



## The Eye of Night

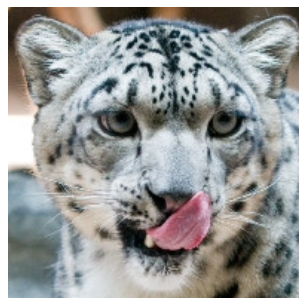
A Kataryna Greyfax Inquisitor Audio Drama (2017)

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The Primarch sat alone surrounded by tables laden with books, scrolls and data crystals.

(Inquisitor approaching the Primarch in slow swift footsteps)

He looked up as she entered, expression grim.

Roboute Guilliman: "Katarinya... Gratitude for your swift response".

He indicated for her to approach with a sweep of his huge hand.

Roboute Guilliman: "I have been studying records released to me by the Inquisition. There is much we do not understand about the Great Rift and what has occurred. But ignorance is not a new experience for me".

Inquisitor Greyfax: "I cannot think of you as ignorant, Lord Commander".

Roboute Guilliman: "If we consider ourselves wise, we are already fools, Katarinya. As such we found ourselves ten thousand years ago when the machinations of my brother Lorgar beset the Imperium with the Ruinstorm".

Inquisitor Greyfax: "The similarities have not been lost on the Inquisition, Lord Commander, I assure you. The Great Rift eclipses that divide by several magnitudes".

Roboute Guilliman: "It does, yet it has a similar source. The Warp. Conjured by ritual and magic, sacrifice and demonology".

Greyfax suppressed an outburst that such matters should not be spoken of so candidly even here in the heart of the Imperial Palace.

Roboute Guilliman: "The Ruinstorm was created by design of our foes and so too the Great Rift. I see a pattern and I believe I know the source".

Inquisitor Greyfax: "A pattern, Lord Commander? Our best logicae and historiographicae have not seen as such"

Roboute Guilliman: "They never set foot on worlds such as Davin, Katarinya. I know this spoor and I have followed it back through these records. I do not have a solution, but I think I know where we can begin looking. The Gothic war".

Inquisitor Greyfax: "That was centuries ago".

Roboute Guilliman: "Merely a blink of the Eye of Terror. One of your predecessors, Inquisitor Horst, believed that two artifacts were taken to aid Ezekyle Abaddon in his crusade against the Gothic sector".

Inquisitor Greyfax: "The Hand of Darkness and the Eye of Night. I have read the reports. Horst is considered... hm... a maverick. His speculation undocumented".

Roboute Guilliman: "Yet something allowed Abaddon to take over the Blackstone Fortresses and turn them against the Imperium. And Horst's speculation remains the only theory as to how".

Standing Guilliman was even more overwhelming even beneath the vast dome of the Hall of Glories.

Roboute Guilliman (looking through a book): "Not all of Horst's reports were received on Terra. His findings are incomplete. We need to know what else he discovered".

Inquisitor Greyfax: "I am too be an archivist?"

Roboute Guilliman (closing a book): "I need you to travel to Savaven to find the original texts".

Inquisitor Greyfax: "Our hidden enclave on the Cardinal world is no more. Savaven was destroyed by Abaddon's Planet Killer, Lord Commander. It is nothing but rocks and dust".

Roboute Guilliman: "A coincidence that it was targeted by such a deadly weapon? A world dedicated to the Ecclesiarchy when more militarily important targets were not touched".

Inquisitor Greyfax: "You think Abaddon knew of the Inquisition fortress beneath the cathedrals?"

Roboute Guilliman: "Possibly, and maybe knew even of Horst's investigations and wished to hide something he uncovered. Which is why I expect you to be diligent in your search".

Inquisitor Greyfax: "The Gothic sector has almost been enveloped by the expansion of the Eye of Terror. I will need a fleet and an army".

Roboute Guilliman: "I have spoken to Grandmaster Voldus. You may have a single ship and a squad of Grey Knights. I do not want the records, Katarinya. I want you to bring me the Eye of Night".

Inquisitor Greyfax: "And the Hand of Darkness?"

Roboute Guilliman: "I have other plans in motion for its retrieval. Voldus's warriors await you in orbit".

It irked Greyfax to be so ordered and dismissed, but she could not stop herself bowing and acceding to the Primarch's intent. Even before she

understood fully what he had said, she was already heading for the door. Another piece set in motion in the game being played out for the future of the Imperium and mankind.

(doors closing behind the Inquisitor)

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Grey Knight (over vox): “Brother Justicar Genhain, we have established position over the proximal point of Savaven”.

(doors opening behind brother Justicar)

Genhain: “Inform Inquisitor Grey...”

Inquisitor Greyfax (interrupting): “No need, Justicar. I am aware of our arrival”.

The throbbing in Greyfax’s thoughts that had begun when they translated into the system, had increased to such an intensity it was like the beating of a second heart in her head.

Inquisitor Greyfax: “Do you detect it awesome, Justicar? The pulse of an old beacon”.

Genhain: “I feel its presence, Inquisitor. It is not for me to judge its purpose”.

Inquisitor Greyfax: “No, it is not. You shall be my shield, while I explore this mystery. Lend your will to mine”.

She felt the first touch of the Grey Knight’s thoughts like cold steel on warm flesh, startling and acute. Greyfax fought the urge to rebuff the advance and instead opened up the barriers erected about her mind, allowing the psychic strength of the Justicar to blend with her force. Thus bolstered Greyfax finally allowed herself to accept the psychic whisper that had been intruding upon her mind, drawing it into her thoughts.

(Inquisitor moaning in concentration)

She recognized immediately the presence that had left it. Horst. Though she had never met the Inquisitor, the psychic spoor left an instant impression. Haste, desperation, fear. And that was all. No message.

