

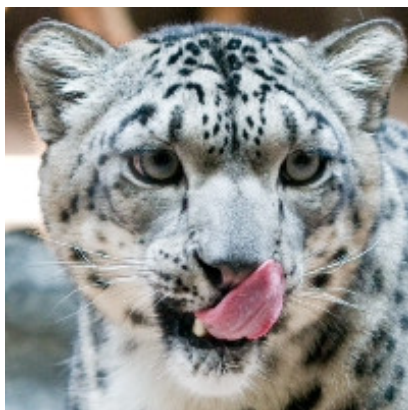
**Kill Shot - An Assasinorum Audio Drama script**

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**LIST OF CHARACTERS:**

- \* Deliva – Vindicare Assassin:
- \* Seleuca Markovan – noblewoman;
- \* Tierkus – Logister.

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(assassin breathing hard while treading among the blowing winds)

Deliva (over vox): “In position. Logister Tierkus, do you read me?”

Tierkus (over vox): “Agent Deliva, do you have the target in sight?”

Deliva (over vox): “Not yet. I have worked my way into a position overlooking the Markovan mansion. No sign of Seleuca Markovan yet”.

Tierkus (over vox): “Have you been spotted?”

Deliva (over vox): “No, I was silent and invisible. I am the shadow as the Vindicare temple teaches”.

Tierkus (over vox): “And you’ve learned well, agent. Is the mansion defended?”

Deliva (over vox): “I can see soldiers standing guard: three on the roof, two at the ground level entrance, another on the third floor balcony. They wear Markovan family livery<sup>1</sup>, armed with autoguns and sidearms. They will be competent, but untested. Their body armor is for show, (sarcastically) typical aristocratic household troops”.

Tierkus (over vox): “Do not underestimate them, agent”.

Deliva (over vox): “Far from it. Every pair of eyes can serve the enemy. Every trick of finger can end us. They will be eliminated if necessary. I am holding fire for now. There is no need to give away my position”.

Tierkus (over vox): "Remember, the seventh rule of the Vindicare temple. Every bullet must be accounted for".

Deliva (over vox): "And every shot must have its purpose".

Tierkus (over vox): "Describe your target".

Deliva (over vox): "Seleuca Markovan. Age: uncertain, but juvenate treatments make her appear young. Red hair, slender build, two mind impulse ports on the back of the cranium<sup>2</sup>. Identification Alecto on the sole<sup>3</sup> of the right foot. Harmless in appearance, but inveterate<sup>4</sup> and dedicated heretic with access to blasphemous relics and archeotech. Her veneer<sup>5</sup> of culture and wealth masks a corrupted soul".

Tierkus (over vox): "Your mission parameters?"

Deliva (over vox): "Execute the target. No other outcome is acceptable".

Tierkus (over vox): "Go for the kill shot, agent Deliva. Do not trust anything less. Remember Cardinal Apothis. You risked your life confirming the kill up close, because the brainstem<sup>6</sup> was not obliterated with your first shot".

Deliva (over vox): "I need no reminding. I spent twelve solar cycles penance<sup>7</sup> for my laxity<sup>8</sup>. Wait, I see her! On the third floor balcony by the trooper. She is wearing an emerald gown<sup>9</sup> with diamonds".

Tierkus (over vox): "Take the shot, agent Deliva. Thus the Emperor wills it".

Deliva (racking her gun and trying to take aim) (over vox): "I cannot. The head is obscured. It would not be a certain kill. She has sent the soldier inside".

Tierkus (over vox): "Slow your heart, slow your breathing. Be still".

Deliva: "My Emperor, your finger is on the trigger".

(Deliva breathing deep and slow)

Deliva (over vox): "The target has gone back inside. I had no shot".

Tierkus (over vox): "Can you remain concealed<sup>10</sup>?"

Deliva (over vox): "Indefinitely".

Tierkus (over vox): "Then wait for her to emerge again. Stay hidden for as long as it takes".

Deliva (over vox): "I have done this before, Tierkus. For seven nights I lay in wait for General Grast on the plains of Gathallamore. On the seventh he opened the hatch of his Baneblade tank and I put a round through his throat where his armor had its only weak point. I lost 40% of my skin to rot leeches<sup>11</sup> at the swamp outside Cestas Prime waiting for the anti-prophet Caranat to march out of the city gates. I punctured both his skulls with one shot.

