

What they choose to do next is an important step. Do they continue to fight alongside him, hoping to steer him back to the path of the Puritan, even if they risk damning themselves in the process? Or do they stand up to him, turning against their master and bringing him to justice? Neither choice is easy, and both are not without risk. If they continue to serve their Inquisitor, even though they disagree with his methods and ideology, how far will they go in his name? At what point will they stop and stand up to him? And by this point, will they too have become Radicals? And if they do oppose him, do they do so openly or subversively?

The Acolytes could openly denounce their Inquisitor, turning him into the Imperial authorities or to another Inquisitor. But what is the word of an Acolyte against that of an Inquisitor? An Inquisitor who is in good standing with the Conclave, or who has weaved himself a web of trusted allies, is unlikely to be brought down without a great deal of evidence. It is often far easier for the Acolytes to conveniently disappear than to face up to the possibility that such an influential figure has fallen into shadow. And what if they are believed? How far will they go to denounce their own Inquisitor? Will they actively participate in his capture and trial, after all he has done for them? Will they be able to withstand his retribution?

The Well of Souls

Within the Tricorn Palace on Scintilla, deep beneath the shaded plazas and ornate walkways, lies an oft-forgotten chamber, forever cast in gloom and guarded by tier upon tier of silent, grotesque stone sentries. This is the Well of Souls, and within its depths the pleas and accusations of the most despicable, treacherous—or so posterity would have it—Inquisitors are heard. The accused is bound within the bottom of the well itself, and a jury of his peers sits upon the tiered galleries looking down on him. The floor of the well is paved with red Iocanthan marble, all the better to hide the bloodstain of the executed. It was here that the arch-Radical Bompus Sept was finally brought to justice and executed for his sins against humanity. But it was also here that the trial of the heretical Inquisitor Vilnius Habib took place, whereupon he broke free of his bindings and unleashed a bound daemon upon his peers, slaying 99 Inquisitors and escaping into the warp, never to be seen again.

Surely he will be lookoing to silence his former servants, perhaps turning their former comrades and allies against them at every turn.

Instead of openly denouncing their Inquisitor, the Acolytes could work subversively, waging a hidden war against him. Such a move is bold, not to mention foolhardy, for there is much at stake. Should the Inquisitor or one of his allies discover the Acolytes' duplicity, he will consider them to be the traitors and heretics, and the fate for treacherous Acolytes is unpalatable indeed. How can they bring down their Inquisitor without bringing themselves down too? Will they employ their master's own devices and machinations against him, or will they rise above it and bring him down whilst remaining pure?

The Servants Have Fallen: Puritanical Inquisitor, Radical Acolytes

Of course, the reverse situation is entirely possible too. In sending his Acolytes into the crucible of investigations, a Puritan Inquisitor might find that his operatives opt to take the path of the Radical themselves. When confronted with the harsh realities of the fight against Chaos or the myriad other enemies of the Imperium, it is entirely natural for an Acolyte to crack and choose the easy route, using the tools of the enemy against them. Of course, such expedience and a decision to get the job done no matter how is not viewed in the best light by a Puritanical Inquisitor.



An Inquisitor who discovers that his Acolytes have embraced the path of the Radical, whether knowingly or otherwise, is likely to act quickly. They are unlikely to find themselves offered any sort of mercy or leniency—the best that a Radical Acolyte can expect is to be treated as their Inquisitor would deal with any other heretic or traitor. At worst, a Radical Acolyte will receive an especially nasty punishment, as a warning to other Acolytes who might consider leaving the path of the righteous.

Far better for an Acolyte who has set foot on the path of the Radical is to ensure that his Inquisitor never finds out. Such Acolytes might genuinely not want to besmirch the good name of their Inquisitor, not wanting to sully his reputation with the methods that they employ, getting their hands dirty so that their Inquisitor does not have to. Others might consider their Inquisitor to be naive to the truth of the universe, perhaps trying to open his eyes to the true potency of the Radical path.

Concealing Radical actions from an Inquisitor is not a deception undertaken lightly, however, for the master is far more keenly aware of the actions and ideologies of those who serve him than the Acolytes might suspect. At the very least, it requires discretion during all investigations and missions, perhaps to the extent that any potential witnesses to their actions are silenced. Reports must be carefully falsified, although not to the degree that they raise suspicion. Facts must be tweaked and lies massaged into half-truths. Corroborating witnesses must be bribed or blackmailed, dissenting voices bought off or threatened. Greater lengths might be required to circumvent the suspicions of their Inquisitorial master, perhaps going as far as selective mind scrubbing or memory dampeners, to enable the Acolytes to pass any interrogation or torture they might be subjected to.

RADICAL AND PURITANICAL ACOLYTES

Regardless of the ideology of their Inquisitor, it is possible that the Acolytes will develop ideological differences of their own. Whereas one Acolyte might be a naive stalwart adhering to the Emperor's Truth, another might be more a pragmatic individual, willing to embrace any and all methods to get the job done. The differing ideologies within a party are a great source of conflict within any party, and all it takes is external impetus to bring them blisteringly to the fore.

No doubt at first these differences could manifest themselves as a simple disagreement between how a mission should be approached, or a full-blown argument over how a situation was handled by one or another of the group. But when an Acolyte bribes a Chaos Cultist for information instead of turning him into the authorities, pockets a grimoire instead of burning it, or executes a valuable contact simply because of their Xenos heritage, the fault lines amongst the party will quickly become all too apparent. The ideologies might cause

the Acolytes to come to physical blows, the differences being settled in a swift and bloody manner; or they could simmer below the surface for some time as the Acolytes subtly work against each other behind one another's backs.

And of course, to really ramp up the conflict and tension within the party, their Inquisitor must get involved too. Does the ideology of one of the factions amongst the Acolytes carry more weight when backed—either consciously or unwittingly—by the Inquisitor, or does it just increase the stakes worth fighting for?

THEMES IN A RADICAL CAMPAIGN

Although there are many shades of Radicalism, and many ways to approach a Radical Campaign, there are certain themes that will be common to each. Take these themes and make them your own; weave them into the very fabric of your campaign, characterising friends and foes, as well as the locations and characters that make up the backdrop with some facet of the various themes.

The End Justifies the Means

Inquisitors must constantly tread a fine line between doing what is right and doing what is necessary, between acting in the interests of the Inquisitor and acting in the interests of the Imperium. How far an Inquisitor is prepared to go to ensure the survival of the Imperium is a frequent question, asked both by the Inquisition itself and by the wider Imperium. One Inquisitor's patriotism is another's treason. One Inquisitor may not blink at ordering the Exterminatus of a whole world to ensure the destruction of a cult; another may blanch at pulling the trigger to execute a single cultist. Whereas one Inquisitor may refuse to consult the daemonic grimoire, even if it means condemning the souls of billions to damnation, another might readily open its pages, damning his own soul to save billions more.

Perhaps the most commonplace and powerful theme of the Radical Campaign is the question: does the end justify the means? This is a profoundly moral and objective theme that the Acolytes will have to keep asking themselves as the campaign progresses. Many Radicals believe that the answer is yes, that the end will always justify the means, no matter how terrible that may be, but there are many shades of grey within that answer.

This theme should be used to continually push the players and their characters. Force the Acolytes into uncomfortable situations, present them with difficult choices and see how the respond. Are they prepared to sacrifice the life of another? How about the lives of ten, one hundred, one million? How about an entire world? At what point do they draw the line?

And once you have established how far the Acolytes are prepared to go, present them with a foe—or an ally—who is prepared to cross that line. How do they respond to that, and what will it take them to re-evaluate their own moral code.

This theme could be apparent in a number of different ways—and not just in the actions of the Acolytes themselves. Obviously there are those who believe that the end justifies the means: the Inquisitors prepared to carry out reprehensible acts to defeat Chaos, the Arbitrators who believe in letting criminals escape to catch a bigger foe, the Governor prepared to bargain with the alien to safeguard his world, even at the expense of neighbouring systems.