Greyfax pushed Genhain out of her thoughts and slammed down her psychic walls.

Genhain: “I need no powers to discern your mood, Inquisitor. The contents were not your liking”.

(alarm going off)

Grey Knight (over vox): "Proximity alert, Justicar. Another ship".

Genhain moved to the monitors forcing Greyfax to step aside with his bulky Terminator armor. He examined the terminal for several seconds.

Genhain: "Frigate class vessel, unknown designation. Orbital position above one of the larger debris asteroids. It seems we are not alone in these ruins".

Inquisitor Greyfax: "Some other hand guides our foes to thwart us. Attack, Justicar".

Genhain: "My thoughts exactly".

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(Inquisitor breathing hard while exploring the airless ruins)

The enemy had not been expecting a foe to come upon them and had paid no mind to keeping watch. The 'Malleus Rex' fell upon their starship like a pouncing lion, raking the unshielded ship with crippling fire even as Greyfax and the Justicar's squad teleported to the surface. Here they found the broken ruins of a grand cathedral. All that remained were the stumps of pillars of a great portico and several dozens rows of pews, oddly still intact upon a piece of mosaic-covered rock half a kilometer across. The beacon sensation that had occupied Greyfax was of a greater intensity on the planet's surface. It seemed more like a laser-linked transmission to her than a general broadcast. She could feel its source a few meters beneath her feet.

(Inquisitor breathing hard)

Clad in void suits, shaped like overlapping insectoid plates beneath the luminous robes, their ship ablaze with a fire a few kilometers above them, the interlopers were oblivious to the arriving warriors as they searched among the broken remnants of cloisters. They wore vacuum masks shaped as grotesque cackling gargoyles, leering clown visages and bird faces, bringing to mind the illustrations of demons Greyfax had seen in the Liber Chaotica. Servants of the changing one.

Genhain: "Do you wish to interrogate any of them?"

Inquisitor Greyfax: "There is nothing to be learned from the ravings of a heretic. Terminate them all".

Greyfax allowed the Justicar and his Grey Knights to take the lead. This was what they had been created for. Superhuman warriors clad in reinforced plasteel, adamantium and ceramite. Nemesis-force halberds glowing against the stark blackness of the airless sky, the Grey Knights raised their vambrace storm bolters and opened fire. The flicker of bolts lit the darkness. Lasbeams sliced back as cultists scattered for cover behind statues of ancient saints and shattered choir stalls. The near vacuum blanketed everything, muffling the exchange of fire with an unreal quiet. Greyfax saw red and purple robes ripped to tatters and silvery void suits torn apart by bolt impacts. Their occupants flailing and stumbling as air exploded from the lungs and blood boiled in their veins from explosive decompression.

Genhain (crying): "Purge them! Charge them the fear of treachery".

Grey Knight: "There is none so despised as a traitor".

Greyfax sent forth her will turning it into a hammer blow with which she crushed the souls of her enemies.

Inquisitor Greyfax (chanting): "Kneel before the Emperor! Bow down before his might. Submit to the one true lord!"

(cultists screaming from pain)

As she advanced the cultists fled, her thoughts beating upon their spirits like a battering ram at the gates of a castle. Several fell to their knees, hands up to implore her to stop. Others stumbled beneath the onslaught and shouted out entreaties to their twisted deity.

Inquisitor Greyfax (chanting): "Accept your deaths! Judgment has found you! I am the edge of the blade! Nothing shall stand before me!"

The Grey Knights drove the last few cultists to the archway of the catacomb's stairwell. Brother Axaeus advanced with purpose. The gleam from the ignition flame of his incinerator caught the mosaic tiles on the floor.

Axaeus: "Thy shall be purified!"

The wash of white fire filled the archway of the chamber beyond.

(cultists screaming in pain)

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(Inquisitor breathing hard while exploring the airless ruins)

The landing ended abruptly, one set of stairs spiraling down to the right. Ahead the tattered remnants of a tapestry still adorned the wall.

Genhain (crying): “Forwards!”

Genhain ordered his men down the step. At the bottom was an ornate archway, the shimmer of an old force-field still visible between the crystal-threaded steel. Within the atmosphere of Savaven was still intact.

(Inquisitor taking off the helmet and taking a deep breath)

They came upon another doorway sealed by rune-marked bricks. The plank above the walled portal of the mausoleum was dedicated to Saint Carthage, but the continuing insistence of a psychic pulse betrayed the lie of what was beyond.

Greyfax waved the Grey Knights forward.

Inquisitor Greyfax: “Breach this wall! The secrets of Savaven are close”.

Genhain: “I think that this dead place hides more secrets that will be found in a burial chamber or a hidden archive. Can you hear the ghosts of his victims, Inquisitor?”

Greyfax was more concerned with the grating inside her thoughts caused by the psy-trail and did not reply. At a gesture from his Justicar brother Nerrick set about the bricks with his lightning-wreathed hammer. His relentless blows made short work of the myriad. Beyond was a crypt or so it seemed at first glance. Greyfax stepped carefully over the rubble, the interior of the tomb lit by the suit-lamps of her escorts. Within the crypt was a sarcophagus, unadorned save for a small symbol of the Inquisition discreetly inscribed on one end. Frowning Greyfax searched for some sign of a data coder or cogitator terminal, but the room was quite bare of records and machinery.

Inquisitor Greyfax: “It must be concealed within. Lift the lid”.

Motioning to one of his companions Genhain took hold of one end of a slab that covered the grave, his fellow Grey Knight – the other. The lifted and steered the heavy stone aside almost dropping the heavy weight in surprise as they revealed an armored suit within.

(upper stone of the sarcophagus falling)

The plate of a Grey Knight paladin lay nestled in the sarcophagus.