(distant chatting voices)

Deliva (over vox): "Logister Tierkus, I can wait".

(flyer igniting one's engines)

Tierkus (over vox): "What is that sound?"

Deliva (over vox): "Engines, standby. I see an armored gun cutter being brought onto the landing pad in the mansion grounds. It is being fueled for takeoff".

Tierkus (over vox): "Is it ready to leave?"

Deliva (over vox): "Almost, household staff running through the pre-flight rituals of preparedness".

Tierkus (over vox): "Seleuca Markovan could be preparing to leave. Your Exitus rifle cannot be a guarantee to bring down a craft like that".

Deliva (over vox): "Agreed. I do not have the option of waiting after all. I am going to have to close the distance to the target".

Tierkus (over vox): "Can you do so unseen?"

Deliva (over vox): "The two soldiers are still by the entrance. I have clear shots".

(Deliva taking a deep breath and making two clear kill shots)

(dead guardsmen collapsing to the ground with moans)

Deliva (over vox): "Both down".

Tierkus (over vox): "Every bullet must be accounted for".

Deliva (over vox): "I shall do my penance to my Emperor for the two additional shots after Seleuca Markovan is dead".

(Deliva standing up, taking her gun and leaving the current position)

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(Deliva slowly walking along the mansion)

Deliva (over vox): "I am inside, no contacts. The place seems empty. I hear no movement nearby".

Tierkus (over vox): "Strange, be on your guard".

Deliva (over vox): "My temple demands I never be anything else".

Tierkus (over vox): "It also teaches that it is when we are at our most confident in our abilities that we fail".

Deliva (over vox): "Wait! I see someone".

Tierkus (over vox): "Have you been compromised, agent Deliva?"

Deliva (breathing hard, over vox): "No, it's a corpse. Elderly, male, Markovan family livery... He is unarmed... He was a house retainer<sup>12</sup>. Minor cranial augmentations... A scribe, perhaps. If he were alive, I could hear the blood in his veins. No visible wounds though".

Tierkus (over vox): "Seleuca is liquidating her staff".

Deliva (over vox): "Eliminating witnesses, so there's no one who knows where she has fled to. I have to get to her before she escapes. I am moving through the portrait gallery into the house interior".

Tierkus (over vox): "Where are you headed?"

Deliva (over vox): “To the main atrium<sup>13</sup>. I have the floor plan memorized. I will have a clear shot down through to the landing pad approach”.

Tierkus (over vox): “Good. You may have to eliminate more staff to conceal your movements”.

Deliva (over vox): “The walls here are lined with portraits, generations of the Markovan family”.

Tierkus (over vox): “They are corrupted down to their very bloodline. That place is steeped<sup>14</sup> in their heresy. Still your soul, Deliva. There are threats within these walls even the Scholastica Mortis has never recorded”.

Deliva (trembling): “Oh, Imperator, salva nos from the kraken, from the witch, from the demon! From enemies without, within and beyond! Mine is the glory of the destruction of your enemies. Mine is the burden of those that yet live. Let my every kill be a prayer in your name. Oh, Imperator, salva nos!”

(Deliva breathing hard and resuming her tread)

Deliva (over vox): “The spy mask shows no recent heat traces, but she came through here”.

Tierkus (over vox): “She could be thermally shielded”.

Deliva (over vox): “Then either she is exceptionally paranoid or she knew we were coming”.

Tierkus (over vox): “Both are possible”.

Deliva (treading forwards, over vox): “I am advancing... through the atrium. Still no sign of her. Another body on the ground, a household trooper. Dead, again with no exterior wounds. The soldier from the balcony. I can feel her, Tierkus. She is still here. She is close”.

Tierkus (over vox): “Focus, agent Deliva. Remember the tenets<sup>15</sup> of your temple. Control your breath and your pulse. The Vindicare is an instrument of the Emperor’s will. She is detached<sup>16</sup>. She is

without passion. Her only emotion is the desire to make the kill shot count. Calm your mind, observe your surroundings”.

Deliva (taking a deep breath) (over vox): “The Markovan mansion, twelve hundred years old, built according to Neothorian architecture. Twenty three armed personnel, eighty scribes and household staff. Ninety-one rooms. Private medicae and juvenate suite, arboretum<sup>17</sup>, solarium, wine cellar. It is protected by a passive thermal scanning auspex array but it cannot see me. The sidelines are long in the main building, but too cramped<sup>18</sup> in the east wing and basements for arrival”.