To embrace Radicalism is to act in a profoundly self-righteous manner, to know the enemy and be assured that you can best them, that you can maintain the upper hand when fighting them. To do otherwise is to court disaster, to admit weakness, and to show frailty.

The inverse of this question is just as provocative. What of the Inquisitors not prepared to step over the line, even if it means defeat? To Acolytes who embrace the path of the Radical, such characters could prove to be inestimable foes, zealous in their desire to hunt down those who would cross the line.

Arrogance

To be an Inquisitor is to be profoundly arrogant, to be assured with an almost zealous conviction that the actions undertaken are right, regardless of what anyone else might think, say, or do. Yet it is easy for an Inquisitor, empowered with the authority of the Emperor Himself, to lose sight of his true purpose, to become distracted from his true goal—safeguarding the Imperium of Mankind from the innumerable threats that stand to oppose it—and be swept up in his own sense of self-worth and importance. And if this is true for all Inquisitors, it is doubly true for Radicals. A Radical Inquisitor must stand in the face of all those who would denounce him and call him a traitor (or worse) and be sure in the knowledge that he is right.

The theme of arrogance comes across in a campaign in a number of ways. First and foremost, it is apparent in the machinations of the enemies, the villainous masterminds who are confident that they know best, and that their plan is unassailable. Such arrogant foes could be Inquisitors themselves, heretical cult leaders, or alien masterminds, but an arrogant enemy does not necessarily mean a weak enemy. Foes assured of their own success might have blind-spots, but confidence is not always misplaced.

But more than in the machinations of the enemy, arrogance should be a theme running through friends and allies too. The forces of the Imperium encountered by the Acolytes should display arrogance, dismissing alien foes as primitive or discounting threats from within the Imperium itself as trivial. Bureaucrats should look down upon the Acolytes when carrying out their business, and the Governors should be assured that their world is safe from harm. The Acolytes' Inquisitor could be supremely arrogant, confident that Radicalism is the only way, and that he is mighty enough not to succumb to the wiles of the enemy. Whether the Acolytes support him in this could be a great source for tension and conflict. Finally, it should be the Acolytes themselves who are arrogant, confident of their own power and oblivious to the true dangers that await them for dabbling with the tools of the enemy.



Hubris

Sitting side-by-side with arrogance is the theme of hubris. Hubris is overconfidence and arrogance cast down. To be arrogant in your own abilities and dismissive of the foes you face is to court disaster, to bring about retribution from an unexpected quarter and to invite the enemy to strike you down in your moment of glory.

Hubris is a powerful theme, always stepping to the fore in victory over an arrogant foe. But becoming complacent with such victories is to call down hubris upon the Acolytes' own heads, to invite failure and defeat. Hubris can be a powerful theme when signposted early on, the very confidence of a friend or a foe foreshadowing his eventual defeat.

Hubris might manifest in the glorious parades of the Imperial Guard, marching off to almost certain victory on an alien world, followed by reports of their shameful massacre. It might appear in the aftermath of an Inquisitor's downfall, as he is tried and executed by a jury of his peers. It could be the overconfidence of a governor that proves to be his undoing, the irony of him turning a blind eye to a minor threat that ultimately puts his world to the torch.

Naivety

Knowledge is power, but in the Imperium knowledge is also dangerous. Naivety and ignorance are encouraged amongst the citizens of the Imperium as a means to keep them pliant and under control. Naivety is also a valid defence for the general populace—in the 41st millennium some knowledge genuinely is dangerous, and ignorance keeps the people safe from the dangers of daemons and subversion into Chaos cults. In the eyes of a Radical Inquisitor, however, naivety and ignorance are dangerous in themselves, for they blind an Inquisitor to the truth of the matter, no matter how unpalatable that might be. They also bind an Inquisitor, limiting his arsenal of weapons with which to fight the enemies of the Imperium.

The companion of arrogance to some extent, naivety is the ignorance to the true dangers of the universe. Whereas Radicals are said to be arrogant, naivety is often the sin of the Puritans.

Naivety is a useful theme to act as a counterpoint to the protagonists, especially if the Acolytes have embraced the path of the Radical. A great way of frustrating the Acolytes is to present them with a naive antagonist or ally, one who could become useful to them—or at least, less of a threat—if they could just be made to understand. What truth can the Acolytes confront the ally with to make him open his eyes and see?

Naivety can be made manifest in a number of different ways, but most obviously in the faces of the seemingly pure and innocent citizenry or the authorities oblivious to the true threat, refusing to believe that such a danger could exist. A Puritanical Inquisitor, heedless of the power of the Radical and damning any who might walk such a path, is a good embodiment of naivety, as would be an Acolyte unwittingly embracing Radicalism, convinced that he can make use of the powers of a Chaos artefact where others have succumbed to damnation and corruption.

Better the Devil You Know

When fighting the enemies of Mankind, sometimes hard choices must be made. War makes strange bedfellows of us all, and in times of great crisis, necessity might force an Inquisitor to side with one foe against another.

A Radical Inquisitor makes use of any and all tools at his disposal and, when confronted with an overwhelming threat, turns to the weapons of an enemy he understands well to fight one he has little comprehension of. An Inquisitor who has frequently fought—and therefore understands—the forces of Chaos, might naturally turn to using the tools of Chaos when confronted with a new and dangerous foe, such as a hitherto unknown xeno race.

Similarly, in a particularly dangerous conflict, an Inquisitor might be forced to side with one enemy against a common foe. During a daemon invasion, an Inquisitor might ally with Eldar Pirates, despite the fact that there is no love lost between the two normally. A Puritan Inquisitor would not give countenance to the prospect of an alliance, for the Eldar are xenos, and it is heresy to ally with xenos, regardless of the dangers he faced. A Radical, however, is inherently pragmatic, and even if his normal foe might be the alien, he knows when to put aside differences in the short term for long term gain.

BUILDING BLOCKS OF A CAMPAIGN

A Radical Campaign does not so much replace an existing campaign, with all its overarching themes, antagonists, and plots, but rather sits alongside it, bringing its own set of challenges, mysteries, and conflict to the game. A clever Game Master builds bridges and connectors between the two campaigns, using the themes of one as mirrors or facets of the other. There are a few building blocks and tools that a GM can use as part of a Radical Campaign, working them in alongside the greater, over-arching themes described above.

Temptation

One of the keys to driving an Acolyte to Radicalism is temptation: the lure of the easy route rather than the hard route, the appeal of the tools of the enemy to gain victory, even if it means damnation. Temptation can be as subtle or as blatant as you like. Offer the players a hard choice, an impossible situation or a near insurmountable obstacle. Then give them an easy way out: a daemon weapon, a xenos sympathiser, a Chaos cultist who knows the answer. See if the Acolytes succumb to temptation.

And it's not just temptation of the characters that you can consider—the players can be tempted to the cause of the Radical just as readily. Offer them mechanical rewards in the form of new abilities and powers. Offer them a way out for their characters, a way to save them from certain death or disaster.

But temptation should never be the easy way in the long run—great power must be paid for, after all. And you should make sure that the Acolytes sweat, make them earn this power, or pay for it tenfold.

Revelation

Another key tool is revelation, the sudden realisation of something that shakes the world view of the Acolytes. This should be a wake-up call of sorts, an abrupt realisation that all is not what it seems, and that the answers are not as clear-cut as they might once have thought.

This revelation could take a number of forms. It could be the fall of a close ally, the confession of a fellow Acolyte of his secret Radicalism, or the witnessing of the true power of the enemy's tools and methodologies. Such a revelation could turn the Acolytes' world upside down, such as the discovery that a close friend is really the bad guy, and the supposed enemy isn't so bad after all.

Revelation is a powerful tool; a swift kick that jolts the players into action, as well as making it dawn on them that there is another option. It should be dramatic and heart-wrenching, carefully crafted so as to have the maximum impact on the emotions of the Acolytes—as well as the players. It should force them into action and push them into making a decision that will have long-lasting ramifications.