A burst of psychic power flooded the room dazzling Greyfax's second sight with its intensity.

(Inquisitor moaning)

Staggered she gripped the edge of the sarcophagus to steady herself. A moment later a gauntleted hand fell upon hers as the suit within sat up.

Mysterious Grey Knight: "Praise the Emperor! I thought nobody would find me".

Greyfax tore her hand away and raised her weapon unwavering toward the apparition's 50 head.

Horst: "I am Inquisitor Horst and I am not entirely sure that would do you any good if I was not. There is no physical shell within this armor to destroy".

Greyfax could not believe what she heard. She reached out on instinct and grasped the mask of the Space Marine helmet. She tore it away. The Inquisitor took a step back. Within the armored plates her eyes met the empty stare of a fleshless skull, a dull flicker of light within them.

Inquisitor Greyfax: "This is not possible. Centuries have passed since Horst was lost".

The jaw moved as it spoke, but no actual sound issued forth.

Horst: "Centuries? I thought perhaps decades. This is worse than I imagined. We have to stop Abaddon".

Genhain: "Your warning comes far too late, Inquisitor. The Despoiler's plans have come to fruition".

Horst: "Holy Terra has fallen?"

Inquisitor Greyfax: "Not yet, but the Imperium is beset in a way not seen for ten thousand years. Abaddon's Black Crusade and the xenos besiege us. The galaxy is riven<sup>51</sup> by storms and the rule of the Emperor is divided".

The armored suit climbed out of its tomb and looked around. It reached out a hand, retrieved the face plate from Greyfax and fitted it back to the open helm hiding the skull. Despite her doubts Greyfax knew from the psychic contact that this was against all reason and expectation Inquisitor Theodos Falconet Horst. At least what remained of him.

Grey Knight: "I recognize the armor of paladin Bellakus. How did you come by it, Inquisitor?"

Horst: "We have more pressing matters to attend, I am sure".

Inquisitor Greyfax: "Indeed. We seek the Eye of Night. Do you know of its location?"

Horst: "Not as such but I can lead you to one that can. Moriana the crone<sup>52</sup> who sees all from her lair in the Eye of Terror. She it was that guided Abaddon to the Eye of Night and it is from her we will learn of its current location. What forces have you at your disposal?"

Genhain: "Those you see here. Nothing more".

Inquisitor Greyfax: "We are bound to follow this cause to its end even into the Eye of Terror. Our strength shall not falter<sup>53</sup>".

## PART 2

(Inquisitors and Grey Knights walking across the swamplands, bubbling and snarling sounds surrounding them)

Inquisitor Greyfax: "It seems you were right, Horst. This forsaken swamp seems a fitting refuge for a traitorous crone".

Horst: "It has changed since I last passed by. Remember that we are now within the fringes of the Eye of Terror. Substance is mutable here. I have a dim recollection of a blizzard-swept mountainside".

Inquisitor Greyfax: "I know that there are tracts<sup>54</sup> dedicated to the investigation of the witch but I have only ever seen passing mention. What did you learn of her?"

Horst: "Little more than the speculation that existed before. Her name is anathema to any Imperial servant, but the forces of the false Warmaster and the Dark Gods are wary<sup>55</sup> of her loyalty also. She serves the powers directly, some say, harboring<sup>56</sup> no mortal ambition of her own".

Inquisitor Greyfax: "It is rumored that she was once of the Ordo Malleus".

Horst: "No, Moriana is older even than the Ordos if the first testimonies are to be believed. Her name drawn in the ashes of the Horus heresy, writ in the blood and entrails of Imperial servants".

Genhain (crying): "Mind the waters! We are not alone".

Horst: “No mortal guardians patrol the path to Moriana’s lair. Bar the gates of your mind even as you defend your body”.

(croaking ravens flying away from the branches around)

The creatures that burst from the rippling mire were of no mortal origin, such was obvious immediately. Standing taller even than the Grey Knights Moriana’s demonic guardians seemed to be made of skeletal stone, clad in tendrils of water plants and slick with wet moss. Swamp water streamed from their straightening bodies running over black bones to fall into the mire. Their eyes were pits of dark green glowing and flickering as though lit by an unearthly flame. Mouths of rocky splinters parted revealing flint fangs and lashing crystal tongues. In phalangeal digits the swamps fiends held contorting flails, each tipped with three reed-like cables threaded through clusters of chattering bird skulls.

(demons snapping their claws like whips)

Their other hands formed snapping claws serrated with razor sharpness.

Surrounded Greyfax and her companions opened fire immediately. The fog of the marshes swirled through with a flicker of sanctified bolt rounds and the searing flash of Nemesis-force weapons.

Inquisitor Greyfax (crying): “Throne of Terra! Smite them!”

Raising up their inhuman war cries the demons closed all about the interlopers into their realm. Bathed in the sacred flames of Axaeus’s incinerator the swamp fiends recoiled, followed by a volley of blessed storm bolter fire that tore chunks from their conjured forms and sent them reeling and spasming back into the waters. Licks of white fire continued to ripple across the pyrethium slicked over the marsh setting light to beds of fingerlike rushes and upthrusts of finger-bone stems.

(silence coming to the marshes as soon as the demons retreat or die)

Grey Knight: “Are they gone?”

Genhain: “We are in the realm between realms. Nothing here is mortal but that which we bring with us. Look at your thoughts, not your eyes, brother!”

Greyfax knew of what the Justicar spoke. The demonic energy of the guardians had dissipated, but it was not yet banished. The entire miserable world was nothing more than a mirage, created out of the

whims and dreams of Moriana. Even as she scoured their surroundings telepathically she sensed the eddies and vortexes of power gathering again. More demons, the same or new ones it mattered not, were reforming.

Horst: "Not much farther to go".