Tierkus (over vox): “We are closer to our target, agent, but that also means our target is closer to us and the threats they bring with them are not limited to physical danger alone”.

Deliva: “Emperor, give me your sight! Emperor, guide my hand!”

Seleuca Markovan (over loud speakers): “There is no one here to guide you, agent”.

Deliva (over vox): “It’s her!” It matches her voiceprint<sup>19</sup>... Seleuca Markovan...”

Tierkus (over vox): “Where is she?”

Deliva (over vox): “She is using the house’s vox net. I can’t pinpoint<sup>20</sup> her. She is observing me from somewhere”.

Seleuca Markovan (over loud speakers): “You have trespassed in my home, agent. You have violated the sovereignty of house Markovan. We are bound to the Imperium by the treaty signed in the Great Crusade. You insult not just this family, but the Imperium you claim to serve. I am not so foolish as to think that I can outrun a Vidicare’s bullet. But if you want to add my kill to your tally<sup>21</sup>, I will make you work for it”.

Deliva (crying): “For your crimes, Seleuca Markovan, this death is a mercy”.

Tierkus (over vox): “Remain calm, agent”.

Seleuca Markovan (over loud speakers): “My only crime is brilliance<sup>22</sup>. It is in ignorance that you punish me”.

Deliva (over vox): “There is a security shrine on the ground floor. She could access the vox net from there. It’s the only place she could hear me from here. She is underneath me”.

(Deliva galloping into a run, ducking to the ground)

(Seleuca Markovan unleashing three shots)

Tierkus (over vox): “Was that gun fire? Are you hit?”

Deliva (on the run) (over vox): “Of course, I am not hit. She is headed for the arboretum. I am pursuing”.

(Seleuca Markovan unleashing two shots)

Deliva (on the run, over vox): “I know this house better than you do, Seleuca Markovan. There is no way out of the arboretum save the wine cellar. You are trapped. Every bullet you send my way I will see coming. This is over”.

Tierkus (over vox): “Do you see her?”

Deliva (over vox): “She’s gone into the cellar. There are no ways out”.

Tierkus (over vox): “Then complete your mission”.

Deliva (over vox): “The confines will be close. I will have to switch to my Exitus pistol”.

Tierkus (over vox): “Remember, three shots minimum to the torso”.

Deliva (over vox): “If the circumstances permit it, an operative of the Officio Assassinorum is admonished<sup>23</sup> to pronounce the crimes of the condemned before performing the execution”.

(Deliva halting and trying to regain her breath)

Deliva: “Seleuca Markovan, your crimes against the Emperor are many and comprehensively proven. Heresy, 17 counts, related to the worship of the one known as the Changer of the Ways. Theft of

the Emperor's wealth and persons into the thrall<sup>24</sup> of your cult. Possession of proscribed<sup>25</sup> texts and artifacts. In all things your life has been a wanton<sup>26</sup> and deliberate act of blasphemy. For these crimes and all others not known to the Emperor's sight you have been condemned to death".

(Deliva racking her pistol)

Deliva: "There you are. I told you there was nowhere to hide".

Seleuca Markovan: "At least I die as I lived, surrounded by the very finest vintages<sup>27</sup>. So, this is who they sent after me. An Imperial assassin, no less. I knew I was something of an august<sup>28</sup> personage<sup>29</sup>, but I never thought I'd warrant quite such an exalted<sup>30</sup> executioner".

Deliva: "Relinquish<sup>31</sup> your weapon".

Seleuca Markovan: "Take it".

(Deliva taking a shot)

(Seleuca Markovan moaning)

Seleuca Markovan: "Your aim is as good as expected. Then I am unarmed. I have no recourse<sup>32</sup> but to throw myself upon your untender mercies, assassin".

Deliva: "You do not deny the crimes by which you are condemned?"

Seleuca Markovan: "Of course not, why bother? Nothing I say would stay your hand. But, agent, do you ever imagine what kind of life you might have had if they had not taken you and turned you into... this? A normal life, the kind of existence you have only ever seen through your gunsights".

Tierkus (over vox): "Do not let her speak. Fulfill your mission".

(Deliva taking three shots)

(Seleuca Markovan's body collapsing to the ground)

Deliva (over vox): "Target down".