Madness

As an Acolyte slides deeper and deeper into madness and insanity, the opportunities to mess with their heads present themselves more and more. To an insane Acolyte, the pathways that would have seemed far too diabolic and potentially heretical when he was sane begin to look all the more appealing. Likewise, an Acolyte well aware that his sanity is slipping from his grasp might be prepared to take steps that no totally sane individual would contemplate.

Corruption

Sitting side by side with madness is the inexorable descent into corruption that most Acolytes must face. The more that they stare into the depths of the abyss, the more the abyss stares back into them. Corruption is a danger that threatens all Acolytes, but Radicals all the more so. Will they willingly expose themselves to corruption for personal gain, no matter how selflessly it might be intended? Will they readily grasp at power, even if it imperils their soul?



How Far is Too Far?

Once you have all the building blocks assembled, it's time to start pushing the Acolytes and the players. By now you might have a fairly clear idea of where they stand, ideologically, and of what they will and won't do. Now, to start pushing them. So the Acolytes have stated that they won't go as far as to deal with heretical cultists. Push them. How about now, if an ally's life is at stake? How about now, if their life is at stake? How about now, if a whole planet is at stake? Forget about dealing with cultists, what about daemons?

Each time you threaten the Acolytes, make sure you threaten their ideology too. Shake up their world view and see what comes loose. Change things, threaten things they hold dear—then give them a way out, but at a price.

You can start the path to Radicalism quite innocently. As part of an investigation, present them with a dubious source, a source who acquires excellent information that has been obtained from a rogue psyker or a cult of some kind. What will it take the Acolytes to use the source again? How much will it take to push them to bypass the source and go straight to the rogue psyker? At what point do they dispense with the psyker entirely, and begin to make use of similar powers themselves? And at what point does it cease to be about the investigation or the mission, and become about that power instead?

There is no right or wrong answer, no predetermined end point in the journey along the path of the Radical. It's all about testing the Acolytes, seeing how far they will go—all in the name of the Emperor, of course.

Antagonists

Puritans

The most obvious—not to mention vocal—opponents of Radical Inquisitors are the Puritan Inquisitors. Zealous, vehement, and unmoving in their doctrine, Puritans are the antithesis of Radicals. Believing that engaging with the enemy on any level is utterly beyond reproach, Puritans go out of their way to undo the machinations of the Radicals. That their agendas often run counter to one another only heightens the tension between the factions. The Puritans seek to expose the Radicals to the light, holding them up as heretics and traitors, whereas the Radicals seeks to puncture the plans of the Puritans, breaking down the stasis of their agendas with entropy and chaos.

Fellow Radicals

Just because an Inquisitor is labelled a Radical, it does not make him consider himself such, and nor does it mean that he will have any more in common with the causes of other Radicals. There is certainly not a single Radical faction, and the agendas of Radical Inquisitors often run counter to one another more often than they complement each other. For this reason, it is not uncommon for two Radical Inquisitors to find themselves rivals or enemies, for there is always an Inquisitor prepared to go to more extreme lengths, or a more moderate Radical ready and willing to offer condemnation.

The Enemy

Within a Radical Campaign it can be all too easy to lose sight of the true enemy that the Inquisition strives against—daemons, xenos, and heretics—in favour of power games and intrigue within the Inquisition itself. Yes, the infighting and ideological differences between different Inquisitorial factions and creeds make for some powerful plots, but when all around is going to hell, Inquisitors will put aside their personal differences and fight the real enemy. Thusly, you should make sure that there is a real enemy, in addition to or instead of the enemies who pose as supposed allies, for it is when fighting the enemies of the Imperium that the mirror can be truly held up to the Radicals and the question asked: was it worth all the loss and suffering, to defeat this enemy; are we really so different from they?

Radical Missions

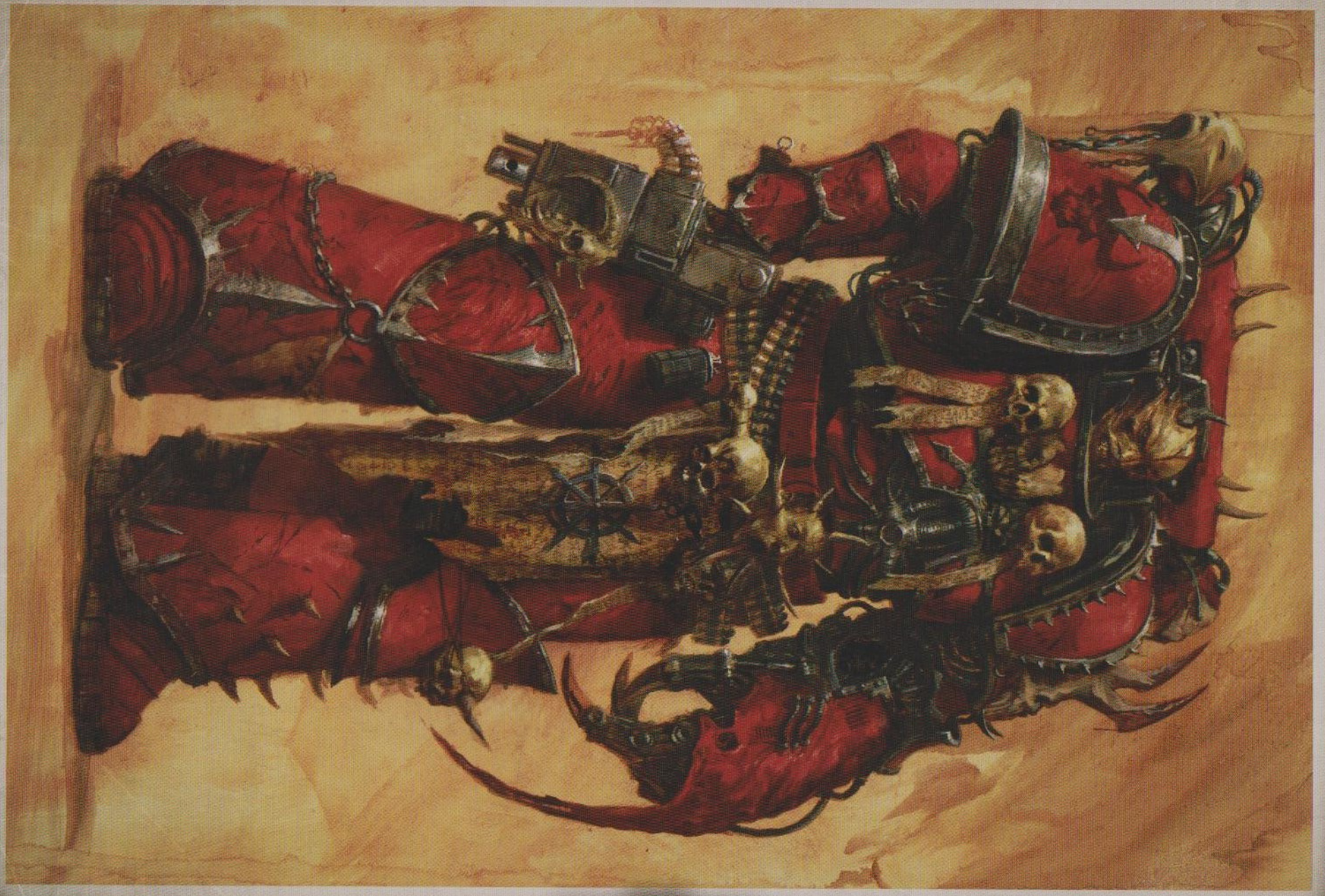
The **Dark Heresy** rulebook presents a handful of examples of missions that the Inquisition might be sent on. Here we present a few more, with the added twist that these are the sorts of missions a Radical Inquisitor might send his Acolytes on, whether with their knowledge or not.

Cultists

One of the main duties of an Inquisitor is to root out and destroy cults dedicated to the Dark Gods. However, to a Radical Inquisitor such cults are a potential source of information and power. Tame Chaos cults are a good way of getting to a more insidious foe, tolerating a lesser evil so that a greater evil might be defeated. Cults are also a great source of rumour and information, especially in the occult underworld where whisperings of conspiracies are rife. They are also a potential source of access to greater powers, often coming into the possession of powerful artefacts or contacting daemons. A Radical Inquisitor might have need of all these resources and more, dispatching his Acolytes to acquire them.