Horst lifted a gauntleted hand and pointed ahead. Through the mists and gloom something like a large stalagmite rose from the swamp, its flanks jutting the spines. Tatters of gossamer-like webbing trailed from some of the spines, others were adorned with decaying heads and hands or held the moldering remains of banners dating back to the Legions. Greyfax recognized symbols and pictographs of the Sons of Horus, the World Eaters, Death Guard and others.

Horst: "Tribute from traitor warbands seeking the guidance of the hag".

Genhain: "Advance, we shall guard the rear".

Inquisitor Greyfax: "Armor your thoughts, Horst. There is no end to the evil sorcery of this place".

The two Inquisitors strode ahead to swiftly cover the remaining ground. They reached firmer footing around the base of the hag's of old. Closeness revealed it as an immense hillock made of branches and bones bound with frame rope and glistening sinew, daubed with offal and mud. Green fire like that which had lit the demons' eyes burned within a gash-like opening a few meters above the waters of the swamp.

Greyfax took the lead, her sanctified bolter ready, the gleam of her power sword lighting the fog around them. Under foot the ground gave slightly like walking across flesh. Her focus was set upon the opening ahead. Her thoughts sensed nothing within, not the remotest flicker of energy apart from the demon stuff that surrounded them. She ducked into the abode of a hag. Inside she found a cave lit with jade firelight. A figure in ragged green robes sat near the flames with a short blade in one hand, a scrimshaw bone in the other. Greyfax focused on the ornament in Moriana's hand, a wand made of two entwined slender figures with mouths open in terror, almond-shaped eyes and pointed ears marking them out as facsimiles of the alien Eldar.

Moriana (giggling): "You have found Moriana the crone. Your weapons are not needed here. Moriana will tell you whatever you wish to know".

Inquisitor Greyfax (after a brief pause): “Your doom has found you, traitor. This will be your last day. Know that your end will be excruciating and that you will deliver up all that we desire before your demise”.

Moriana: “That is partly true, slave of the false Emperor. Moriana has already promised that Moriana will reveal that which you seek (giggling). You have come for the Eye of Night? Moriana does not have it, but Moriana can tell you where it will be found”.

Inquisitor Greyfax: “Why would you willingly help us?”

Moriana: “Because it serves Moriana to do so. Mutual benefit”.

Horst entered, his armor brushing clods of dried mud and bones from the frame of the door as he squeezed his bulk into the grotto.

Moriana: “Ooo, what manner of thing have you brought here? Moriana did not think that the Emperor’s lackeys stooped to necromancy”.

Greyfax ignored the insult and pointed the tip of her blade towards the throat of a hag.

Inquisitor Greyfax: “Speak freely and your end will be swift and without terror”.

The crone’s smile crept slowly across her withered lips as she regarded Greyfax from beneath the hooded lids of her eyes. Moriana laid the scrimshaw in her lap and knotted her fingers together.

Moriana: “You cannot kill Moriana. What you desire is inside Moriana’s head and nowhere else”.

Inquisitor Greyfax: “I bring only your death. The manner of it is briefly within your power to choose”.

The crone said nothing and turned her head offering up the grotesquely pulsing artery within her withered neck.

Horst (over vox): “She is speaking the truth. She would rather die than give us what you want”.

Inquisitor Greyfax (over vox): “You underestimate my prowess and inducement”.

Horst (over vox): “She is not a mortal, not as we understand it. Who can say if she even feels pain anymore?”

Inquisitor Greyfax (over vox): “I am willing to test that theory”.

Horst (over vox): “We do not have the time. We have no leverage here. Ask her what she wants”.

Moriana watched them silently throughout the exchange, unable to hear their vox communications but doubtless aware of it.

Inquisitor Greyfax (over vox): “We do not strike bargains with the enemies of the Emperor”.

Moriana: “Moriana sees from your expression that you are racked by a doubt. Moriana cannot make this clearer to you. Moriana wishes to tell you this information. Simply give up this ego-driven need to demand it of Moriana that is freely yours”.

Inquisitor Greyfax: “What do you want in return?”

The crone’s smile became a broken-tooth glee of triumph, her eyes glinting with malignant intent.

Moriana: “Ask Moriana nicely”.

Greyfax was but a moment from drawing back her sword to strike off the impudent witch’s head when she felt the intrusion of Horst’s soul into her mind.

Horst (telepathically): “Set aside your pride. We are Inquisitors of the Emperor. We judge our own actions, no other authority save He on the Throne holds sway. Choke back your disgust and do as she says for the sake of all we strive for”.

Her hand trembled. The desire to strike with a blade matched against the logic of Horst’s words. It gave Greyfax an almost physical pain to accede to the machinations of the Chaos hag.

Inquisitor Greyfax (telepathically): “She is using us, manipulating us. She is a tool of Abaddon and will lead us astray. This was a mistake. I will rid the galaxy of her presence and we will find another way”.

Moriana narrowed her eyes, guessing something of the Inquisitor’s intent perhaps. Her fingers fidgeted with a scrimshaw.

Inquisitor Greyfax (telepathically): “See, she values her life still. We shall take her back to the ship and when we have rent her flesh and seared her soul, she will beg repentance and confess all of her sins”.

Horst’s rebuke struck her thoughts like a blow.

Horst (telepathically): “You are willing to throw away everything for your righteousness. An Inquisitor must be flexible to tread the harder road

that others cannot. You are a disgrace to the Ordo if you throw away this chance for nothing more than petty vengeance”.

She hated this. Too many of the Inquisition had strayed down that road turning from the light to the grey and then without knowing it falling to the darkness.

Inquisitor Greyfax (telepathically): “What is the point of fighting Chaos if we are to bargain a way that which keeps the Imperium together?”