Tierkus (over vox): "Confirm the kill".

Deliva (over vox): "Standby".

(Deliva suddenly starting to choke and falling to the ground)

Seleuca Markovan: "I... have... often... wondered what I might have been if they had never taken me... Ah, I doubt you in the Vindicare temple have ever been given the liberty to entertain. Oh, such dangerous thoughts, but in the Venenum temple they must grant us such liberty".

Deliva (moaning): "Venenum?"

Seleuca Markovan: "Yes, we must be able to think for ourselves. When one's weapon is something as subtle<sup>33</sup> as poison, one must think outside the dictates of the temple like yours. A gun is a more straight-forward weapon, but it has its limitations. I doubt you could have taken me down if our situations were reversed".

Deliva (moaning): "You... are... dead..."

Seleuca Markovan: "Some of me, one of my hearts, both my original lungs, I think. But I have as many redundant<sup>34</sup> organs as you do. The grandmasters of the Venenum temple will have to work hard to get me back to active duty. Oh, it was worth it though".

(Deliva trying to stand up)

Seleuca Markovan: "No, Deliva! You won't be able to pick your gun up again. The poison I used is paralytic. It was on everything throughout the mansion. The door handle you touched, the bannister<sup>35</sup> you vaulted<sup>36</sup>, the floor you walked on. It just took a few minutes to leech through your synskin".

Deliva (moaning): "I...."

Seleuca Markovan: "For your crimes, agent Deliva of the Vindicare temple, for the weakmindedness<sup>37</sup> and permitting yourself to be possessed by a demonic force, the being known as Tierkus, which you drove from its former host Cardinal Apothis. It jumped into

your mind and you let the fortitude<sup>38</sup> to expel it. It thinks it is invisible inside your head, but the Officio Assassinorum is more cunning than it realizes. It masquerades as your mission handler to gain your trust and to access all the secrets of the Imperium's assassins. But it has nowhere to go now. Our psykers have made sure there is no way into my mind once you are dead. Of course your constitution is too strong for my contact poison to kill you outright. The fatal dose will have to be administered... by hand".

Deliva (weeping): "Tierkus... What... What is she saying? Is it true?"

Tierkus (in demonic voice): "How decision taken..."

Seleuca Markovan (injecting lethal poison dose): "Yes".

(Deliva collapsing to the floor)

Seleuca Markovan: "Good night, agent Deliva!"

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(somewhere in the warp)

(weird drone noises, distant thunder and laughter)

Demon Prince: "Approach me".

Tierkus (approaching): "My lord".

Demon Prince: "Prostrate<sup>39</sup> yourself, Tierkus, brother".

Tierkus: "I did your bidding, my lord".

Demon Prince: "You... did... nothing. No, you did worse than nothing, you foul and senseless wretch. You rancid<sup>40</sup> mote<sup>41</sup> of ordure<sup>42</sup>! You less than vermin. Had you done nothing, Tierkus, you would disappear from my sight. I would think not on you at all. But you have committed the only sin that exists in the eyes of the gods of the warp. You have failed".

Tierkus: "We were betrayed. I seized the assassin's mind as you commanded. She did not know. I had her completely within my confidence. But I was sent on a mission where our target was in

truth her executioner. Someone within the Officio Assassinorum detected me. Some psyker in their ranks, we do not know about”.

Demon Prince: “We? Who is this ‘we’? Do you lay at the foot of my throne the responsibility for your miserable dereliction<sup>43</sup>?”

Demonic Tierkus: “No, my lord. I... ”

Demon Prince (hitting Tierkus): “I seek dominion over the Officio Assassinorum, the Imperium’s instrument of vengeance, the subtle blade of Terra. No enemy or goal is beyond my reach with such a weapon at my disposal. But what I desire, I do not have. You, my servant, have failed at the task for which I elevated you from the masses of demon kind and still before the prince of the warp you grizzle<sup>44</sup> and squirm<sup>45</sup> and deny your own fault. What need do I have for one such as you?”

Demonic Tierkus: “I shall double my efforts, my lord, and my devotion. I shall never again return to you with my task undone”.

Demon Prince: “No, Tierkus, you will not”.

(Demon Prince ripping Tierkus apart)

Demon Prince: “Even in the realm of the gods I am surrounded by fools. I can trust no one to corrupt the temples of the assassins for me. I shall have to see to it personally”.

(distant moaning voices)