Acolytes might be tasked with finding such cults as normal, but upon notifying their superiors might be told to make further contact with them, or to attempt to infiltrate them, rather than destroy them. They may be required to groom a cult, preparing it for entering into the employ of the Inquisitor, unbeknownst to the cultists of course. The Acolytes might be ordered to steal away a daemon weapon, a task that exposes them to great corruption and temptation in the process.

The Acolytes might be unwitting pawns in such a mission, believing that their actions are ultimately designed to bring about the downfall of the cult. Acolytes acting on their own initiative and attempting to dismantle the cult may find themselves unceremoniously and prematurely pulled out of the operation and brought before a very annoyed Radical Inquisitor.



VII: The Radical Campaign

Daemons

Whereas many Inquisitors are tasked with the duty of the daemonhunter, hunting the creatures from beyond and thwarting their machinations on the material plane, certain Radical Inquisitors make it their mission to hunt down daemons for another purpose entirely: to learn from them, either how better to fight them or to gain great power from them. Such Inquisitors might seek to bind daemons, making use of these powerful prisoners to answer question and aid them in unravelling mysteries, or they might use them to create a daemonhost, forcing the daemon to serve them rather more directly.

An Acolyte might find himself asked to assist his master in summoning and binding a daemon, or to gather up the various resources needed to perform the binding of a daemonhost.

Whilst a naive Acolyte might convince himself that dealing with Chaos cults will eventually serve to bring about their downfall, only the most blind and ignornant Acolyte would think so about daemonkind.

Xenos

Battling the insidious forces of the xenos, as well as destroying xenotech, is one of the chief priorities of any Inquisitor. A Radical Inquisitor might have other ideas, however, seeing the xenos not so much as a threat to be overcome, but potential allies to be entreated with. A Radical might wish to make use of the xenos as allies, or perhaps to study them closely or learn from them, for the ways of the xenos are many and strange. Radical Inquisitors might also wish to obtain xenotech for themselves, repurposing it for use against another foe (perhaps the xenos themselves) or to dissassemble it and learn from it.

The Acolytes of such a Radical might find themselves despatched on a diplomatic mission, sent to make peace with a xeno culture or to establish successful first contact with a race. They might be sent to forge friendships and create alliances, or they might be sent there for an alterior motive, such the theft of technology from under the noses of their hosts.

An Acolyte could reasonably be expected to suspect the motivations of his Inquisitor if regularly sent to contact aliens peacefully, but this is not of itself sufficient evidence to warn him off.

Inquisitorial Infighting

One of the most dangerous Radical missions undertaken is against the forces of the Inquisition itself. Radical Inquisitors frequently come to blows with rivals within their own organisation, especially Puritan Inquisitors, and it is not unheard of for Acolytes to be sent to thwart the machinations of their enemies. Such missions could simply involve the undermining of assets, the spreading of rumour and speculation that scares off contacts, or the sabotage of rival operations. Or it could be more extreme, involving the assassination of rival Acolytes or Inquisitors, or the outright interference with missions. Such missions are best conducted undercover, for they have the potential to escalate into far more serious affairs if brought into public eye.

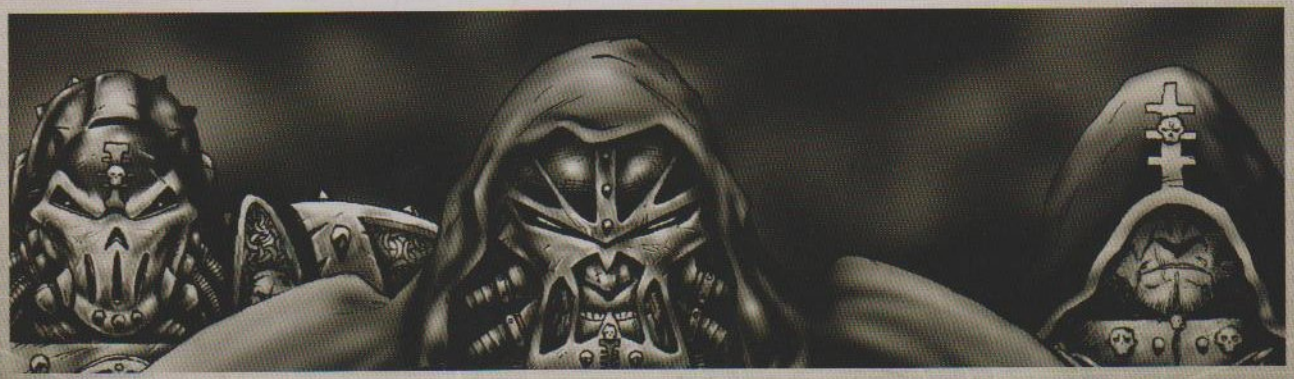
Covert Operations within the Imperium

Perhaps the most extreme mission the servants of a Radical Inquisitor will be asked to perform is to go undercover within the Imperium or the Inquisition itself, carrying out covert operations against the forces of the Emperor. Such operations are long and hard campaigns that might require Acolytes to remain undercover for years at a time. Such operations could involve a multitude of objectives, but all are likely to be illegal, heretical, or worse, if the Inquisitor feels the need to employ such discretion.

Those Radical Inquisitors whose agendas concern the destabilisation of the status quo, such as the Istvaanians or the Recongregators, launch covert operations to destabilise planetary authorities, conducting assassinations or other terrorist activities. This could include the murder of a prominent official or the bombing of a water treatment plant. It could be far more subtle, such as rabble rousing or distributing seditious materials.

Such a mission is dangerous in the extreme, for the Acolytes are actively fighting the forces of the Imperium, albeit for the greater good—or so they believe. An Acolyte caught on such a mission cannot expect any help from his master, for he must be the ultimate deniable asset. In fact, should their mission look like it is going to be compromised or be associated with the Inquisition in any way, the Acolytes might find themselves in turn hunted by their former masters.

At times, the Acolytes may not even realise that they are working undercover, either because they were recruited by



an undercover Inquisitor under false pretences, and therefore believe that they are genuinely working against the Imperium, or because they have been brain-scrubbed and given a new personality and memories to assist with the subterfuge.

THE FATE OF THE RADICAL

The ultimate fate of the Radical is likely to be an unpleasant one, whether corruption and damnation at the hands of the forces with which he has dealings, or excommunication and execution at the hands of the Inquisition he purportedly serves.

There is no strict hierarchy or formal organisation within the Inquisition, which is very much a council of individuals, an organisation of peers. There is no internal affairs department to which an Inquisitor can report another as being out of line or heretical, nor a division that deals with processing suspected cases. Instead, there is a fairly loose process by which suspected heretics, traitors, and Radicals within the Inquisition are dealt with by a conclave. This is process begins with denunciation, followed by a trial by peers, and then either acquittal, execution, or excommunication.

Denunciation

The first step in the downfall of an Inquisitor is his denunciation to the Inquisition. Many Inquisitors skirt the boundaries of what is and what is not acceptable behaviour for an Inquisitor, but few will be called to answer these potential breaches—such is the case where almost every Inquisitor is equally powerful, their authority on any given case answerable only to the Emperor. An Inquisitor who has truck with heretics or worse might be whispered about wherever Inquisitors meet, rumours of their dastardly sins and fell behaviour spreading amongst Acolytes and Inquisitors alike, but nothing will be formally done about it. Informally, high-ranking Inquisitors or particularly vehement peers might dispatch investigation teams of their own to root out the truth of the matter—unless one of the accused Inquisitor's peers is prepared to denounce him.

To denounce an Inquisitor is a bold and dangerous move. It is to not only cast aspersions on the behaviour of an Inquisitor, but to declare him a traitor, a heretic, or worse. Such a move is not undergone lightly, for it can easily backfire, resulting in a souring of relations between Inquisitors of a conclave, or worse, the excommunication or execution of the accuser himself. The accuser must be sure of his own suspicions, sure enough to be able to convince a jury of peers that he is right.