Horst (laughing telepathically): “Nothing holds the Imperium together, Greyfax. It is simply the dregs of the Emperor’s creation washing down the great Maelstrom of destiny in close proximity to each other, sustained only by unfeeling momentum. But we must strive to build something better each day and not accept this dismal future”.

The other Inquisitor withdrew his presence leaving Greyfax feeling momentarily empty and alone. But then with a new found sense of purpose her will and righteousness swiftly filled the void again.

Horst (telepathically): “Few other true victories we can win. Today is not one of them. The Eye of Night is the weapon we seek to strike back not just at Moriana, but all the servants of the dark powers. She has no more fondness for Abaddon than you or I and would happen sacrifice him for her own twisted ends”.

Moriana (yawning): “Moriana grows impatient, young one. Moriana will summon forth more guardians if you continue to waste Moriana’s time”.

Her barbs failed to find their mark. Thoughts cleared by Horst’s intervention, Greyfax realized that Moriana wanted her to attack, to give the hag reason not to cooperate.

Inquisitor Greyfax (taking a deep breath and calming herself): “Grant me a boon, crone, and tell me the location of the Eye of Night. Please, Moriana”.

Moriana picked up her scrimshaw and jabbed it at Horst causing Greyfax to tense, her psychic potential flaring in expectation of a sorcerous attack. She felt foolish as it quickly transpired that the hag was merely using it to emphasize her next point.

Moriana: “You have already found the Eye of Night”.

Horst (over vox): “She will try to bake you still. Do not give her the victory of your frustration”.

Inquisitor Greyfax: “What do you mean, crone? Your words are as twisted and baseless as your loyalty”.

Moriana opened her arms and gave a slow shrug, her expression amused within the embrace of her ragged hood.

Moriana: “Exactly as Moriana says, slave to the Emperor. No riddles. Your companion, when he was alive, found the location of the Eye of Night. More than that he recovered it”.

Inquisitor Greyfax (over vox): “Is that true?”

Horst (hesitant over vox): “I... Why would I have brought us here if I already had the Eye of Night?”

Stepping back to keep both Horst and Moriana in view Greyfax held her blade pointed at the hag while aiming her bolter at the animated war plate.

Inquisitor Greyfax (over vox): “Why indeed? What conspiracy is this with which you think you intend to ensnare me?”

Moriana (laughing): “This is an unexpected pleasure. Moriana guessed right that your fumbling spirit companion does not remember our previous encounter. It is as Moriana claims. The Eye of Night lies in the grasp of his dead hand (giggling). Dead in the merely physical sense, of course. Life, death. Material, immaterial. Good, evil. There is no point to bringing such delusions into the Eye of Terror. Chaos has a way of mocking your binary certainties”.

Greyfax smiled.

Inquisitor Greyfax: “You have misstepped, benighted hag. If it is as you say that the Eye of Night is on the corpse of Horst, I no longer need you alive”.

Moriana (cheerfully): “Oh no, Moriana’s goading has undone Moriana again. Oooo... Whatever will become of Moriana?”

Inquisitor Greyfax: “Your subterfuge has failed. It will only be a matter of time until I locate the Eye of Night. Do you wish to lessen my effort in return for a painless demise?”

Horst (over vox): “I think that perhaps it is too early to draw conclusions. We may still need her”.

Inquisitor Greyfax (over vox): “If what she confesses to be true is so, then all we have to do is return to the place of your death to claim the Eye of Night”.

Horst (over vox): “It would seem so. Yet...”.

Inquisitor Greyfax (impatiently over vox): “What? What could cause you to delay the rightful execution of this wretched creature?”

Horst (over vox): “I have... I cannot remember it... I have no recollection of... of how and where I died”.

It took a moment for Greyfax to absorb and analyze this information.

Inquisitor Greyfax (over vox): “You do not know how you died or what killed you? You don’t remember dying?”

She took the Inquisitor’s continued silence as a confession and rounded on Moriana. The hag flexed her bony fingers, broken nails glinting like burnished iron.

Moriana: “When will you listen, child? Moriana needs you to reclaim the Eye of Night. Moriana wants you to reclaim it”.

Inquisitor Greyfax: “Why? I will give you nothing in return. To settle such a pact is the first step on the road that leads to corruption and treachery”.

Moriana: “You have to do nothing except what you must do. A demon guards the tower where the Eye of Night resides. A prince, who thought himself more important than Moriana (giggling). Who took from Moriana and did not settle its debt. You shall be Moriana’s executioners”.

The Inquisitor knew that there had to be more to Moriana’s plan than she claimed, but would she ever reveal it? As much as the thought turned Greyfax’s gut, the revelation of Horst’s amnesia had wrong-footed her. It seemed the crone had the upper hand and would do whatever she pleased regardless.

Inquisitor Greyfax: “I concede the bargain. Tell me how to find this tower?”

Moriana: “Tell you? Did Moriana survive ten thousand years by giving away Moriana’s secrets without some measure of protection in return? No, Moriana did not. Moriana knows that your blade would cut Moriana’s throat the moment the breath carrying that information leaves Moriana’s body”.

Inquisitor Greyfax: "Then we are at a stalemate again for I am not leaving here on your faithless word".

Moriana: "Moriana will conjure a guide for you to take you to the tower. Listen to Moriana's helper and you will find the Eye of Night. Moriana has already told you why Moriana desires you to succeed".

Horst (over vox): "I think we have no other choice. Agree to her terms".

(Moriana laughing insanely)

Inquisitor Greyfax (over vox): "It is deals like these that are the splinter in our souls. They seem but a pinprick at a time but they worry and gnaw until the wound festers and then all is corrupted and lost".

Horst (over vox): "Do you have any other plan? I can remember nothing from the moment I came to this place to my awakening upon your arrival on Savaven"

Inquisitor Greyfax (over vox): "You met the witch before. What did she demand of you then?"

Horst shrugged.

Horst (over vox): "The same I expect, but I failed. Now I have a chance to rectify that failure, if you would relinquish this foolish notion of... of spiritual purity. We were chosen to be Inquisitors because we can carry the burden of such choices, not to shun it at the cost of others".

Greyfax knew what she had to do, but she found it hard to master the words. She stared at the hag racking her thoughts for a plan that would regain control of the situation but there was nothing but acquiescence to the crone's demands.

Inquisitor Greyfax: "Very well, Moriana. Send us your guide. I swear now, whether you have spoken right or wrong, I will return and kill you".

Moriana: "And I assure you, child, that should you try to do so, it is not I that will fall. Do you think you are the first to make such an oath?"

Greyfax's attention was directed at Horst. Perhaps as evidence of the crone's mysterious intent she felt an itch in her soul, born of a deep loathing of all that had transpired. She desired nothing more than to quit this place as though leaving it might cleanse the stain and stench of it from her soul. Yet as she left Greyfax knew in her heart, she had crossed a line she had told herself she could not uncross.

## PART 3

(roaring engines of a Thunderhawk)

It wasn't just a physical wind that whined from the canopy of the diving Thunderhawk. Protected by an aegis bubble generated from the psychic defenses of its occupants the gunship literally cut through the sole stuff of the Eye of Terror, a pocket of reality in the sea of the Immaterium. Within order and sanity, outside raw Chaos. The keening of damned spirits sounded in the heart and mind as much as the ears. They whispered their tragedies each too quiet to be heard among the weight of their numbers, giving rise to a plaintive howl devoid of individuality. Now and then a more powerful soul would slide against the shielded fuselage, its shrieked lament lost in the turmoil.

Many times, more that she could remember, Greyfax had been called upon to enter battle during her service to the Emperor. Heretics, xenos, mutants, rebels and demons had all fallen beneath her blade and bolter. This time felt different, a heightened sense of fate at hand. This was no ordinary world to which the gunship descended. She knew nothing of the nature of the foe she and Genhain's Grey Knights would face, other than it would be demonic. Even this did not account for her unease.

A source was easy to identify. It sat like a flame of blue and green upon the crash seat in front of her, no bigger than her thumb. Moriana's impish demon familiar had no face to speak of and only the vaguest flicker of protrusions that might be called limbs. Even so it appeared to be sitting on the edge of the bench with its arms folded and legs crossed, looking with energetic curiosity around the troop compartment of the Thunderhawk. It started humming to itself. Never before had Greyfax gone into battle with one of her sworn enemies as an ally and the thought was chilling. If she could do this, what else was she capable of? How could she purge herself of this guilty act?

Genhain: "We are almost at the surface".

Greyfax looked out of the viewing port. The sky of the demon world was red-tinted. In the distance clouds brood and boiled, flickering with yellow lightning. Tortured faces flowing and changing within the roiling crimson masses. Below were mountains that looked like fangs, each was a massive jag of ivory and black, seated in concentric circles of gum-like foothills.

(Demonic imp singing)

At their center reared an immense black thorn of a tower bedecked with turrets and spires. It seemed to briefly shimmer like crystal as though its darkness was a mirage before resuming its somber and intimidating facade.

Demon Familiar: “Burstiagar, the pillar of spite for filth, shrine of the wanderer. Ahahahah... Prison of Agmarator, load of the mother-spore... Tower...”

Inquisitor Greyfax (infuriated): “Shut up, spark of vileness. Where is the Eye of Night?”

Demon Familiar: “Tower, gate of endless gates. Citadel of the Fateweaver”.

Inquisitor Greyfax: “Understand this, ember of Chaos. My blade will separate you as easily as the air. Do not think that the amnesty extended to your mistress applies to you... Where in the tower do we find the Eye of Night?”

Demon Familiar: “Find it yourself, Emperor witch. Hahaha! So self-righteous, I smell that riddle with you, touched, impure, negative self, approximates virtue”.

Inquisitor Greyfax: “The location, now! Your summoner vowed and vouched, she desires our success”.

Demon Familiar: “Follow me, huntress of the shadow empire”.

The imp became even more of a wisp then floated up from the seat. Throbbing slightly as though caught on a current of air it drifted through the hatch into the cockpit then brightened as it became a spark in the gloom ahead. A pilot steered after the apparition heading toward a spur, low on the flank of the great tower. From below a rainbow of colors erupted from an opening maw engulfing the sweeping gunship with demonic power, pressing in upon the psychic barriers. Along the collider-scope bridge soared demon things, their streamlined predatory bodies edged with claws and spines, stingers trailing behind in the Chaos current.

Genhain: “All stations, open fire!”

The rounds of the heavy bolters had been anointed with a blood of saints. They flared into the otherness of the demon sphere becoming cascades of cleansing lightning, swirling down upon the rising demons like the fury of a storm god.

Demon Familiar (laughing): “Ahahahaha!”

The imp demon took them directly through the gathering flock. Explosions of ichor and unreal blood spattered and rained as the Thunderhawk’s weapons carved from the circling swooping creatures. It became clear that they were headed for a wall connected to the promontory Greyfax had spied earlier, a parapet wide enough for the gunship to land. The wall was throng with demon kin, bounding cavorting horrors of cerulean hew rowed about greater presences of pink that seemed part body and part miasma. They shifted endlessly, sparks of red and purple streaking up from fingers splayed towards the incoming gunship.

The gunnery systems were turned toward the ground, now sowing droplets of black fire among the teaming mass. Into this congregation of death plunged the Grey Knights’ transport, its presence anathema to the creatures below.