Once the accuser has made his denunciation, the accused is called to be judged and a jury of his peers is assembled, comprised of as many of his fellow Inquisitors as wish to answer the summons. Next, the accuser lays bare his evidence and makes his case. The accused gets the opportunity to defend himself, calling whatever witnesses or presenting whatever evidence he feels appropriate, although in many cases he is not given much time to prepare. Finally, the jury passes judgement, declaring the accused innocent or guilty as they see fit.

Excommunication

An Inquisitor declared guilty by a trial of his peers will typically be declared Excommunicate Traitoris, and then immediately executed for heresy then and there. However, many Inquisitors genuinely accused of such heinous crimes (heinous in the eyes of the Puritans, that is) are sensible enough to remain at large rather than turning themselves in to be judged; after all, in their eyes they are above the law and have done no wrong. In such a case, they will still be judged in absentia, and judgement passed to declare their guilt or innocence.

Those Inquisitors found guilty in absentia will be declared Excommunicate Traitoris and a warrant will be issued for their arrest and execution across the sector or beyond. Being excommunicated means that they will have their Inquisitorial powers stripped from them, they will be branded a heretic and a traitor, and they will be cast from the light of the God Emperor.

This may seem all very straightfoward, but in application it is far from it. The galaxy is a very big place, and the Inquisition is but one organisation spread across a large area. Transmitting the excommunicated status of an Inquisitor amongst all the Inquisition's holdings within a sector can take years, and it can take far longer to spread word of the verdict to every individual Inquisitorial agent. It is not unheard of for word to spread to an agent of the Inquisition years after the judgement is passed, who in turn takes the law into his own hands and hunts down and executes the Inquisitor, oblivious to the fact that the Inquisitor has successfully appealed for innocence in the matter.

Similarly, the authority of an Inquisitor relies upon the twin weapons of fear and respect. An Inquisitor's rosette is a totem that commands great respect, a symbol of a higher authority with no more real power than any other physical artefact. Being excommunicated does not strip an Inquisitor of any real status, for he is still able to command the fear and respect of others simply by virtue of who he is. In the eyes of Imperial law, he might be a criminal and a traitor, but far removed from the centres of authority, on most worlds of the Imperium without a powerful Inquisitorial presence he remains an Inquisitor in every respect.

Obviously, the Acolytes of an Inquisitor who is excommunicated are similarly excommunicated, except they do not have the power or force of their own to rely on when things get sticky. The Inquisition will move quickly to seize holdings and finances, as well as to arrest or disband the network of contacts of an excommunicated Inquisitor, potentially curtailing the activities of him and his servants. However, any Radical Inquisitor worth his name will have put measures in place to prepare for such an eventuality, creating shadowy accounts and assets that remain hidden from the Inquisition. Some Inquisitors put contingency operations in place, designed to activate in the event of their excommunication or execution, to either safeguard their plans or ensure that their enemies reap a whirlwind of disaster.

The excommunication of a particularly powerful or influential Inquisitor can result in a ripple of dissent or defiance within a conclave, either as an Inquisitor's shadow assets are

enabled and begin to wreak havoc against his enemies, or as his allies within the Inquisition stand firmly by his side. The eruption of factional infighting within the Inquisition can be devastating, especially as it has the potential to escalate further still.

Inquisition War

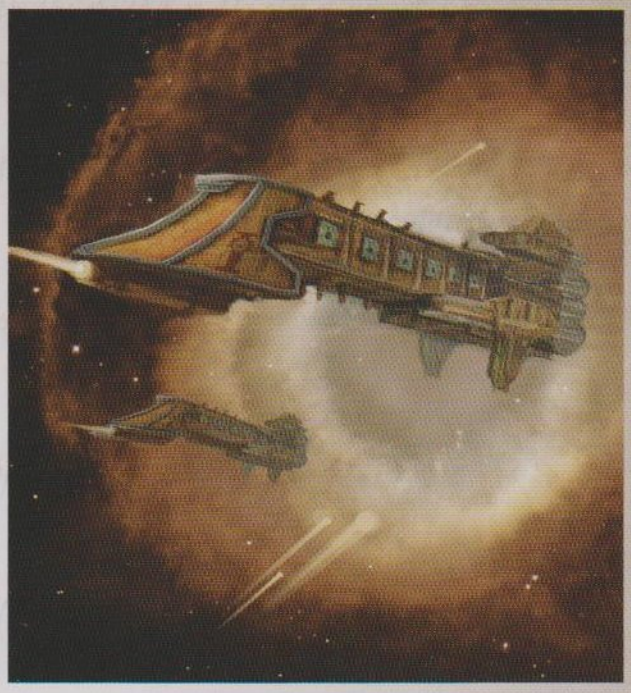
The most devastating outcome for factionalism within a sector is a full-blown Inquisition War. An Inquisition War erupts when opposing factions and rivals within a conclave declare one another excommunicatus, or refuse to submit to the authority of their peers. Such disagreements are normally defused by careful diplomacy, a discrete assassination, or a swift execution. But on rare occasions when the conclave either fails to act swiftly enough to quell such dissent or the disagreement strikes a fault line within the Inquisition, it can escalate quickly. When it does so, it drags Inquisitors into the conflict from the whole conclave, forcing them to choose sides. An Inquisitorial conclave is never a voice of unity or quorum at the best of times, and such arguments can fracture an already tenuous consensus along factional lines, breaking the Inquisition in the sector into a whole mess of smaller organisations, each with their own agendas.

Most such fractures halt there, the Inquisitorial conclave engaging in a tit for tat diplomatic squabble between a dozen or more small factions for an indefinable amount of time. During this period a sector often slides further towards the yawning abyss of Chaos, for whilst the Inquisition fights amongst itself, the individual Inquisitors do not fight the enemies of the Imperium. Such civil wars can last decades but rarely escalate beyond minor infighting or skirmishes on fringe worlds.

Sometimes, however, a conflict can escalate further, especially when the factions are divided along fundamental ideological fault lines, or where two or more factions wield a great deal of power and support—and therefore have all the more to lose by backing down or conceding. Such an escalation leads to one inexorable conclusion: a full-blown Inquisition War. Inquisition Wars are, thankfully, very rare, only a handful having occurred in the past 10,000 years. They are terrifying events, far more devastating than any alien invasion or heretical uprising, for they see Inquisitor turn on Inquisitor, each bringing his full might and authority to bear. Shadow missions assassinate planetary governors. Entire regiments of the Imperial Guard are commandeered and turned on one another. Whole systems burn via Exterminatus as the doomsday weapons of the Inquisitors are unleashed against the strongholds of one another.

An Inquisition War rarely rumbles on for longer than a decade, a century at most, for they are so devastating that the wider Imperium is forced to act swiftly. Entire Chapters of Space Marines are deployed to the sector with orders to terminate any and all Inquisitors with extreme prejudice. If one or another faction does not hold the upper hand when fighting ceases, the Imperium is not averse to wiping the slate clean in the most bloody way possible and establishing a fresh Inquisitorial conclave with Inquisitors drawn from other parts of the galaxy.

Yet the end of an Inquisition War does not herald the end for the turbulent times in the sector, for the devastation and dissent caused by the fighting can have longer lasting repercussions and consequences that reverberate for millennia.



The Inquisition War of M39

The Calixis Sector was unfortunate enough to experience a full-blown Inquisition War early in its founding. The Inquisition War erupted over the excommunication of the powerful Inquisitor Cerdius, who was one of the most influential figures in the Calixian Conclave's history, and all of her many followers. No fewer than 13 Inquisitors and their entire retinues were excommunicated and declared traitors by a power bloc of Puritanical Inquisitors seeking to destabilise what they perceived as Radical elements within the conclave. The excommunicated Inquisitors did not go quietly, however, raising entire regiments against what they saw as the usurpers. Three systems within the Malfian Subsector were consumed in the war, the surfaces of their worlds razed by virus bombs and planetary bombardment. The war itself lingered on within the subsector for close to a century before Cerdius and her cabal were eventually hanged after the betrayal of one of their number. Parts of the Malfian Subsector remained in turmoil for the next millennium, and it is said that the war is one of the reasons why Scintilla remains the dominant world in the sector over Malfi itself. This shroud is one of many reasons why the nobles of Malfi remain resentful of the Tricorn Palace and the fate that its politics denied to them.