(ramp opening)

Inquisitor Greyfax: “Armor your souls! Follow me!”

The moment the ramp was down Greyfax led the charge. Her bolter spat fury incarnate, every blessed projectile a white flare of purity. Around her erupted the storm of the Grey Knights, the ire like a wall of blades that cut down anything that approached. Ahead Moriana’s guide flickered and moved in front of the forbidden gatehouse. The raised port terrace formed a huge fanged peak lit up by the flash of weapons and plumes of magical fire.

Inquisitor Greyfax: “No relent! We cannot fail while our faith holds true!”

(Inquisitor slashing one of the demons)

\* \* \*

Demon Familiar (singing): “In and out the maze we go, up and down the tower, through the windows, under the floor into Nurgle’s power”.

Without the dimming and brightening star of Moriana’s guide to lead them Greyfax and her companions would have been lost within moments of passing beneath the gate of the tower. The demons had been content not to follow, trusting to the nightmarish interior to do what they could not. Regular dimensions became irrelevant. Even the sketchy psychics of the citadel’s exterior had been abandoned when they crossed the threshold.

(Demonic familiar talking to oneself, humming and singing the same song)

Corridors expanded out like the crystal shapes of snowflakes, mirror surfaces reflecting doorways and corridors that did not exist.

Genhain: "Disable your sensorium, brothers. There is nothing tangible here for it to detect. Trust only... (hesitating) Trust nothing, not even your eyes!"

(Demonic familiar giggling)

Though there was definitely a surface underfoot it could not be rightly be called a floor. They appeared to walk on the walls or ceilings at times though never once felt the change of gravity.

Inquisitor Greyfax: "I feel the chambers and walls, gates and arches, but I cannot see".

Horst (over vox): "Nothing here is real. Even our thoughts. There is only the reality we bring with us. Never forget that and never leave the sanctuary of the aegis".

Inquisitor Greyfax: "Do you have any recollection of this place?"

Horst (over vox): "Only the vaguest inkling of familiarity. Like a... misremembered nightmare. If my body does indeed lie here, I have no idea how it came to be".

The light of the familiar dappled on rippled surfaces like frozen ice and was swallowed by bottomless depths. It turned sharply circling about as if trying to find the way. Eventually when Greyfax could no longer hold back the tittering nothingness that crowded around the corner of the thoughts, they came upon a vaster space. Among such extraordinary surroundings it seemed almost mundane to enter a hall with a floor, walls and ceiling. Clouds gathered above the heads of the countless pillars that held up the vaults of the sky. Purple grass flattened underfoot, a breeze sighed against the armor of the Emperor's servants.

Horst (over vox): "No it comes to me, in part at least, like scattered pages of a puzzle found whilst groping in the dark".

Genhain: "What do you remember, Inquisitor?"

Horst (over vox): “I came here with paladin Bellakus... Our squad had fallen as we navigated the tower’s depths. Moriana had set no aid that time”.

Inquisitor Greyfax: “What happened, Horst?”

Horst (over vox): “The demon”.

(demonic voices approaching)

Inquisitor Greyfax: “What of it? What did...”

Horst raised the finger of his gauntlet and pointed. Greyfax’s enquiry died as their surroundings fell away. The vista of the hall sloughed off like a discarded skin to reveal a hellish scene.

(hellish visions of laughing demons torturing human souls)

Flame lit everything. In the dancing of ruddy-lightened shadow Greyfax half-saw figures in agony. They were being excruciated on every instrument of torture ever devised by the devious minds of humans. Horned demons loomed over their prisoners, taloned hands grasped tongs and rams, hooks and whips. There was something horribly familiar about them and in the reflections on the blades of flame knives Greyfax thought she saw her own face looking back.

Horst (over vox): “No... There... The demon”.

The figure that emerged from the smoke and shadows seemed like an ordinary man save for the black hollows that were his eyes. He was tall, gaunt but possessed of some bulk. He wore a sleeveless tunic of black embroidered with gold over a shirt of scout. Thick black trousers were tucked into carthae standard issued Imperial Guard boots. Most disturbing of all was the smile, languid and uncaring. He opened his arms as though in welcome.

Horst (over vox): “My body!”

Demon Prince: “It is my body”.

Demon Familiar (repeating): “My body... My body...”

Inquisitor Greyfax: “What?”

Horst (over vox): “The demon has taken my body for itself. I remember now. I had to hurl myself into the paladin’s body to cast myself back to the psychic beacon on Savaven”.

Demon Prince: “It lies. This is my body. It is the creature of the darkness. You have been fooled, Inquisitor”.

Demon Familiar (repeating): “Lies... My body... Darkness... Darkness... Fooled, Inquisitor... Fooled...”

All the while the flame of Moriana’s guide bobbed and wove above the head of the demon.

Demon Familiar (laughing): “Ahahahahaha! This one! Kill this one!”

Inquisitor Greyfax: “You are by far the most unconvincing doppelganger I have ever encountered, demon”.

Greyfax raised her anointed bolter. Beside and behind her the Grey Knights also took aim.

Horst and Demon Prince (at the same time): “No!”

Horst (over vox): “Possessed though it is, that is still my mortal shell. Destroy it and I am doomed to inhabit this carcass for... forever”.

Around them the demon torturers turned from their victims, eyes blazing silver and gold as their attention fell upon the mortal interlopers.

Genhain: “There is no other way, Inquisitor. We must destroy the host vessel”.

Horst (over vox): “It needs no vessel. This is the Eye of Terror, not the mortal world. It is using my body only as a shield”.

(Demon Prince laughing at Horst’s words)

Inquisitor Greyfax: “Then our need is even clearer”.