From the Journals of Inquisitor Vovvnus Kaede, 5.309.722.M41

I have stumbled upon a remarkable account that describes an individual of great interest. His name is Adept Castus Grendel. The reports I have gathered indicate that Adept Grendel is in the service of Inquisitor Vogen...a most unimaginative colleague. What grasped my attention is that there are several reports from Vogen that describe Adept Grendel's survival against staggering odds. Beginning with some cult activity on Scintilla and ending with an explosive battle on the Hive World of Cantus against both daemons and aliens, this Grendel has prevailed where many others would not.

I am no Thorian, but I know that Vogen is a follower of those teachings. Perhaps he is grooming this Adept, watching his progress and waiting to see the Emperor's hand revealed in this Adept's unlikely prowess.

However, I have discovered that Vogen's acolyte has drawn attention from other quarters as well, including Rykehuss... and my informants tell me that Rykehuss is convinced that the only explanation for the Adepts continued survival is that the acolyte is in league with the very forces he is sent to confront! Furthermore, he claims the conflicts surrounding this Adept were all engineered for the very purpose of deceiving the Inquisition and distracting the Ordos from far more important matters. Although this sort of short-sightedness is typical of Rykehuss, in this instance I feel some caution is warranted.

I possess a pict-capture of Adept Grendel, sent to me by one of my agents. In the image, Grendel is accompanied by an Adepta Sororitas, but this Battle Sister does not match any known profile of the local Convent. This false Sister, then, may be guiding this Adept Grendel... or pulling the puppet strings herself. I have dispatched my own Throne Agents to investigate. I must know the truth, if only to frustrate the efforts of Rykehuss one last time!





VIII

Calixian Radicals

Friend or Foe

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Felroth Gelt

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Arcturos

•

Hettesh Kane

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Seraph

•

Natius Osrinn

•

Cyrrik Scayl

Chapter VIII: Calixian Radicals

This chapter showcases six of the most infamous or influential Radicals operating within the Calixis Sector. These Radicals are, for the most part, well-known within the Inquisition, and many Puritans would stop at nothing to see them silenced, or better, extinguished utterly. Many Inquisitors, however, take a more moderate stance, mirroring Inquisitor Lord Zerbe's solid and patient approach. The Radicals presented here are largely individuals who work alone, although they may have ties to some organizations and factions both within this book and in **Disciples of the Dark Gods**.

Friend or Foe

The leading Radicals introduced in this chapter can serve either to assist the Acolytes or to hinder them. Some of these Radicals may even be ideal to serve as the group's Inquisitor! If the Game Master chooses to use these radicals as allies in his game, he is free to introduce them as he wishes: perhaps as having been supporting the Acolytes' successes all along, or as a newcomer looking to guide them in the "right" direction.

As an enemy, however, any of these Radicals can serve admirably as a nemesis. A nemesis is a reoccurring villain whose schemes the Acolytes have thwarted and whose vengeance spitefully dogs their steps. A nemesis is a classic plot device for a long-term campaign; few things motivate players more than discovering that their nemesis is behind the conspiracy that they have uncovered, and nothing is more satisfying for those players than when they finally bring their nemesis down. To help Game Masters introduce and use a nemesis in their game, there are a few guidelines that are worth bearing in mind:

A nemesis should not be behind every heresy: While it is important that a nemesis reoccurs in the campaign, if he is omnipresent his impact is lessened. It is better to save him for the main events.

A nemesis should hurt the Acolytes: For a nemesis to be an effective threat, he must genuinely have the potential and the motivation to damage, undermine, or kill the Acolytes, their allies, and friends. More to the point, he also has the power to get away with it, at least for a time. This way a nemesis can easily become a genuinely loathed figure that players will do almost anything to destroy, a villain the players love to hate.

A nemesis should escape until the final showdown: In order to be an effective focus of the Acolytes' thirst for vengeance, they must confront their nemesis several times and have him slip through their fingers (or defeat him only to find out someone else was pulling his strings—the real nemesis!). This makes the final triumph all the more satisfying.

Using this Chapter

Each of these men and women is a monster in human form; their crimes are legion and their atrocities many. Each is intended to be a worthy adversary for any group of Acolytes, and any one of them can become the arch-nemesis for a campaign or simply provide a memorable villain for a single adventure.

Profiles for the Most Wanted?

Profiles for the most wanted heretics in the Calixis Sector are not included in this chapter. This omission is quite deliberate, as the danger, abilities, and powers of these Radicals have not been pinned down or specified. These factors are for the Game Master to decide; they can be moulded into a powerful villain, or a potent and diligent mentor for a group of Radical Acolytes.

This section includes a new Talent, Touched by the Fates, that is ideal for building powerful villains—the sort that require more than a lucky bolter round to take down.

Touched by The Fates (Talent)

Prerequisites: Limited to Non-Player Characters with free will; may not be applied to daemons and other non-living creatures.

The NPC has a number of Fate Points equal to half his Willpower Bonus (rounding up). He may use these Fate Points in exactly the same way as Player Characters and may even "burn" a Fate Point to survive death and destruction (if possible), although this should always happen "off camera." If in any given situation the NPC would be defeated and the scenario resolved in the Acolytes' favour, the NPC will return another day (probably for revenge!). In addition, the rules for Righteous Fury also apply to this NPC.

Radicals as Villains

The true curse of the Radical is that he believes himself to be a hero working for the good of the Imperium, if not Mankind as a whole. Thus, as a villain, the Radical can be a tragic, fallen figure or a truly misguided monster who has become what he hunted for so long. The key to remember when using a Radical as the master villain for a campaign is that he is more than just a collection of powers and abilities; he have a motivation and an agenda all his own!

The best way to create a villain is to start with a well-defined idea of what he will be in the campaign. One of the best tricks to the creating a cool villain is to give him a good narrative, a back-story, a personality, a style of his own, and his own motivations. Many Game Masters go so far as to give their villain a signature in the shape of a recognisable modus operandi, a visual style, or an exclusive goal. These are the things that make for a first-rate villain, not simply a set of Characteristics, Talents, and game mechanics. Once the Game Master has an idea for "what" and "who" the villain will be, then it's time to pick up a rule book and lend him some definition—not the other way around!

Inquisitor Felroth Gelt

Name: Felroth Stasius Gelt
Known Aliases: Lord Slyknife, the Haunted Hunter
Known Associates or Organisations: The Black Regiment, Lord-Captain Laomyr of the Triumph of St. Drusus, Rogue Trader Serren Travius
Preferred Methods of Operation: Gelt prefers to work with an extensive network of Acolytes and former associates. A charismatic and inspirational man, Gelt can call on the services of many agents throughout the Calixis Sector. He has been known to use captive psykers secured inside grav-suspended nutrient vats to provide a modicum of protection from the powers of the warp. Gelt is not afraid to get deeply involved in person, and prefers a "hands-on" approach to his investigations.

Felroth Gelt is a renegade Inquisitor who has been branded a Radical and a heretic by the Tricorn Palace. A former Monodominant Puritan, Gelt hounded the enemies of the Imperium across the Calixis Sector for more than three centuries. Gelt was a bold and courageous man, and quickly earned the favour of Lord Inquisitor Caidin, under whose mentorship Gelt flourished. He explored death worlds, sailed on ships of the Imperial Navy, commanded a personal regiment of stormtroopers in the field, and kept a series of captive psykers for his personal use. He became well-known for having encountered a wide variety of foes, from mutants to beasts, to stranger things like the daemon of Kinog and the Kantressian Foulmind. Each victory, however, came at a price: the lives of his Acolytes and a gradual wearing down of his once-firm adherence to the Monodominant Creed. Each success seemed empty, devoid of true importance. Gelt bent his attention to transcribing his journals into a tome that would guide younger Inquisitors and Acolytes, imparting some of his own hard-won lessons of survival.

All of that changed upon the cursed world of Kasha. Gelt had travelled there to assist with the suppression of the Rebellion of the False, an uprising triggered by a macabre heretical cult. It was during this turmoil that he first met Inquisitor Draven, a dark and driven man who reminded Gelt of his younger self. But where Gelt had been steadfast to the Puritan path, Draven chose to seek out any advantage he could find. Gelt then bore witness to the fruit of Draven's labours: the power of Chaos turned against the Emperor's foes. Enthralled, Gelt accompanied Draven on further expeditions throughout Imperial space and beyond. Having been enlightened by the teachings of the Xanthites, Gelt's aged frame is now revitalized by the power of the warp, his long years of service and experience now turned in a new direction.

Since coming to the Xanthite doctrine, Gelt abandoned his journals, his Acolytes, and every other aspect of his former life. He chose instead to dedicate himself to seeking out more tools to turn against the enemies of Mankind, and subsequently vanished from known space. Gelt has not been heard from since, and his absence has led some members of the Inquisition to conclude that, in fact, he never existed at all; the journals and notes left behind must be fabrications designed as a distraction or a trap for the unwary. Those same rumours declare that only Lord Inquisitor Zerbe knows the truth.





Inquisitor Arcturos

Name: Staven Arcturos

Known Aliases: He Who Seeks, Hound of Seven Sorrows

Known Associates or Organisations: Ulthyr Ellarion of the *Twilight's Edge*, the Screaming Silence, the Narrow Shade Troupe

Preferred Methods of Operation: Arcturos studies the future using methods he learned from alien mystics of the Eldar and bases every action upon the outcome he divines. So far, his methods have proven only fitfully accurate, and he has had to retreat from a dead end more than once. Nevertheless, he perseveres with the faith of a zealot in the xenos techniques.

One of the alien species scholars of the Xeno Hybris faction, Inquisitor Arcturos is an ancient, brilliant man who keeps his own counsel. Once a thorough and meticulous member of the Ordo Xenos, Arcturos was initially drawn to the Calixis Sector during his lifelong study of the Eldar and their influence in the Segmentum Obscurus. For decades, Arcturos tracked down any trace of this enigmatic alien culture, ranging all the way out to the Gothic Sector and back. He uncovered tantalizing hints and rumours, but rarely anything solid.

However, his first true breakthrough occurred after a battle with an unidentified xeno vessel in the Hazeroth Abyss. Arcturos' ship was crippled, helpless before the enemy craft's weapons. In the nick of time, an Eldar cruiser intervened, rescuing Arcturos and driving off the other ship with a barrage of pulsar lances. This ship belonged to Ulthyr Ellarion, an infamous Eldar corsair who prowls the space lanes of the Calixis Sector. Ellarion is rumoured to host one of the rare Eldar Seers aboard his vessel, and it is said that this Seer imparted great knowledge to Arcturos during his stay aboard Ellarion's ship, *Twilight's Edge*.

What happened later is shrouded in mystery. Some claim that Arcturos became a guest of an Eldar Craftworld, whilst others say he roamed distant stars, transported by alien witchery. Whatever the truth, upon Arcturos' return he was a deeply changed man. Arcturos swiftly became one of the Xeno Hybris' faction's most fervent members, and he is reputed to have a number of aliens amongst his retinue. Those who have spoken to Arcturos report that he is now obsessed with the Eldar's means of viewing the future through a series of psycically-active runestones, and that he constantly practices this vile form of divination, basing every act on what he sees in the patterns of the stones.

Arcturos has recently turned his attention to the Rogue Traders who are beginning to explore the Koronus Expanse. His studies have hinted that some terrible threat to the sector may begin within this uncharted region in the Halo Stars.





Hettesh Kane

Name: Hettesh Kane
Known Aliases: Professor Dolorosa, Witch-Wielder, Keeper of the Inner Fire
Known Associates or Organisations: The Burning Princess, Montesque (deceased), Jenni Rational
Preferred Methods of Operation: Kane tends to operate behind the scenes, using his psychic powers to spy upon his objective and learn all he can about it before making his move. Kane has several mind-wiped agents serving him (simply because serving him is all they know), and his mastery of various psychic gifts allows him to escape nearly any trap if things go wrong.

The sanctioned psyker Hettesh Kane was once a renowned teacher in the Scholastica Psykana. He became a dedicated member of the Ordo Hereticus to hunt down and eliminate rogue psykers throughout the Imperium. However, Kane's experiences and personal beliefs led him to become convinced that psykers could achieve nearly anything, if properly trained and possessing deep moral conviction. Over time, Kane began to train and teach those he captured rather than destroying them outright. Although he was not always successful, Kane sought to turn those who were once enemies into agents of the Golden Throne.

One of his most notable failures was a proud young student named Montesque, a native of Kulth. Montesque displayed frightening potential and surpassed his mentor in nearly every way after only a few short years of training. Kane quickly realized that his pupil was an alpha-grade psyker, and that Montesque's powers were rapidly growing more and more difficult to control. Kane slew the younger psyker and experimented with Montesque's unique brain, eventually constructing an unusual psy-focus out of his former student's skull to amplify and push the limits of his own considerable powers.

Hettesh Kane's psychic abilities are in the upper delta-band, but what is far more dangerous than his raw power is the level of mastery he displays. Finesse and skill are Kane's hallmarks, and although he does not despise non-psykers, he does pity them. His focus is firmly fixed upon a time when all mankind will be able to shape the warp to their will, and Kane is determined to do nearly anything to ensure that future comes to pass. He strongly identifies with the Polypsykana faction, although he has not yet fully committed his allegiance.





Seraph

Name: Seraph (granted alias)
Known Aliases: None
Known Associates or Organisations: Moritat Death-cult, Oblationist faction
Preferred Methods of Operation: Seraph prefers a direct confrontation with her targets, often attacking from ambush when her prey feels most secure. Seraph is the trusted right hand of her mistress, and is often given specialist favours and equipment if required to accomplish her task.

The assassin known only as "Seraph" is a mind-wiped former Acolyte of Radical Inquisitor Antonia Mesmeron. Seraph knows very little about herself; only a few hints of her past remain before her service to the Inquisitor. What is clear is that Seraph was once a member of the Moritat cult before she was possessed by a sinister daemon (Tricorn Reference: X–17-Omega, designate "Spayr") during the Inquisitor's involvement in the Foulmind conspiracy on Protasia.

The skills she learned as both an Acolyte and a death-cultist have made Seraph doubly-feared, and at Inquisitor Mesmeron's side she claimed many lives with her specially-made lathe blades. After her possession, Seraph tore through the depths of Sender Hive on Laskin, weaving a bloody rampage that left no level of Imperial society unstained. Seraph's trail of destruction was halted only by the sacrifice of a squad of stormtroopers and the personal intervention of Inquisitor Mesmeron, who arranged for a full exorcism of her valued Acolyte. This action was not taken lightly, for Mesmeron intended to use this exorcism to validate her own Oblationist views, and in this, she succeeded.

After the exorcism, Seraph became stronger, colder, little more than a tool for her mistress' commands. Those who glimpse the chaos-brand upon the woman's face find it is usually the last thing they ever see. Recently, Seraph has become more and more battle-hungry, seeking out ever more dangerous foes to fight in her mistress' service. Whether this activity is sanctioned by Inquisitor Mesmeron or a sign of something darker is yet become clear.





Inquisitor Natius Osrinn

Name: Natius Osrinn
Known Aliases: Old Man Chafe, Thunder-Wolf
Known Associates or Organisations: The Serrated Query, the Hazeroth Bloodsharks pirate band
Preferred Methods of Operation: Osrinn is a devious man, but also a man of action. He despises the waiting game, preferring to move as soon as he judges the moment precipitous. Osrinn depends heavily on his retinue of trusted Acolytes and rarely takes the field alone, though he often teleports directly into the heart of the action.