Horst (over vox): “We can drive it out. If we combine our minds we have the power to destroy the demon and save my body”.

(Demon Prince laughing at Horst’s words)

The demon Horst held up an foul hand, hawks of energy snaking between its fingertips.

Inquisitor Greyfax: “We shall try it your way, Horst. Protect yourselves and project your ire”.

(two Inquisitors combining their minds)

Loosed from the confines of her mortal senses Greyfax’s soul spiraled out of her thoughts to become a towering figure of black wraith. Her eyes were a white flame and her sword gleaned silver. Around her the Grey Knights’ minds manifested as sharp warriors of iron bearing glowing halberds. Horst was a flickering apparition caught between two realities, neither living, nor dead. His presence a deathly visage trapped

in a permanent wale, trailing tatters of dissipating energy. The demons had not changed save for the Horst's possessor. It was a negative of the Inquisitor's shade, an empty darkness bleeding through the veil of realities.

Inquisitor Greyfax: "There is no failure today. Triumph or die for the Emperor!"

Genhain: "Fraternis Diabolis Sejdgator!"

At the command of the Justicar the Grey Knights allowed their spirit energy to merge. The runes upon their force weapons blazed into glorious life linking them with a web of arching power. Sacred lightning glared from their blades as they unleashed scything fusillades of bolts.

Demon Prince: "I shall not be wrought, assassins of Moriana. Into the pit our cast cast be".

The demon Horst manifested a great three-headed staff, one tip with a face of a serpent, the second the visage of a goat. The third the beaked head of a vulture. It slammed the staff onto the ground and at its touch the demon tower started to shatter exploding with lethal shards of energy. A swarm of demon splinters whirled and swept over the entourage of Greyfax, colliding against the shimmering dome of their aegis. Into the teeth of the storm advanced the Grey Knights, their force weapons projected a wall of lightning, incinerating every demonic torturer that hurled itself against their rune-cast power.

Inquisitor Greyfax: "Burn! Banish thee!"

Behind them strode Greyfax arm aloft, a nimbus of energy streamed from her outstretched fingertips like a pillar holding up the vaults of the heavens. She was the bulwark on which rested the aegis, the center of the crackling power dome. Horst flew above them arrowing towards his demon counterpart.

Horst: "Be gone from my body, spawn of the abyss!"

Demon Prince: "Your soul is forsaken too, child of man. You should never have returned to me".

The two spirit beings became a thrashing cloud of black and white, flares of red and blue dancing across the boiling surface. As the demon fought to retain control of its body, it drew him more of the energy used to sustain its immaterial surroundings. First one, then several, then dozens of its conjured minions fell into nothing, their sustaining power

skewed away to join the whirl of chaotic energy syphoned into the demon prince.

Inquisitor Greyfax: “No, Genhain! Push on and cast out the demon!”

Genhain (crying): “The last assault, brothers! Imperator Dominus!”

Aegis and Nemesis storm converged to become a single mass of glowing gloom of power, a wraith of the Emperor himself. Yet even as the Grey Knights bound their minds to unleash this terrible attack, the spirit of Horst was cast from the demon’s presence. Leaving a wake of dissipating white mist Horst fell like a shooting star diminishing with every passing moment until only a grey stone clattered against the floor.

(silence covering the battlefield)

The conjuration vanished the moment Horst’s spirit rended his body. Their will momentarily shattered. The spirits of Greyfax and her escort flew back to their bodies unable to sustain themselves in the demon’s absence. The reality bubbled asserting itself. Greyfax set its heart, Horst, the demon and the Grey Knights around her. All had become corporeal but still the demon inhabited the corpse of Horst. His armor, the armor of paladin Bellakus, that he had in turn possessed, lay on the stone floor of the unreal tower. It struggled to one knee twitching and jerking under the influence of the immaterial presence that died in it.

Demon Prince (laughing insanely): “Ahahahahah!”

Horst (breathing hard over vox): “End it! Victory before all else!”

Greyfax needed no further encouragement. She fired as she advanced. Her first shot hit the demon corpse in the chest ripping out ribs and heart. The second shattered a hip causing it to topple to one knee and throw up a hand in protest. It looked almost the mirror image of the crippled Horst.

Demon Prince (moaning from pain): “Cease this or Moriana pulls your strings? I can offer you power... knowledge. The Eye of Night is but a meager treasure of the Fateweaver’s tower. I shall show you things that can shatter the legions of the dark...”

Inquisitor Greyfax (interrupting): “Silence!”

(Greyfax shooting Demon Prince)

Demon Prince (screaming from pain): “Aaaaaaa!”

Greyfax's third shot destroyed the creature's face silencing its insulting offers. Yet it still moved trying to claw at her as she stopped within reach, broken fingernails scratching at her armor. Her sword swept out in a single blow taking the head clean from the body. The corpse landed at her feet. A moment later the head rolled past her. Behind her Horst's animate war plate also collapsed and lay still.

Genhain: "What is that within the skull of his body?"

Greyfax slid her blade into its scabbard and stooped to pick up the contents of the broken skull. It was a black gem the size of her fist surrounded by a haze of darkness.

Inquisitor Greyfax: "The Eye of Night".

Genhain: "We must take it to the Primarch without delay. Our battle is not yet over".

Greyfax nodded slipping the Chaos jewel into a small chest upon her belt, a psychically warded casket she had brought for the artifact's containment. Despite the foes that would beset them on their way out she felt victorious. The triumph dimmed within a heartbeat as she considered the sacrifice of Horst. Noticing that the messenger of Moriana had vanished, any sense of success disappeared completely. Any victory she had achieved was tainted by the deal she had struck with the crone. She could not change the past so she set aside her concerns and she brought forth the sword.

Inquisitor Greyfax (rising the sword): "For the Emperor!"