A former student of Inquisitor Van Nuygens, the man now known as Natius Osrinn began as a trusted and diligent Acolyte. Osrinn was chosen for his quick wits and agressive nature from among the lower-hive scum of Solomon, and over time proved his worth to Inquisitor Van Nuygens many times during a career that spanned five decades of service. Eventually, Osrinn was promoted to the rank of Interrogator and thence to a full Inquisitor of the Ordo Xenos. However, not long after his ascension, Osrinn's interests shifted, focusing more and more upon sorcery and the arcane. In time, his allegiance shifted away from his mentor and his Ordo, and eventually, he disappeared, claiming "special circumstances."

The Tricorn Palace received several reports indicating glimpses of the enigmatic Inquisitor Osrinn, including several that claimed he had been seen assisting Space Marines of the Relictors Chapter. Other reports indicate that Osrinn wandered far into the reaches of the Segmentum Obscurus, all the way out to Belial IV and back before he re-appeared in the Calixis Sector in 803.M41.

Osrinn's return caused a stir in the Tricorn, for he bore with him ancient Terminator armour of unknown origin and a sword that was unmistakably a daemon weapon. Refusing to account for his actions, Osrinn avoided a summons from the Tricorn and struck out alone into the Halo Stars. Some say he has gathered around him a group of unusual Acolytes: mutants, aliens, rogue psyker-witches, and even a daemonhost of incredible power. What he intends to do with such an assorted retinue is still a matter for conjecture.



Cyrrik Scayl

Name: Cyrrik Scayl
Known Aliases: Master Sevensins
Known Associates or Organisations: The Logicians, the Children of Nomen Ryne
Preferred Methods of Operation: Scayl runs his operations from afar, trusting his instructions to special bionically-enhanced couriers or specialized cogitators locked with a gene-coded seal. Few have seen Scayl in person since his withdrawal from the Ordo Hereticus, but his agents can be found on many a hive world throughout the sector. There are other Tech-Priests of the Lathes who claim that Scayl is merely misguided and should be returned to the blessings of the Omnissiah rather than struck down.

A Tech-Priest Magos of the Lathe Worlds, Cyrrik Scayl left behind his homeworld of Hadd to serve in the Ordo Hereticus more than two centuries ago. During his time with the Ordo, Scayl became obsessed with tech-heresy, deeming it endemic to the Calixis Sector. He became famous for his long-winded rants that the Inquisition should take a deeper notice of blasphemies against the Omnissiah occurring under its purview. When his clumsy attempts at oratory failed, Scayl withdrew from the Ordo to pursue tech-heretics personally.



However, once in the field, Scayl found his perspective changing. An encounter with the arch-heretek Nomen Ryne led to an epiphany for Scayl, and rather than hunting tech-heretics, he joined their number as an ardent convert. Scayl pursued scraps of information about such tech-heretics as Ammicus Tole, Grizvaldi, and Nomen Ryne himself for years before beginning to formulate his own theories and research. Scayl vowed to surpass those he once mocked and derided, and he dedicated himself to the search for a means by which to replicate a human consciousness into the form of a self-aware machine–spirit: the dreaded tech-heresy of the Silica Animus. So far, Scayl's research indicates that only the mind of a psyker possesses the strength of will required to endure the process, but he hopes to refine his theories after experimentation so that any mind can thus be transformed.

Several worlds on the frontier of the Calixis Sector are home to secret laboratories and dissection chambers where agents of Cyrrik Scayl labour under his remote direction. Recently, Scayl has made contact with the Logician cult, and his former colleagues in the Ordo Hereticus fear that an alliance between these two heretical powers may prove disastrous. To date, however, all agents sent to discover the whereabouts of the renegade Magos have failed to return.



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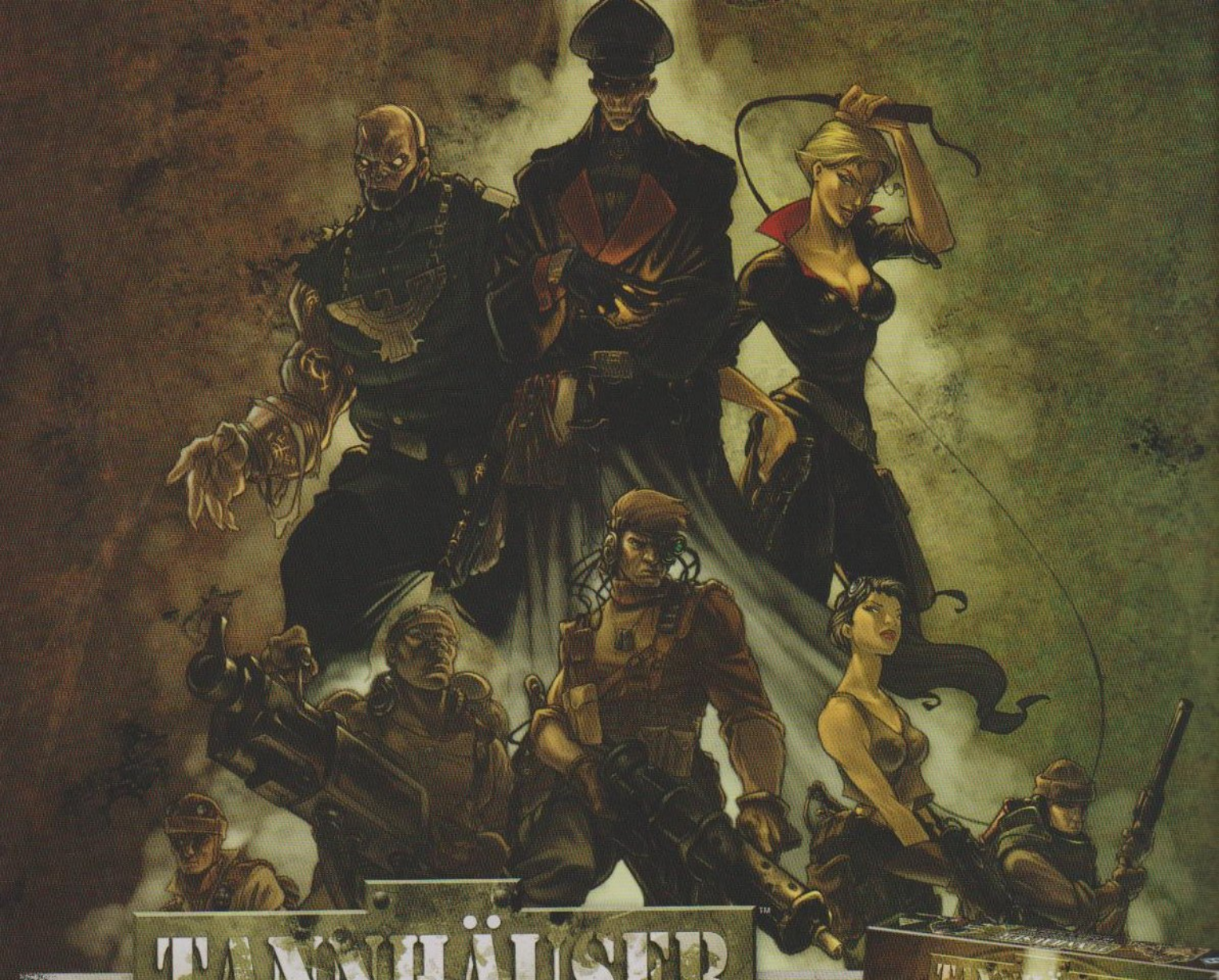
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Beatus est mens ut est quoque begrambis bubio
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Astronimicon vadum rector nos per [illegible] Deus-Imperator misericordia
Fides non Alienus, Haereticum, Venefícus
Coreward
Morior in Suus numeris est scio eternus vita
Totus laus immortalis Imperator super suus rutilus per ~ Rex pro ethnico
IXANIAD SECTOR
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Ocean - Dead World
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Agri-World
BARASPINE
Hive World
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